

INSPECTION REPORT

STJOHN'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

Bebington, Wirral

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105082

Headteacher: Mrs M S Bulmer

Lead inspector: Mr P M Allen

Dates of inspection: 7th - 9th March 2005

Inspection number: 267811

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 7
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 151
School address: Old Chester Road
Bebington
Wirral
Merseyside
Postcode: CH63 7LH
Telephone number: (0151) 645 5291
Fax number: (0151) 645 6803
Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs M Ross
governors:
Date of previous 24th May 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average-sized infant school which serves its local parish, St John's, with a small number of pupils coming from the neighbouring parish of St Luke's. The vast majority of pupils live in nearby Bebington, with some from the neighbouring communities of Port Sunlight, New Ferry and Rock Ferry. Pupils come from a broad range of backgrounds and live in a mixture of housing types. There are 151 pupils on roll, with more boys than girls across the school. There are six classes, all with discrete age groups; two each for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The great majority of pupils are of white UK heritage background. There are very small numbers of pupils from a mixed heritage background or from an Asian background. Two pupils speak English as an additional language, although neither is at an early stage of English language acquisition. Eight pupils are identified as having special educational needs, including one with a Statement of Special Educational Need, most of whom have moderate learning difficulties. These proportions are well below the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils have experienced pre-school education through the pre-school playgroup on the school's site. On entry to the Reception class, the attainment and skills of most children are broadly in line with what could be expected although the majority enter school with good speaking and listening skills and social skills and with a positive attitude to learning.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17531	Peter Allen	Lead inspector	English History Physical education Special educational needs
11474	Peter Berry	Lay inspector	
21113	Jane Sargent	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design and technology Music
29686	Stefan Lord	Team Inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Geography English as an additional language

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	8 - 13
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13 - 14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	15 - 26
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school** that gives good value for money. Good leadership and management are helping the school to develop and improve. The quality of education provided is good. The commitment to the care and wellbeing of the pupils is very good. Good teaching ensures that pupils' learning and achievement are good. Standards are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time the pupils leave the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Effective teaching and learning in Year 2 is one of the main reasons why standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above the national average at the end of Year 2.
- The headteacher's good leadership is characterised by a strong determination to provide the best for each child.
- The very good provision for pupils' care and welfare underpins the school's caring Christian ethos.
- The good assessment procedures enable teachers to plan effectively.
- The school's very good partnership with parents has a positive impact on children's learning.
- Standards in information and communication technology need to be higher.
- In the Foundation Stage (Reception classes), too much time is given to directed teaching, leaving insufficient opportunity for learning through play.

The school has made a good improvement since its previous inspection in 1999. In the main, the issues have been addressed. There are now more opportunities for independent learning, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils. More efficient use is made of the time available, although some of the lessons observed during the inspection were over-long. The issue about developing the Reception curriculum has not been successfully addressed; there is still a need to provide a better balance between teacher-led tasks and those which promote children's independent learning. Since the previous inspection, the school's programme of improvement has led to it becoming more effective than previously, with higher standards at the end of Year 2.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	A	A	A	A*
writing	A*	B	A	A*
mathematics	B	A	A	A*

Key: A – very high; 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.*

Across the school, pupils achieve well. In Year 2, they achieve very well. Virtually all of the children are likely to reach the national Early Learning Goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year, and a significant minority are likely to exceed them. Standards at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This continues a trend of high standards. There are no

significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls or between the achievement of pupils of different ethnicity. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive. Higher-attaining pupils are given challenging work, enabling them to achieve well. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2, but need to be higher. **Pupils' personal development is very good. Their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good overall.** High levels of care and good relationships contribute significantly to pupils' positive attitudes. Behaviour is good. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Some particularly effective teaching was observed in the Year 2 classes. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage them well; the pupils become well engaged in their learning and aspire to do well. Teaching assistants provide effective support for the teaching and learning. There are good systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The school's curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is a need to further develop the Foundation Stage curriculum. The school needs to provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in information and communication technology in order to raise standards; the school needs to continue to develop the use of information and communication technology to support work in all areas of the curriculum. Very good support, care and guidance for pupils ensure that their personal needs are identified and met and that their self-esteem is well promoted. The school enjoys a very good partnership with parents and a very good partnership with the community, including the parish.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and management with a clear vision for development and a commitment to providing the best opportunities for each individual pupil. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators has been well developed since the previous inspection. Governance is good and meets statutory requirements. The governing body, which includes a number of new and enthusiastic members, is well led and supportive of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school and very supportive of all it does for their children; they appreciate the school's caring Christian ethos. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school and all it has to offer; they feel secure and safe.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in information and communication technology; and
- further develop the Foundation Stage provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils achieve well across the school because of the good teaching they receive. In Year 2, they achieve very well. Pupils' level of performance rises from being broadly in line with what could be expected on entry to Reception to standards which are well above the national average by the end of Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above the national average at the end of Year 2, which represents an improvement in writing, mathematics and science since the previous inspection.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are higher attainers achieve well because of the good support they receive.
- The school needs to continue to raise standards in information and communication technology.
- Parental support has a positive impact on standards, most notably in reading.

Commentary

1. Children in the Reception classes achieve well overall. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in their learning about language and literacy and mathematics. Progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development is satisfactory. Virtually all of the children are likely to reach the national Early Learning Goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year and a significant minority are likely to exceed them, although their development would benefit from more opportunities to promote their independent learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.8 (17.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.3 (15.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.9 (17.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 46 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The above table indicates standards in the 2004 national tests which were well above average. Standards at the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. These standards are reflected in the 2004 results which were well above the national average for all schools nationally. When compared with similar schools (those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals), the results in reading, writing and mathematics were in the highest five per cent nationally. Standards in reading are very high across the school as they were at the time of the previous inspection. A significant factor is the very good support given by parents in helping their children to practise and extend their reading skills. There is a trend of high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in science at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average as they were in the teacher

assessments of 2004; standards are higher now than they were at the time of the previous inspection.

3. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to work with the computers and this limits the progress they can make. The school recognises that standards need to be higher in information and communication technology. There was insufficient time during the inspection to make secure judgements about standards in other subjects.
4. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls and the achievement of pupils of different ethnicity. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve in just the same way as their classmates. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive. Pupils who are higher attainers are set challenging work, enabling them to achieve well and reach appropriately high standards. The school is only just beginning to identify pupils who are gifted and talented. The good systems in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science are helping the school to be well informed about individual pupils and to be able to set challenging but realistic targets which are being well met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is very good; pupils' cultural development is good. Attendance is very good and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work are good.
- Relationships throughout the school are good.
- Pupils' personal development is very well supported by educational visits, charity work and the school's provision of personal, social and health education and citizenship.

Commentary

5. Pupils arrive at school and quickly settle into the routines. For the vast majority of pupils, attitudes to lessons are good; they make appropriate contributions to the lessons, for example when asked questions by their teachers, and they work hard. There are, however, in some classes a small number of pupils, invariably boys, who sometimes are too easily distracted from their tasks; this can affect the flow of the lesson. In the main, pupils are able to work well independently and they work together co-operatively when required to do so. Relationships are good among the pupils and between pupils and adults. All aspects of personal, social and emotional development are well promoted in the Foundation Stage classes and the children respond well.
6. Behaviour of most pupils across the school is very good and, in some lessons, the behaviour can be exemplary. No instances of serious misbehaviour were observed during the inspection and there have been no exclusions. In the breaks, the pupils were observed generally behaving well, obeying the 'playground rules'. They take turns in using the 'activity trail' in accordance with the designated rota and they show appropriate respect for property and for the views of others. Pupils' movement around

the school is very orderly, which enables the school to function efficiently. Behaviour in the dining hall is good overall, but can be noisy.

- Pupils' personal development is very good, benefiting from many educational visits, community involvement and charity work. The school promotes personal, social and health education and citizenship very well and this enhances the pupils' maturity and their understanding of the world around them. The parents give very high praise to the school's positive contribution to their children's personal development. The pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is very good, being enriched, for example, by the well-planned assemblies and the use of circle time to reinforce positive attributes. There is a caring Christian ethos throughout the school and the pupils show due reverence during prayers. The provision for pupils' cultural development has improved over recent years and is now good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	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.

- The school has a very good attendance level, being consistently well above the national average for primary schools; this is a significant improvement since the school's previous report. Whilst pupils' punctuality is generally good, a small minority of pupils were observed arriving up to ten minutes after the start of school; this causes disruption to the class registration periods.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The good quality of the teaching and very good levels of care and support mean that pupils are able to learn well. There is a very good partnership with parents and a very good partnership with the local community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching provided by the school is good and, as a result, pupils learn effectively. Procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Year 2, pupils benefit from particularly effective teaching, and this contributes significantly to the high standards seen at the end of Year 2.
- High expectations of what pupils can achieve and of behaviour have a direct impact on how well pupils apply themselves in lessons.
- Teachers plan tasks which are closely matched to pupils' needs because good use is made of assessment information.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Homework plays a very important part in extending and reinforcing pupils' learning.

Commentary

- The quality of teaching and learning is good, contributing to pupils' good, and sometimes very good, achievements. It was good in around half the lessons seen.

The proportions are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. Parents are very confident in the quality of teaching provided by the school. The table below shows the judgements made on lessons seen during the inspection. Evidence from teachers' planning, pupils' work and from talking to pupils about their work was also taken into account when making the overall judgement on the quality of teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3	11	9	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

10. There is good teaching and learning throughout the school, with the most effective teaching being seen in Year 2, where pupils' learning is challenged and extended through very effective questioning based on very good knowledge of pupils' learning. Pupils are expected to work hard throughout their lessons and behaviour is respectful at all levels. There is some variation in the quality of teaching across different year groups. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of lessons and productivity are lower as are expectations of behaviour, resulting in occasions when a small number of pupils, usually boys, are not sufficiently focused on their tasks. In these lessons, pupils make slower progress and achieve less well. In the Reception classes, reading, writing and mathematics are taught well and children make good progress and achieve well, but insufficient attention is given to the overall balance of adult-led and independent learning, so that achievement in other areas of learning is less good. The headteacher, senior staff and subject co-ordinators regularly monitor teaching across the school. Sometimes these observations lack rigour because they do not focus clearly enough on the impact of teaching on learning, achievement and standards.
11. Teachers work together in year groups to produce detailed lesson plans which make good provision to meet the needs of individual pupils. This enables most pupils to make good progress and achieve well. For example, in a very good science lesson in Year 2, pupils worked in groups to decide which toys and materials floated best. Pupils were grouped according to levels of attainment and questions were adapted to suit each group's previous learning. Well-briefed adults followed clear plans to help all pupils achieve as well as they could. Work for higher-attaining pupils drew on previous learning from work on forces, whereas that for lower-attaining pupils focused on drawing more simplistic conclusions from their observations.
12. Teaching assistants and adult helpers are well prepared and play an important part in pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well. Teaching assistants know the pupils well and know what is expected of the pupils they work with. In most lessons, assistants are used effectively, supporting pupils during whole-class sessions or preparing resources until groups are ready to go to work. In a small number of lessons, adults are not used effectively in whole-class sessions, when they take a passive role.
13. Homework is effectively used to support and extend pupils' learning and, through this, parents have a high level of involvement in their children's learning. Parents value home-school diaries as a means of communication with the school and the ensuing dialogue helps parents and teachers to work together effectively to help children achieve well in their lessons.

14. There are good procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics, science and satisfactory systems for all other subjects. Pupils are assessed regularly throughout their time in school. Predictions are made for attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and these predictions are revisited and adjusted over time. Work in writing, mathematics, science and religious education is assessed at regular intervals and targets are agreed and reviewed. Targets can be either for groups or individuals and are shared with pupils and parents. They play a prominent part in classroom learning, ensuring that pupils understand what they need do to improve their work. Teachers make good use of this information when planning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for enrichment. The range and quality of resources are good. The attractive and recently improved accommodation is good and supports the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling them to achieve well.
- Personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is in need of further development.
- There is a need to further develop the use of information and communication technology to support the work across the other subjects.

