

INSPECTION REPORT

URSULINE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Liverpool, Merseyside

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104937

Headteacher: Mr Mark McQueen

Lead inspector: Mr Keith Edwards

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 January 2005

Inspection number: 268168

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 385

School address: Nicholas Road
Blundellsands
Liverpool
Merseyside
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Telephone number: 0151 924 1704
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr M Fraser

Date of previous inspection: 17 May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ursuline Catholic Primary is a church-aided school that draws most of its pupils from the immediate locality. Numbers on roll have reduced slightly since the time of the last inspection and there are now 385 boys and girls who attend full time. Almost all of the pupils are white and come from homes where English is the first language. Just over eight per cent of the pupils have an entitlement to free school meals. This is below the national average.

There is one intake into the reception classes during the course of the year. Most of the children who start in the reception class have had the benefit of pre-school experience. The attainment of the pupils on entry to their reception year is slightly above average although there is considerable variation in the pupils' attainment. The children are taught in single-age classes and there is a wide spread of ability in each class. Fifteen per cent of the pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs. This is below the national average. Six pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The current headteacher has recently completed his first year in post and has involved the school in local initiatives including 'Primary Leadership' and 'Emotional Intelligence' programmes.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21190	Keith Edwards	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology English as an additional language
32655	John Bostock	Lay inspector	
22274	Vera Rogers	Team inspector	Mathematics Citizenship Music Special educational needs
32414	Michele Messaoudi	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Modern foreign languages
32474	Margaret Bushell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography History Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that has some very good features. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. Each member of the school community is valued and there is effective teamwork. The quality of teaching and learning is good and there are particular strengths in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 and 6. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in mathematics, reading and speaking and listening are above average in Year 6. In the 2004 national tests for the pupils in Year 6, overall standards in English, mathematics and science were above the national average.
- Although satisfactory overall, achievement in writing and in science could be higher.
- The headteacher has successfully laid the foundations for the future development of the school whilst maintaining the ethos where every member of the community is valued. Relationships are very good.
- The school provides very well for the personal development of its pupils. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good.
- The school has developed very good links with the parents and excellent links with the community.
- More could be done to prepare the children for life in a multicultural society.

Improvement since the last inspection in April 1999 has been satisfactory overall. However, the rate of improvement has accelerated in the last year. The school has dealt effectively with the key issues identified in the last inspection. There is a clear programme for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and this has led to increased effectiveness. The individual programmes of work for those pupils with special educational needs are now much sharper and there has been a strong commitment to providing additional support. The improvement in standards in the tests for pupils in Year 6 has been above the national trend over the last four years. The school has ensured that there has been a very good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology and, as a result, standards are rising rapidly. The school has much improved library facilities although this resource is underused for independent research.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

The achievement of the pupils is good. The children make good progress in the reception classes and most pupils are set to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. This is because the pupils feel secure and the quality of teaching is good. The pupils benefit from the systematic teaching of basic skills in Years 1 and 2 and most pupils achieve the expected levels in literacy and numeracy. However, too few pupils achieve the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils benefit from good teaching and standards have risen faster than the national trend. Current standards in mathematics and reading are above average but standards in writing, though satisfactory, could be higher. This is because

the pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their skills in other subjects and the teachers' marking does not consistently show how the pupils might improve their work. Standards in information and communication technology are improving as the school makes full use of its new resources. There is some underachievement in science because there are too few opportunities for pupils' investigative work. Throughout the school, the pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs achieve well. This is because they receive good quality individual support and the teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and number work is systematic. The quality of the children's singing is a strength.

Because the school's provision is very effective, **the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** The pupils grow to become mature, confident and responsible. The pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and their behaviour is very good. The pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance levels match the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Overall, **the quality of teaching is good.** All of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better and there was evidence of very good practice in each phase. Throughout the school, the teachers manage the pupils very well and they have developed effective working partnerships with the teaching assistants. Because the teachers make good use of assessment techniques, there is a good level of challenge in numeracy lessons. This is not always the case in literacy lessons although very good practice is evident in Years 3 and 6. In the best lessons, tasks are very well modified for different groups of pupils so that they apply themselves well and work hard, but this is not evident in all classes. The quality of marking lacks consistency. The provision for those pupils with special educational needs is good.