Commentary

15. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and shows a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. However, the issue in the previous report about developing the Foundation Stage curriculum has not been successfully addressed. There is still a need to provide a better balance between teacher-led tasks and those which promote independent learning through the elements of choice, self-direction and decision-making. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is broad and balanced and is being systematically developed to provide more links between the subjects. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. There are no extra-curricular activities, although a significant number of pupils take part in the before- and after-school provision. Within the curriculum, there is satisfactory promotion of sport and the arts.
16. The curriculum is well planned, taking into account the learning needs of the different groups; there is effective shared planning across each of the three year groups. The way the staff plan together has given them the opportunity to develop and share their knowledge and expertise. The whole curriculum is permeated by the school's caring Christian ethos. Since the previous inspection, the role of the curriculum co-ordinators has been well developed; this is enabling them to provide good leadership and bring about many changes, partly through the annual subject development plans.
17. Although standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory overall, there remains the need for more frequent opportunities for pupils to use and have 'hands-on' experience of computers. The school recognises the need to further develop the use of information and communication technology to support work in all curricular areas.
18. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities. Provision for the relatively small number of pupils with special educational needs is

good. The school reviews pupils' needs when they first enter school and uses the information to identify those pupils who need extra help. Individual education plans are effective in addressing needs, although some have examples of targets which are too broad and not sufficiently clear. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and consequently pupils are supported well, making good gains in their learning and achieving well. Good assessment procedures enable teachers to identify both those pupils who need extra support and those who are higher attainers. Work is planned to specifically address these pupils' needs. The school is only just beginning to identify pupils who are gifted and talented.

19. Homework is well organised and consistently set and pupils take home both reading scheme and library books. There is a high level of support, with parents often hearing their children read daily and ensuring they learn their weekly spellings. This commitment to helping their children at home makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' standards. The school has firm plans to further involve parents when setting writing tasks for the pupils.
20. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good. This work gives good attention to alcohol and drugs misuse and to sex and relationships education. There are good opportunities for 'circle time' where pupils are free to express personal feelings and concerns. Teachers have positive strategies that develop children's initiative and responsibilities.
21. There is good enrichment of the curriculum through the use of visitors into school, through the use of the local area and through visits to places further afield. Recent visitors have included the local librarian, the school nurse, police and fire brigade personnel and a representative from Liverpool's 'City Mission'. Artists, musicians and theatre groups also have an impact. Good use of the local area includes regular visits to nearby Port Sunlight and a railway journey to Birkenhead. Visits into the wider area have included Ellesmere Port Boat Museum, Chester Zoo, Knowsley Safari Park and the Blue Planet Aquarium. All these activities help to bring the curriculum alive and enrich the pupils' learning. Year 2 pupils benefit from well organised weekly lessons in Spanish, provided by a specialist language teacher.
22. Overall, the accommodation supports the curriculum well. There is now an outside play area for the Reception children, which is an improvement since the previous inspection, although it could be used more effectively. The school is well resourced and has an adequate number of computers but the siting of these does not readily promote the teaching of information and communication skills. The one interactive whiteboard is effectively used; there are firm plans to increase the number of these. There are sufficient teachers and teaching assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very good support and guidance for its pupils, within its caring Christian ethos. Health and safety matters are given appropriate priority. The school seeks and values the views of its pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- THE SCHOOL HAS COMPREHENSIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR PASTORAL MATTERS.
- Staff know their pupils well and provide good supervision.
- Healthy lifestyles are well promoted.
- Personal, social, and health education and citizenship is very good.
- Health and safety matters are generally well covered.
- Pupils' views are sought and valued.

Commentary

23. The school has a friendly, welcoming atmosphere, in which staff know and support the pupils well. The parents give significant praise to the school's welfare and care arrangements, being unanimous that their children are well looked after and treated fairly. New starters settle quickly into their new environment. The school has a caring Christian ethos; this is appreciated and valued by the parents.
24. The school has many comprehensive policies and procedures, which ensure that pastoral matters are given a high priority and prompt attention. These procedures include clear guidelines for all staff, including the midday supervisors, voluntary helpers and student teachers. Staff give very good supervision. Each pupil benefits from a good trusting relationship with one or more adults within the school. Whilst the pupils' own views are listened to and valued, the school has clear plans to develop a school council in order to create a better forum for pupils to express their ideas.
25. Child protection matters are suitably covered by trained staff. The school's welfare provision is good, but the recording of minor accidents in the midday supervisors' log is too informal. There is suitable first aid cover. Health and safety matters are given due prominence, with regular inspections and detailed risk assessments undertaken. There is, however, currently a concern that children might trip on the uneven flagstone paths around part of the outside area. External agencies provide appropriate support, including the education welfare officer and the nurse. Healthy lifestyles are well promoted by the school, in particular within the planned personal, health and social education curriculum.
26. The school promotes good behaviour with its 'Golden Rules' prominently displayed throughout the school. The teachers give constant praise and use a generous supply of stickers to encourage hard work and good behaviour. The school celebrates pupils' efforts and successes each week, when two pupils from each class are chosen for an entry into the 'Golden Book', which is proudly displayed in the entrance hall. The parents confirmed that the school is very quick to deal with any issues that arise with regard to pupils' misbehaviour.
27. Pupils' individual requirements are well met and targets are developed appropriately to match the pupils' needs. Special educational needs are identified early and effective support given in order to ensure good academic and personal progress for those pupils. Thorough procedures for assessment and monitoring ensure that each pupil's distinct needs are taken into account. The school provides well for matters of equal opportunity and inclusion. The school is successful in meeting its aim of providing a high quality environment based on Catholic values, which underpins the quality of education provided and supports the standards that are achieved.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with its parents and its community. Links to other educational establishments are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with the school and give it very good support.
- Reading and other homework for pupils is very well organised.
- Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress.
- The school appropriately seeks and acts on parents' views.
- There are strong links to the local community.
- Links to the pre-school group and the partner junior school are very good.

Commentary

28. In the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussions with the inspection team, parents were unanimous in their support and praise for the school. Parents feel that the school is welcoming and they are comfortable in approaching the staff. There are many volunteer parents who give valued assistance in classes and around the school. The school has detailed guidance booklets for all helpers and other visitors such as student teachers. Parents' views are actively canvassed by the school and appropriate action is taken on any issues that arise. A parents' room is being developed to enhance the partnership and encourage more parents to participate in the school's activities.
29. The school provides a comprehensive and attractive prospectus and regular newsletters to keep parents up to date on school matters. In addition, welcome booklets are provided for the parents of new starters. There are parent consultation evenings in the autumn and spring terms, plus the opportunity to discuss the pupils' end-of-year reports. These events are well attended and the school makes the effort to ensure that all parents are seen at some point during the school year. The pupils' reports contain clear information on their progress in the main subject areas. Information is sent to parents each half-term detailing the forthcoming curriculum. The school has a well-established and appropriate system for homework; the school's requirements are well understood and appreciated by the parents. The home-school reading diaries are suitably used and provide an additional means of communication between the teachers and parents.
30. The school has very good relationships with its community, including very close links to St John's Church. The pupils benefit from educational visits into Bebington and beyond, for example to the Boat Museum and to a local garden centre. The pupils make contributions to improving the local environment, such as bulb planting. Many visitors into the school enrich the educational provision; for example, scientists from a local company have contributed during the science week.
31. The school has a close liaison with the pre-school playgroup and with the adjoining junior school; this results in good procedures for the transfer of pupils. Links with other primary schools are maintained through the cluster group. The school successfully hosts a significant number of trainee teachers from Hope University and Chester University College.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are both good. The governance of the school is good. These judgments are the same as those of the previous report.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good partnership between the headteacher, staff and governors, who have been effective in establishing the ethos of the school.
- There is a strong commitment to ensure that the needs of all pupils are addressed, including those with special educational needs.
- Procedures for school self-evaluation are good but the monitoring of teaching lacks rigour.
- Governors support the work of the school effectively.

Commentary

32. The good leadership of the headteacher provides clear direction for the school. The staff and governors are supportive of her vision for the school as an inclusive and caring community. The introduction of grouping of pupils into classes according to their level of attainment (setting) for literacy and numeracy lessons in Year 2 is a good example of the school taking steps to best meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities. The quality of the headteacher's leadership skills has led to all staff and governors working successfully as a team that strives to ensure all pupils achieve as well as possible. The headteacher is well supported by the senior management team. Subsequent to a recent staff reorganisation, the Foundation Stage co-ordinator is no longer working in the Foundation Stage and this leadership issue needs to be resolved.
33. The school is well managed. The administrative staff provide good support on a day-to-day basis and support the work of the school well. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work, and then using the information to make improvements, are good. This is reflected in the comprehensive school development plan, which clearly identifies where the school aspires to improve further. Information from a range of tests and teacher assessments provides useful data for tracking and reviewing pupils' progress. Teachers make sure that this information is used to best effect to provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils. The management of pupils with special educational needs is good so that their particular requirements are well met.
34. Importance is given to empowering staff to develop their management tasks; for example, the role of most subject co-ordinators has developed well since the previous inspection because they are now more effective in relation to monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in their particular areas. However, the recently-introduced monitoring of teaching and learning lacks the rigour necessary to have a strong impact.
35. Teachers' performance management is linked well to school improvement priorities and to teachers' professional needs, thus having a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. Induction procedures for new staff are good, with a well-organised level of support in place. The school has a very good involvement in initial teacher

training which also contributes to the continuing professional development of the staff involved.

36. The governance of the school is good. The governing body, which includes a number of new and enthusiastic members, is supportive and fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively. The chair of governors has a good understanding of all the school issues and is in regular contact with the headteacher to discuss school business. Other governors are kept well informed about the school because the headteacher shares a wide range of information with them at meetings, resulting in them being aware of where the school's strengths lie and what can benefit from improvement. Governors are linked to individual curriculum subject co-ordinators, which is a clear indication of their commitment to their monitoring role.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	451,936	Balance from previous year	74,062
Total expenditure	454,007	Balance carried forward to the next year	71,991
Expenditure per pupil	3,047		

37. Financial planning and monitoring are good. The headteacher and governors have a good understanding of the principles of best value and good use is made of the available funds. Much of the school's accrued budget surplus has been earmarked for balancing the present budget, maintaining present staffing levels and contributing to building costs; this will result in a very significant reduction in the surplus.
38. The principal aid to the school's future development is the continuing commitment of all staff, governors and parents working together for the continuing success of the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is **satisfactory**. On entry to the Reception class, the attainment and skills of most children are broadly in line with what could be expected although the majority enter school with positive attitudes to learning and good speaking and listening and social skills. Very positive attitudes to learning are fostered. This is a strength of the provision and reflects the ethos of the school. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in their learning about language and literacy and mathematics. Progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development is satisfactory.

The previous inspection identified a need to broaden the range of practical and creative activities offered to children in the Foundation Stage. It also found an imbalance in the curriculum between tasks which are adult led and those which children choose to do independently. These issues have not been successfully addressed. Teachers' planning identifies all the required areas of learning and the classrooms are equipped to provide for them, but children are given too few opportunities to engage in practical and creative activities because too much of their time is taken up with tasks they have been directed by their teachers to complete. Many of the directed tasks are linked to the development of mathematics and literacy skills and the organisation of the day limits children's opportunities to engage in learning through play.

The leadership of the Foundation Stage is in need of review; subsequent to recent staff reorganisation, the Foundation Stage co-ordinator is no longer working in the Foundation Stage. The accommodation has recently been improved and there is a newly-created outdoor play area. The limitations imposed by the organisation of the curriculum mean that this is underused.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Children feel safe and secure because of the very good relationships that are established.
- Children concentrate on their work for significant periods of time.

Commentary

39. Children achieve well in this area and most are likely to reach the expected goals by the time they leave Reception and a significant minority are likely to exceed them. Teaching is good overall, although too few opportunities are given for children to make independent choices about what they will do. Adults are calm and respectful when talking to children and other adults, providing good role models. Children show their confidence in their environment by sharing their thoughts and ideas with their classmates and there is a sense of community within each class. Children listen to

one another and take turns to speak. Adults use praise effectively to reinforce good behaviour.