The curriculum is satisfactory. A particular strength is the school's provision for the children in the Foundation Stage. Furthermore, the school's provision for numeracy and for information and communication technology is good. Although the headteacher and staff work hard to try to ensure that all pupils receive the same kind of experiences and opportunities, there are weaknesses in the planning for writing where the planning does not consistently allow for the development of skills. The curriculum is enriched by a good number of additional activities, particularly in music. The school has made good progress in adapting the difficult accommodation to meet the demands of the curriculum. It has formed very good partnerships with the parents and its relationship with the community is excellent. The school provides very well for the care and welfare of its pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of management is good. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The overall impact of the headteacher is very significant because he has motivated his colleagues to raise expectations of themselves and the pupils. He has a clear vision of how the school should be performing and has introduced a range of management innovations to make the school more effective. The management of the school is good. There remains scope for the development of the role of the subject co-ordinators so that they have a sharper focus on raising standards. The governors provide good support for the work of the school and are developing their role as critical friends.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and think highly of it. The pupils are proud of their school and feel they are valued and very well supported.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing and in science.
- Improve the provision for the pupils' multicultural education.

- Develop the role of subject co-ordinators.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The overall achievement of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. This is because the pupils are well taught and the school monitors the progress of the pupils carefully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are above average in Year 6.
- Standards in reading, speaking and listening are above average.
- Standards in science and in writing could be higher.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- By the end of the Foundation Stage, most of the children are likely to exceed the goals set for them in each of the areas of learning.
- Pupils are making good progress in acquiring skills in information and communication technology.

Commentary

1. In the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 2, the improvement in standards has been below the national trend. This is because the results in the national tests in recent years have been very erratic and fewer pupils have achieved the higher standard (Level 3) in reading, writing and mathematics than in similar schools. However, there has been a steady improvement in the pupils' achievement in writing as the initiatives taken by the school have begun to take effect.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (16.6)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.2 (14.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.2 (17.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.6 (28.9)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.1 (28.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.9 (30.2)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 62 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The pupils' achievements are good in the junior classes because of the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 6, and because the school places such high value on the personal development of the pupils. In the 2004 national tests for Year 6, the pupils' results in English were well above the national average. Standards in mathematics were above the national average. The school often exceeds the challenging targets it sets for its pupils and standards

in Year 6 have risen faster than the national trend over recent years. Current standards in English are broadly average. This is because the pupils' competence in writing has not kept pace with their speaking and listening and reading which are generally above average. The school recognises that for the pupils to make better progress in writing they need to have more practice and also they need a much clearer understanding of what they need to do to improve. Standards in mathematics in Year 6 are above average because the new, flexible setting arrangements are having a beneficial impact on the pupils' learning. They respond well to the smaller group sizes and the very good teaching.

3. The results of teachers' assessments in science in 2004 were above average in Year 2, in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving the national expectation of Level 2 and average in terms of Level 3. In Year 6, results were average when compared with all schools nationally and well below average when compared with other schools whose pupils had recorded similar results in their Year 2 tests. The pupils lack experience in setting up their own investigations to test their hypotheses and then recording their findings. Overall, the pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are making good progress in information and communication technology and standards match national expectations.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Those who are causing concern are identified early and placed on the school's special educational needs register. They are given good support in lessons, particularly in English and mathematics. The school also has a number of short-term intervention strategies in English and mathematics to help those pupils who are experiencing difficulties in learning.
5. There is no significant variation between the achievements of boys and girls. While there are still areas where the pupils' achievements need to be improved and standards raised further, notably in writing and science, the school's improvement strategy is beginning to take effect. There is a clear commitment to further improvement. The new headteacher has raised expectations of the pupils' performance. The teaching teams, particularly in the junior classes, have responded well to the increased rigour in the management systems. They have made effective use of opportunities for professional development and staff training, performance management, data analysis, monitoring and evaluation to support improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Attendance levels match the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral and social aspects.
- The pupils behave very well, allowing effective teaching and learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to their school life are very positive so they learn well.
- Multicultural education is not being developed enough.
- Relationships are very good.
- Most pupils take up the opportunities of participating in the many clubs and activities or taking up the responsibilities the school provides.

Commentary

6. The development of pupils' knowledge about spiritual, moral and social issues is a particularly strong feature of the school's work. Links with the local Roman Catholic Church community and the ethos of the school support strong spiritual and moral teaching. Other faiths are studied and pupils learn about the wonders of nature and the moon and stars. Throughout the day, the pupils are reminded about rules of behaviour, fairness and courtesy. They clearly

understand right from wrong. Pupils learn about their school community and the local area. Participation in the clubs and trips develops their social skills when mixing with adults and other children. The school council and other opportunities such as play leader roles provide the pupils with opportunities to take on responsibilities. A wide range of visitors to school and visits made by pupils introduce cultural ideas. Steel bands, jazz workshops, performing at the Philharmonic Hall and visits by theatre companies are recent examples of these stimuli.