40. Children have very good attitudes towards their work. They try their best when working and help one another. They persevere with their work for considerable periods of time. Children with special educational needs are well supported. Their activities are carefully planned to ensure that they have appropriate learning provision. They are confident in the classroom and around school and enjoy very good relationships with the adults who care for them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers have high expectations and children achieve well in reading and writing.
- There are insufficient opportunities for children to learn about writing for different purposes.

Commentary

41. Children are assessed on entry and good use is made of this information to target individuals. They make good progress in the development of their reading and writing skills and most children are likely to attain the expected goals with a significant minority exceeding them. Teaching is good overall. Children know the sounds of the letters of the alphabet and teachers help them to use their knowledge to help them read and write simple sentences. In work seen, writing was, for the most part, narrative. There was only limited evidence of children being encouraged to write for different purposes, such as writing lists or letters.
42. Children are good at listening to their teachers in class sessions and most are confident speakers in class activities. However, too few opportunities are provided for the development of speaking and listening through imaginative play. Good provision is made for role play in the classroom but there is little use of other activities, such as small world figures. During the inspection, classes were following the theme of 'Growing' and children enjoyed playing in the 'Garden Centre', selling garden implements and serving in the 'Café'. Time for this good quality activity was limited because of the amount of directed work children were given.
43. Children have regular reading homework and parents communicate with teachers about their child's progress. This begins the development of an effective parental partnership to foster children's learning now and in the future.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because they enjoy mathematical activities.
- Appropriate emphasis is given to learning through practical activity.

- Regular assessment helps teachers to plan appropriate work, so that children achieve well.

Commentary

44. Teaching of mathematical skills and concepts is good. By the end of their Reception Year, most children are likely to meet the expected goals and a significant minority are likely to exceed them. Teachers make it fun to use numbers and to explore other aspects of mathematics through practical activities. In lessons seen, children enjoyed activities inspired by the book 'Jasper's Beanstalk'. They counted out the correct number of beans into pots and placed the appropriately numbered tag in the pot. This activity was effectively adapted to offer suitable challenge for each child. Children spoke enthusiastically about the size of a big beanstalk in their classroom, using appropriate mathematical vocabulary to describe its size. In the 'Garden Centre', they served one another in the 'Café' and the shop, counting out money from the till.
45. The broad range of mathematical work seen in the scrutiny of work indicates that children make good progress in all aspects of mathematical development and achieve well. Regular assessments are made, following which teachers plan appropriate work to further develop mathematical learning or reinforce understanding which is not secure. This makes a significant contribution to the good achievement seen because children build up their learning systematically.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for learning about the world through play are limited and achievement is uneven across the different parts of this area.
- Good opportunities are provided for learning about science.

Commentary

46. Children's achievements in this area of learning are satisfactory overall. Their progress across the different strands of learning, such as science, information and communication technology, history, geography and design and technology, is uneven. There are limited opportunities for children to choose activities which promote their learning about the world because much of their time is taken up with directed activities which largely focus on literacy and numeracy. Work scrutiny showed a few examples of children using construction kits and a listening centre. No children were seen using computers during the inspection. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Although planning indicates that provision is made for children to cover this area of learning appropriately, the organisation of the day precludes this in most lessons.
47. There is good provision for the science-based strand of learning, such as work done about the senses in which children learn to identify which sense they would use to find out about different items. During the inspection, children were learning about the conditions seeds need to grow, using the book 'Jasper's Beanstalk' as the starting point.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children control scissors, pencils and paintbrushes well.
- There are too few opportunities for children to participate in energetic play.

Commentary

48. Teaching is satisfactory and children's achievements in this area of learning are satisfactory overall. Children are dexterous in their control of small equipment such as scissors, pencils and glue spreaders. They can cut accurately along lines when making a beanstalk leaf and carefully glue coloured paper on to their leaf. They show good control when using pencils to write letters and numbers and control paintbrushes well to produce good likenesses of Jasper the cat when painting.
49. Opportunities for outdoor energetic play are limited because of the imbalance between directed and independent learning. During the inspection, bikes were put outside, but the outdoor play area was underused. On most of the occasions that a small number of children went outside, play was not well sustained because the choice of activities was limited and there was no adult to interact with the children or improve the quality of play.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for role play is good.
- Children have too few opportunities to learn through imaginative play.
- There are too few opportunities for children to experiment or express themselves using paints and other art materials.

Commentary

50. The teaching in this area is satisfactory, leading to satisfactory achievement by the children. Planning shows that there is good potential for promoting children's creative development through provision such as sand, water, paint and role play areas. However, during lessons, children are directed to undertake specific activities in the areas offering this provision. They achieve well when painting figures from a story or making collage leaves for a beanstalk. However, there are few times when they can experiment with the equipment and materials provided, such as using paint to experiment with colour or brush size or painting a picture of something that they choose.
51. Children enjoy engaging in imaginative play in the role play 'Garden Centre', pretending to be the shopkeeper or a customer. Role play areas are well equipped with items to promote such play, but often there is too little time for children to use them. Teachers think carefully about provision for sand and water play, but limit

imaginative and creative play by suggesting that children act out particular stories with the props provided.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading and writing.
- The actions taken to improve standards in writing have been successful.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Parental support with spelling, and especially with reading, contributes significantly to the high standards pupils achieve.
- Pupils could benefit from more opportunities to use the available computers.

Commentary

52. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those who are higher attainers and those with special educational needs, achieve well in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The very high standards in reading have been maintained since the previous inspection and standards in writing are now higher. Boys and girls are making similar progress as are pupils of different ethnicity. Standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average. These standards are reflected in the 2004 national test results which were well above the national average and in the top five per cent nationally when compared with similar schools. The school's results in reading and writing in the last few years have been consistently well above the national average.
53. Most pupils have good speaking skills and listen very well. During collective worship, pupils were observed listening very attentively. The 'circle times' observed were being well used to promote speaking and listening. Teachers usually insist on pupils listening attentively and give pupils plenty of opportunities to answer questions at length and to discuss aspects of their work.
54. Reading is given a very high profile and standards in reading are high; pupils in Year 2 read fluently, accurately and with growing expression. Most pupils have developed good strategies to deal with unfamiliar words. Pupils know how to use contents and index pages of non-fiction books and read confidently texts they have not seen before. They are keen to discuss their books, to predict what will happen next and to share opinions of other books they have read. Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching of skills and very good support from parents. Reading diaries show that parents are very involved in hearing their children read and pupils confirm how much they enjoy reading at home. There are clear and well-understood routines for taking reading scheme and library books home.
55. Standards in all aspects of writing are also high. Most pupils are competent at spelling, write neatly with correctly formed letters and use punctuation well, with higher-attaining pupils using speech marks and exclamation marks correctly. They put their good vocabularies to good use and use appropriate grammar. Teachers have focused carefully on improving the quality and range of pupils' writing and have

high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers' regular assessments of pupils' writing are well organised and show that teachers have a good knowledge of what pupils should be achieving and their progress. Work in pupils' writing books is of a high standard and pupils write imaginative and well-structured pieces of writing.

56. Pupils clearly enjoy writing for all sorts of purposes. Year 1 pupils write about recent experiences such as their visit to the Boat Museum and World Book Day; they write letters and poems on such themes as 'Jack Frost' and about favourite stories such as 'The Gingerbread Man'. Year 2 pupils write diaries, book reviews, about 'special journeys', 'wanted' posters for Mr Wolf and extended writing such as that on Rumpelstiltskin. Pupils could benefit from more opportunities to practise their word-processing skills and from making more use of the computer to access information.
57. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills through enjoyable activities. They plan the work well and in most lessons ensure that it is matched to the needs of the pupils. Teachers are skilful in their questioning and give clear instructions. Pupils are usually managed well and, as a result, most classrooms are quiet places where pupils can learn. Good relationships exist between pupils and teachers, and pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Pupils usually concentrate well in lessons and aspire to do well. Teaching assistants provide good support, often to pupils with special educational needs.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, varying from satisfactory to very good. During the inspection, it was clearly more effective in Year 2. Where teaching is very effective, there are very high expectations of the pupils who are very productive. In a very good Year 2 lesson, the quality of teaching had a clear and positive impact on the pupils' very good achievement and on their attitudes and behaviour. It was very clear to see why standards at the end of Year 2 are set to be well above average in reading and writing. In less effective lessons, expectations are not as high and pupils do not make as much progress; some pupils become restless and off-task. Sometimes the lessons are too long to fully engage the pupils.
59. The co-ordinator is very committed and has developed the role well. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are monitored effectively. A useful system of monitoring teaching is in place which could benefit from more rigour and clearer development targets in order to drive improvement further. Across the school, the quality of marking is good, giving pupils good insights into how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Assessments of pupils' progress in reading, spelling and writing are made regularly and are effectively used to inform teachers' planning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Increasingly pupils are being given good opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to engage in speaking and listening activities in all subjects and good opportunities to use their reading skills in subjects such as history, geography and science. There are some good opportunities for writing in other subjects; for example, in history pupils write effectively about Guy Fawkes and also the Great Fire of London. There are missed opportunities for pupils to word-process and access information using the computer.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 2 are well above average.
- Assessment is used well to help teachers plan work to meet the needs of the pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, being most effective in Year 2.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning.
- Learning is very practical but some activities last too long.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

61. Attainment is very good in mathematics, and shows an improvement since the previous inspection. As a consequence of the overall good quality of teaching they receive, pupils achieve well, most notably in Year 2, so that standards at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average. These standards are reflected in the school's 2004 national test results which were well above the national average for all schools and for similar schools. This follows a trend of high standards.
62. Pupils in Year 1 have a good understanding of numbers. They add and subtract confidently in the range of 0 to 10 and can name common two-dimensional shapes with higher attainers familiar with three-dimensional shapes such as cuboids, pyramids and spheres. Year 2 pupils are aware of number sequences such as odds and evens and halves and doubles, and identify multiples of 5 and 10 with confidence. They use a range of strategies to help them add and subtract numbers up to 100. They successfully interpret mathematical problems expressed in words, for example when dealing with money. They use the correct vocabulary to describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes.
63. In lessons, teachers usually challenge all pupils well, pupils being given challenge and support in equal measure. The school has high aspirations for all pupils, work is planned effectively to meet the needs of pupils well and there are good practices for assessing how the pupils are doing and tracking their progress. Higher-attaining pupils are given challenging work enabling them to achieve well, for example through careful grouping in Year 1 and 'setting' by ability in Year 2. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive.
64. During the inspection, the overall quality of teaching and learning was good, varying from satisfactory to good, with the more effective teaching in Year 2. Teachers have a good level of subject knowledge and understanding and this is reflected in their planning and the good quality of questions and explanations, which are clear and well focused. There is effective review of previous learning which helps pupils to link steps in their learning. Where teaching is more effective, the teachers' high expectations of effort and behaviour mean that pupils work with sustained interest and concentration. Where teaching is less effective, pupils are not as well managed, expectations are lower and, as a consequence, pupils are less productive and do not achieve as much as they could. Across the school, the teaching assistants provide good quality support in lessons, especially for those pupils with learning difficulties to help them achieve well. However, in mathematics, marking is sometimes not sufficiently used to inform pupils what they need to do to improve.

65. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and form good working relationships with their classmates and other adults in the class which help to promote their confidence and self-esteem. They enjoy their work because there is a strong emphasis on a practical approach to learning through a good range of resources, resulting in good achievement. However, the timing of some lessons is too long and results in a significant number of pupils losing focus and not being fully productive for the whole amount of the time.
66. The subject is well resourced and well led and managed by the co-ordinator. Self-evaluation has included some observations of teaching and learning. More rigour in this process could provide clearer targets for improvement in order to further improve the quality of teaching. Monitoring of planning and recent reviews of the pupils' work give the co-ordinator a clear picture of the subject's strengths and areas for development.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

67. Pupils make effective use of mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and this helps them to begin to develop an appreciation of the practical uses for their skills. For example, they use co-ordinates in geography and use measuring skills in design and technology. There is some use of computer programs to support pupils' learning in mathematics but this is an area for further development.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science are high and pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum is broad and well planned, with good opportunities for scientific investigation.
- The co-ordinator is well informed about standards, teaching and learning across the school.
- Good links are made between science and mathematics.