7. Staff set high expectations of positive attitudes and good behaviour. They praise and encourage good behaviour and there is a good structure of rewards and certificates as well as progressive sanctions when necessary. Pupils respond well and behaviour is generally very good at work and play. They settle quickly and quietly to their work and move sensibly around the school. They co-operate well together at all ages - the older children in particular are acquiring a mature approach to working in pairs and small groups. Play times are active and boisterous and the pupils mix well together. A few individuals find it hard to match the consistently good behaviour of their peers, but in most lessons they are well managed and are rarely a distraction to the others. There was no evidence during the inspection of bullying or racist behaviour. Parents feel that the school takes a strong stance against bullying and that incidents are quickly dealt with. Pupils do not consider it to be a problem.
8. Pupils enjoy school. They are enthusiastic and want to be involved in lessons and other activities. They are keen to get on with their work, co-operate in joint activities and work hard individually. These positive attitudes enable them to get good results from lessons and other opportunities, especially when teaching is stimulating.
9. The school could do more to prepare pupils for life in a diverse multicultural society. A start was made with last year's project 'Round the World' which enabled each class to look at a particular country's physical and cultural dimensions. The classes examined and discussed each other's work. However, the school recognises that a more structured and comprehensive approach is required and is planning to address this through their review of the curriculum.
10. Teachers have strong relationships with pupils and consequently pupils feel able to try to work at the limit of their capabilities without fear of ridicule or failure. Pupils support each other well, both in lessons and in the many sporting and musical activities that are available to them. During the inspection, both the gospel choir and the traditional choir gave excellent support to the morning assemblies. Numerous sporting activities are regular features of school life and are enthusiastically supported. Senior pupils act as play leaders organising games at break time. There are good opportunities for the pupils to take responsibilities throughout the day such as registration and door 'monitors'. Charity collections by pupils are very substantial benefiting many international, national and local groups. The recently launched 'Small change for Big change' initiative coincided with the Asian Tsunami disaster appeal and quickly raised £1,000.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.2
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.

11. Attendance levels have been consistently in line with the national average levels for several years. So far this year attendance has improved slightly to 95.2 per cent. Punctuality at the start of the day and at the beginning of lessons is good.

Exclusions

There were no exclusions recorded for the reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The curriculum is satisfactory and the school provides a very good level of care.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in the reception and junior classes is good.
- There are examples of very good practice in each phase in the school.
- The quality of marking lacks consistency.
- The school is successful in ensuring that those pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- The school makes very good use of teaching assistants in helping the pupils to learn.

Commentary

12. The children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because of the consistently high quality of teaching. The teachers and teaching assistants work as a highly effective team due, in no small part, to very good leadership and management. The staff know the children really well because of their detailed assessments of the children and the highly effective monitoring of their daily progress. Communication with parents is very good. The well-organised and effective planning ensures that every child works at a level that matches his or her age and ability. The outdoor areas have been developed thoughtfully to help the children to learn.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	10 (23%)	17 (40 %)	15 (35 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. As a result of careful monitoring of the effectiveness of the teaching in each class, the headteacher has allocated his team to ensure that there are examples of very good practice in each year group. This has entailed considerable redeployment of staff to ensure that there is an appropriate blend of experience in each year. This strategy has yet to run the course of a full academic year but there are encouraging signs that the quality of learning is much more consistent. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was good. The deputy headteacher has also been deployed to support literacy and numeracy in Year 6 and this arrangement has resulted in accelerated progress for the pupils. The school has also refined its assessment procedures so that the staff have a much greater awareness of the pupils' progress and where there are weaknesses in the pupils' understanding. This is beginning to impact on the teachers' planning. However, the headteacher recognises that the quality of marking is a priority for development. Although the staff ensure that the marking of the pupils' work is up to date, too many of the comments are far too generous in their praise and there are very few pointers for further improvement.