Commentary

68. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well. Teacher assessments in 2004 show that the percentage of pupils attaining at the expected Level 2 was very high and in the top five per cent nationally. At the higher Level 3, attainment was above that seen nationally. This represents an improvement on standards at the time of the previous inspection. Attainment is high across all aspects of the science curriculum. Discussion with pupils and work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are likely to be equally good for pupils in Year 2 by the end of the school year. No significant differences were seen between the work of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because their work is well matched to their needs and they are well supported in the classroom by teaching assistants.
69. In the three lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory overall, although very good teaching was seen in Year 2; this has a significant impact on pupils' achievements and the standards attained at the end of Year 2. There are good

procedures for assessment which keep teachers well informed about pupils' progress. Overall, lessons are well focused and good use is made of questioning to target individual pupils, offering challenge to higher-attaining pupils and consolidation for those who need it. Work seen shows that scientific thinking skills are effectively developed and pupils show good basic understanding of how to make scientific tests fair. Coverage of the science curriculum is good and appropriate emphasis is given to science investigations. Pupils draw upon their learning in mathematics when recording data from their investigations in tables or producing graphs of their findings.

70. Where teaching is most effective, lessons are exciting and interesting with an emphasis placed on practical work. Teaching has good pace and the teacher knows pupils well, with some teaching and learning being tailored to individual needs. Teachers have good, and sometimes very good, subject knowledge. They make use of scientific vocabulary as they teach and so pupils begin to use correct scientific terms as they offer explanations for the outcome of their investigations.
71. The enthusiastic well-informed co-ordinator is providing good leadership. Standards are monitored by evaluating pupils' work and monitoring teachers' planning and teaching. In 2004, the school held a successful science week. Pupils participated in an interesting range of activities during out-of-school visits and with visitors to school. For example, some pupils conducted investigations on shampoo alongside scientists from a local company. It is hoped to make science week a regular part of the science provision.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' limited access to computers is a barrier to raising standards which need to be higher.
- The use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects needs further development.

Commentary

72. Standards in information and communication technology are currently broadly in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Achievement in information and communication technology is satisfactory but, considering the high standards pupils attain in English, mathematics and science, there is potential for pupils to perform better. The main reason why standards are not higher is because pupils have limited access to computers to practise their skills and this inhibits progress; there is a bank of three computers in each Year 2 classroom whilst there is only one computer in each Year 1 classroom. A bank of three computers is available in the library, but these were not seen in use during the inspection.
73. The school has recently introduced a new scheme of work based on national guidance and valuably adapted this by placing the teaching and learning of appropriate information and communication technology skills within the context of literacy, numeracy, science, history and geography. For example, in Year 1, graphical representation is covered in numeracy; similarly, in Year 2, using text to communicate

ideas is covered in literacy and history. This gives the learning of skills a clear purpose and effectively develops the use of information and communication technology across these curriculum areas. Using information and communication technology across all the curricular areas is recognised as an important priority for the school.

74. Pupils enjoy using computers, often sharing ideas to learn from one another and their achievement is satisfactory, including that of pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 are able to use paint and drawing programs to make images. Word-processing skills are appropriately developed; for example, by the end of Year 2, pupils can select and change the style, size and colour of fonts. However, their mouse and keyboard skills are rather hesitant because of the limited access they have to computers to practise their skills and very few pupils spoken to have access to a computer at home.
75. No direct teaching of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection, although information and communication technology was sometimes being used to support learning in other subjects. For example, in a Year 1 numeracy lesson, the teacher made good use of a money game program to effectively reinforce the pupils' learning; similarly, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils used a CD-Rom to reinforce their learning of 'sound of the week'. The only interactive whiteboard in school is located in a Year 2 classroom and this is used effectively to enhance teaching, to make learning exciting and to successfully facilitate the teaching and learning of information and communication technology skills. Teachers effectively assess and record pupils' progress in the subject and use the information to plan future teaching.
76. The co-ordinator has sound expertise, is enthusiastic about developments in this subject and is providing good leadership and management. Although not all teachers are confident, staff competence has improved through training. This is helping to develop teachers' and teaching assistants' confidence and skills but more remains to be done, especially in the use of interactive resources.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. As outlined above, the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is emerging but the school is aware that more remains to be done to support the work in all areas of the curriculum. The school is in the process of acquiring more interactive whiteboards and organising appropriate staff training to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES AND CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The work in geography and history and in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education meets statutory requirements. These subjects were not specific areas of focus for the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. As a consequence, there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on the quality of the provision.

Geography

78. No lessons were seen in geography and therefore it is not possible to form overall judgements about provision in the subject. Evidence from samples of pupils' work,

teachers' planning and discussions with staff indicates that pupils receive appropriate experiences. The way the school organises the curriculum into topics is helping to link work in geography with literacy and this helps pupils develop and adapt their writing skills for a greater range of purposes. Visits to other places also enrich the curriculum.

79. A scheme of work is in place, based on national guidelines, which helps teachers to plan continuity and progression in the teaching and learning of geographical skills. Pupils in Year 1 are developing awareness of their own locality and beyond; for example, through the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' in Brittany and Norway. Year 2 pupils develop their mapping skills by using two co-ordinates to locate features on a simple map and demonstrate an understanding that different places, such as an island environment, may contain human and physical features that are similar and different to Bebington. This effectively helps pupils to respond through their own writing. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, which was critical of the overuse of worksheets.
80. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the work. An effective system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress helps teachers to plan work to meet the needs of the pupils.