14. Numeracy is taught well throughout the school. The careful use of assessment data to plan work has brought about an improvement in the quality of learning and raised standards. Literacy lessons are well taught but there are not enough opportunities for the pupils to develop their writing skills in different subjects and this lack of opportunity for the pupils to apply their skills affects their progress. Equally, although information and communication technology is well taught in the computer suite, the lack of opportunity to apply these skills in other subjects has limited their progress. There are examples of good science teaching, although there are too few opportunities for investigative work.
15. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons apart from the weekly sessions when some pupils are withdrawn to practise their reading and writing skills with support from the local education authority (LEA) support service. As older pupils are placed in ability sets for mathematics, work is planned that is matched to their ability levels. Those pupils with special education needs have individual education plans. The targets on these plans are usually clear and comprehensive although they are sometimes broad and not broken into sufficiently small, manageable steps. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good support to class teachers to assist with the writing of individual education plans to ensure that they are relevant. Support for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good.
16. Pupils are supported well within classrooms by class teachers and a hardworking and effective team of teaching assistants. Class teachers ensure in their lesson plans that appropriate provision is made for pupils with particular learning needs and the teaching assistants provide good, and frequently very good, support for pupils. They monitor pupils' progress during lessons and provide a good blend of help and challenge. Classroom assistants make a very positive contribution to the pupils' learning in the computer suite.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory range of curricular opportunities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is good overall.
- Personal, health, social and emotional development is a strong element of the school.
- Extra curricular activities provide enrichment to the curriculum and help pupils to achieve well.
- The provision for those pupils with special educational needs is good.

Commentary

17. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. All areas of learning are taught through planned themes. Observations and assessments are planned for and carried out by all practitioners. The findings are used to target learning and teaching for individuals and groups of children. Children with special educational needs are identified on pre-school visits and appropriate support is put into place. There is strong liaison between parents, school and pre-school settings. The Foundation Stage leader works closely with the LEA and local cluster of schools to review curriculum practice and to ensure that it is effective in meeting the needs of the children.
18. Under strong leadership from the headteacher, the school has undertaken to restructure the curriculum in Years 1 to 6. The school has achieved a broader and more balanced curriculum. The planning enables the teachers to focus on a skills-based programme that develops the pupils' learning. The curriculum is under constant review to provide a more practical range of activities, use of enquiry skills and the building of cross-curricular links. Early indications are that the impact on pupils' learning is positive. However, the school recognises the need for more planned opportunities for the development of writing, information and communication technology and, to a lesser extent, numeracy in different subjects.

19. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They receive good quality support from teaching assistants, particularly in English and mathematics. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs state clearly what pupils need to learn in order to make progress.
20. Extra-curricular activities in sport and music, planned visits and visitors to the school enhance the curriculum and impact on pupils' learning in a positive way. The school provides 'wrap around' care through a breakfast club and after-school club, both of which are oversubscribed. Induction programmes in place for pre-school children are effective and allow for children to access part of the curriculum from the summer term before they enter the school in September. Pupils in Year 6 participate in a well-planned induction programme that bridges Year 6 to 7. The transition from reception to Year 1 is less well developed.
21. A further enrichment is the modern foreign languages programme. The school has bought into a joint British and Catalan scheme. It shares a Spanish teacher with another local primary school for eight lessons a week. Since October 2004, pupils from the reception class to Year 3 have had one weekly lesson, led by the specialist teacher and supported by the class teacher and classroom assistants. The school plans to continue with this scheme and extend Spanish to other year groups.
22. The provision for personal, health, social and emotional development is a strength of the school and is cross-curricular in the broadest sense. An initiative called 'Emotional Intelligence' is used effectively throughout the school to promote positive behaviour.
23. The layout of the accommodation is challenging for both pupils and staff; however, the staff work well within its constraints. In many classrooms there is no access to sinks and water. Resources are satisfactory overall.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. It provides pupils with satisfactory support, advice and guidance and takes good account of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good, secure provision for pupils' care and welfare.
- Health and safety arrangements ensure that pupils and staff are safe, but such arrangements need to be more closely monitored.
- Induction of pupils is handled sensitively.
- Staff are very caring towards pupils who, consequently, feel secure.
- The school council provides an important channel for pupils' ideas to be heard.

Commentary

24. The care and welfare of pupils are well managed. Good use is made of medical services, healthy food is promoted strongly, fitness clubs and sports are encouraged, seating is provided in the play areas, supervision of breaks is well organised and various games are available for younger pupils. Child protection issues and looking after children in public care are well attended to. Pupils are very carefully marshalled up and down the many steep stairs and through the narrow corridors. 'Wrap around' care is provided through before- and after-school clubs – and these are continued during holiday times. Accidents and incidents are handled sensitively and appropriately. Parents feel satisfied that the school takes good care of their children – as do the pupils.
25. The school has an ethos of inclusion but is faced with a substantial problem about access for physically disabled people. Full access is not possible with the current state of the building, although currently there are no pupils requiring wheelchairs. The school and local authorities

are in discussion about possible future plans that are likely to require substantial investment to overcome the problem. The health and safety of pupils and staff are protected through regular maintenance of equipment and the building. The school is currently reviewing and developing their risk assessment procedures.

26. Induction of new pupils is carried out with care and sensitivity. Children at nurseries and playgroups are invited to school productions, they have four 'taster' sessions before they start and there is a meeting for parents at the commencement of the year. Starting arrangements are staggered to ensure children are not overwhelmed. During the year steps are taken to familiarise pupils with the geography of the building. For example, during the inspection, children from a reception class were being taken in 'crocodile' fashion round the labyrinth of corridors and stairs going to and from the computer suite. Teachers discuss pupils individually as they progress through the school and 'hand over' to each other comprehensive details of children's work and personal development.
27. The staff are very caring. When they have problems, the pupils trust the adults in the school.
28. The school council provides a useful way of allowing pupils' opinions to be heard and acted upon. It only started last year but meets frequently in school time, represents all classes and years, has elected members, is chaired by pupils and is facilitated by a teacher. For the most part the school directs discussions but other topics raised by pupils are also aired. Recent discussion has included topics relevant to pupils such as provision of drinking water and shade in the playground. Council members are expected to feed back and seek ideas and opinions with their classes and take issues to senior staff and governors.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership arrangements with parents are very good. Links with the community are excellent and links with other schools and colleges are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes excellent use of its wide-ranging links with the community to support pupils' learning.
- Parents are well informed about the school's activities and are involved in the fostering of their children's school learning.
- The Parents, Teachers and Friends Association's activities benefit the school.
- Pupils benefit from the school's involvement with other schools.

Commentary

29. Close links with the community add excellent value to pupils' learning and to their personal development. Pupils in all years have a varied and rich programme of visits. Examples are visits to: Chester, supporting work on Romans; the local beach, plant nurseries and nature reserves for younger pupils; museums, theatre, concert halls and art galleries for older pupils; and civic amenities such as the hospital, zoo, safari park, aquarium and the library. In addition, the sports teams compete with other schools. The school choir auditions for and performs at choral festivals and senior pupils go on a residential team-building visit. Visitors to school are also numerous and varied, including theatre groups, writers, artists and musicians as well as police and fire services, local clergy, medical and academic professionals and sports coaches. Members of premiership football clubs visit the school in support of drugs education and to promote racial equality. Choirs sing at local events, pupils make frequent visits to the local church, cycling courses are run at the school, older citizens are invited to carols and shows and the fayres are open to families and friends. These provisions result in extensive, useful and interesting learning for pupils.

30. Parents are very pleased with how the school helps their children develop. Several commented during the inspection about their satisfaction with the ethos of the school, the personal and academic development of their children and the approachability and helpfulness of staff. They feel well informed by communications about the daily life of the school. Newsletters each half term are comprehensive and combine praise for pupils' successes, thanks for the support of parents and teachers, information about forthcoming events and the outcome of previous ones such as charity collections or attendance at events. Several parents help in lessons or in supporting trips and many more help with sporting fixtures. Some parents have worked with pupils to create a large mural erected in the reception area. In the recent past the school provided courses to enable parents to better assist their children with homework and more are planned for this year. The school consults parents about changes of policy in relation to issues such as anti-bullying and homework.
31. The Parents, Teachers and Friends Association is particularly active and its work has enabled the school to add to its resources, including recent purchases of information and communication technology and electronic whiteboard equipment.
32. The school is a member of a strong partnership with the main local secondary college and other feeder schools. Pupils benefit from curriculum teaching support in science, mathematics and art and design as well as information and communication technology support. Drama and sports teachers visit the school and there are joint projects in music and literacy during holiday times.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Both the leadership and the management of the school are good. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and inclusion very well.
- The governors support the school well and have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but they are not yet sufficiently involved in strategic planning.
- The management of the school's finances and resources is good.
- Not all co-ordinators have a clear understanding of their management role.