HISTORY

81. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning as it was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection. A review of pupils' work and the school's documentation indicate that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum taught through a series of interesting topics. There is a good recently-reviewed policy and a very clear structured scheme of work; this gives very clear guidance on what to teach and promotes continuity and progression. It ensures that the parallel classes receive the same curriculum.
82. Good use is made of the local environment, including the rich historical heritage of nearby Port Sunlight together with visits further afield, such as a recent one to Ellesmere Port Boat Museum. Recent visitors have included an ex-fighter pilot (as part of a study of 'Remembrance Sunday') and an ex-evacuee who talked of his wartime experiences. Good use is made of history to promote writing; for example, recent work has included an account of the Great Fire of London written by pupils from the viewpoint of Samuel Pepys and writing about the life of Guy Fawkes.
83. The enthusiastic co-ordinator is leading the work effectively; there has been a recent review of the work in pupils' books and some monitoring of teaching and learning. Simple assessments are undertaken after each topic. The subject is well resourced, with the school making good use of the local education authority's library service to provide resources to support the various topics. Although some use is made of CD-Roms and the Internet to access information, there are firm plans to further develop the use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in history.

ART AND DESIGN

84. During the inspection, only parts of two lessons were seen in art and design, therefore it is not possible to form secure judgements about provision in the subject. Evidence from samples of pupils' work, sketchbooks, work on display, curriculum plans and discussions with staff indicates that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum.

85. The new scheme of work ensures that pupils are given opportunities to develop appropriate skills and use a range of media, such as paint, various drawing materials, and fabric and to produce work in three dimensions. However, the work of artists from cultures outside Europe is not represented and this is an area for development.
86. Pupils are taught about the work of well-known artists and often use their work as a stimulus for their own; for example, pupils in Year 1 look at illustrations showing the work of the sculptor Henry Moore before creating their own sculptures by rolling, squeezing and pulling modelling material into a human form. The increased opportunities to use modelling material is an improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils are encouraged to observe carefully natural things such as flowers, interesting shells, coral and gnarled wood and record what they see in pencil to develop their drawing skills. However, the pencils provided limit the range of shading tones they create. Pupils develop appropriate skills in paint mixing; for example, pupils in Year 2 explore mixing techniques to produce different skin tones for their self-portraits.
87. A lot of art on display in school, such as some of the friezes, is very adult-led. The most effective work was in the form of observational and imaginative drawings and paintings produced by individual pupils. The subject co-ordinator has recently introduced simple assessment procedures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. No lessons were seen in design and technology and few examples of work were available during the inspection and therefore it is not possible to make judgements about standards or provision. A review of planning shows that all the required elements of design and technology are taught during the school year. Year 2 pupils design and make puppets and evaluate them, suggesting how they could be improved. They label plans to show how they have created different features and consider how materials will be joined. Pupils in Year 1 complete planning sheets before making a wheeled vehicle, considering what materials and tools they will require for their project. Food technology is given appropriate coverage and this work is effectively linked to teaching about healthy eating.
89. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The policy has been recently reviewed and good attention has been paid to health and safety matters. Teachers assess pupils' progress and achievements at the end of each unit that is taught.

Music

90. Only one music lesson was seen during the inspection, therefore it is not possible to make judgements about standards or provision. Year 2 pupils were observed during a weekly lesson with a visiting pianist. In this lesson, pupils enjoyed singing a range of songs and playing percussion instruments to accompany the singing. Pupils sustained a steady beat against the tuneful singing by their peers. Throughout the year, pupils have various opportunities to perform for parents and friends. Most musical performances have strong links with religious education, supporting the celebration of Christian festivals.
91. Music is also taught by class teachers. They follow a commercial scheme which gives good coverage of the required elements of the music curriculum. The subject is

effectively led by the co-ordinator, who monitors standards, planning and teaching. She works alongside colleagues to help develop their confidence in planning weekly lessons. A subject audit has identified a need to further develop teachers' subject knowledge and confidence, although no suitable training has been found yet. Resources are good and include a selection of instruments from other cultures.

Physical education

92. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection and, as a consequence, there is too little evidence to make secure judgements about the subject. Appropriate use is made of a scheme of work which ensures that each of the elements of gymnastics, games and dance are taught, although there is less staff confidence in the teaching of the dance aspect.
93. Each class is allocated an hour a week for gymnastics or games, with half an hour for dance. The work is advantaged by a good-sized hall, a good hard play area and an adjacent playing field. Pupils enjoy using the 'activity trail' outside during playtimes when they can practise climbing and other skills. There are no extra-curricular activities for sport, although the pupils benefit from coaching on the annual visits by staff from the local professional football club.
94. The enthusiastic co-ordinator is providing positive leadership and helping the school to begin to raise the profile of physical education. Her current involvement in a school co-ordination project with the local cluster of schools is enabling the school to develop its curriculum. The subject is well resourced. Good use is made of a system of simple assessments.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of the provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education and citizenship are well promoted in all aspects of the school's life.
- Valuable learning opportunities are provided in the weekly timetabled programme of work.
- Members of staff provide very good role models.

Commentary

95. This area has been well developed over recent times and, as a consequence, a clear programme has been devised to promote progression from Reception to Year 2. Pupils make good progress in this aspect of their learning. The work is guided by a policy and scheme of work and is implicit in the school's mission statement; all pupils are fully included. There are weekly lessons, and 'circle time', when pupils have the opportunity to share their thoughts on a variety of issues, is a key feature.

96. Good quality teaching and learning were observed in Year 1 and Year 2; in both lessons pupils were helped to appreciate and respect the contributions of others. In the Year 1 lesson, as part of a theme on 'ourselves and growing', the pupils were helped to understand that all babies need love; pupils were gaining a good understanding of how humans grow and change over time. In the well-managed Year 2 lesson, as part of 'circle time', pupils passed around a teddy bear and gave their thoughts on the importance of 'taking turns'. Lessons such as these make a contribution to the school's caring Christian ethos, where every individual is valued.
97. The school's programme of work is well organised and includes work on healthy choices, bullying, relationships, drugs education and citizenship. Supportive relationships are encouraged throughout the school and the staff set very good role models; they treat all pupils and each other with care and respect. Pupils are developing a very good awareness of how to behave in a community and they work very well together in a co-operative and caring way. The next development of the work is the impending creation of a school council, aimed at giving pupils insights into the democratic processes. The provision for personal, social, and health education and citizenship is just on one of the many features which make this a good school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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