Commentary

33. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher promote an atmosphere in which staff and pupils feel valued. Their leadership is very effective in promoting equality of opportunity and the full inclusion of pupils from all abilities and backgrounds. The headteacher has high expectations for the school and since his appointment just over a year ago, has made very good progress towards improving the quality of education provided for the pupils. He has done this through his clear vision for the school and his determination and ability to set appropriate priorities. He has made effective changes to the management structure and works to ensure that all staff, governors and parents are fully included in the school's development. There are clear systems in place for the monitoring of teaching and learning and this is being used well to bring about improvements to the quality of teaching and curriculum planning. Systems to assess and monitor the pupils' work in English and mathematics have been established and careful analysis of the pupils' performance in national tests has been introduced. From this, areas for improvement have been identified and form the basis of much of the school's development planning.
34. The school has clear educational aims, values and principles which lie at the heart of its work and ensure a purposeful atmosphere and a good climate for learning within which pupils feel secure, included and happy.

35. Overall, subject co-ordinators make a satisfactory contribution to the improvement in standards. However, some subject co-ordinators are relatively new to their responsibilities and have not yet had the opportunity to fully evaluate and improve provision in their subjects. The co-ordinators for the Foundation Stage, numeracy and information and communication technology have clear agendas for raising standards. In other subjects, for example in science and literacy, priorities are not so clear and this has a limiting effect on the pupils' achievement. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has a thorough awareness and understanding of the range of needs within the school. Where the pupils receive support within lessons, this is of good quality. Where relevant, pupils receive appropriate support from the LEA support services. The co-ordinator for special educational needs keeps well-documented evidence and records. The progress of the pupils is carefully monitored, arrangements are reviewed regularly and adjustments to provision made accordingly.
36. The governing body is very supportive of the school and fulfils its statutory duties efficiently through a well-organised committee structure. In order to improve their knowledge of the school, individual governors have recently 'adopted' a class. Through this system they make more regular visits to the school and are developing their understanding and awareness of standards and the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Under the new leadership they are beginning to develop their role in strategic planning by contributing to the school's improvement plan. However, this is at an early stage of development. They are fully aware of the school's financial position and have set aside funding towards making much needed improvements to the school's building.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	996,406	Balance from previous year	67,585
Total expenditure	937,137	Balance carried forward to the next	61,305
Expenditure per pupil	2,379		

37. The school has secure financial systems in place with good day-to-day financial management carried out by the school bursar. Financial resources, including specific grants, are used appropriately. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily and provides good value for money. Financial planning and control are good. The budget is managed effectively to meet the priorities of the school improvement plan and there are safe routines in place to ensure that it is properly controlled. A positive budget is maintained and a small prudent reserve fund is maintained for contingencies. Generous contributions from the parents' association continue to support the curriculum and improve the school environment.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. Teaching and learning across all areas are good. The acting co-ordinator and other practitioners in the Foundation Stage form an effective team and work with commitment and expertise to ensure that children achieve well and have a good start to their school life. They have clarity of purpose and vision. A positive factor in this is the excellent use of the nursery nurse and teaching assistants. Children make good progress because of consistently good teaching, with high expectations and level of challenge. Children with special educational needs make good progress because of the good provision and support made for them. Areas of the curriculum are planned well through themes that are two to three weeks in length and which allow children to learn and reinforce skills taught. Free activities are well balanced. The children in the reception year are in line to exceed the expected levels by the end of the school year in all areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes and the behaviour of children are very good.
- Routines are well established.
- The expectations of staff are very high.

Commentary

38. The staff communicate their high expectations to the children clearly and positively. Individual children are dealt with firmly and kindly but know exactly what is expected of them. This approach is consistently maintained throughout the day. Daily routines are well established and the children are eager to be the 'Child of the Day.' They respond to this task in a mature way. Children are confident and self-assured. They are co-operative with their peers and with adults. They are willing to help each other, for example with coat buttons, and choose carefully when asking others to help. One child picked a particular boy to help with a task; when asked about her choice she answered, 'Well he couldn't do it last week but now he can so he deserves a go!' They play co-operatively and are learning to share and to take turns. Children quickly learn to make their own choices of activities and move from area to area with confidence. They work without disrupting others and are well supported by staff who challenges them to 'have a go!' The children are able to make healthy eating choices when deciding what they are going to have for lunch. When challenged about their choice the children are able to give reasoned answers. The children are in line to exceed the expected levels by the end of the reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Observations and assessments are used effectively to plan future work.
- Role play successfully promotes children's learning, especially in speaking skills.

Commentary

39. Children are on course to reach, and many will exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good and activities are well planned to match the children's different levels of ability. Observations and assessments completed by all practitioners are used effectively to plan for these children. Children with special educational needs are well supported and able to make progress and achieve well. Role-play activities are well set out and form an integral part of the theme being covered; for example, in one class children were challenged to provide food in 'The three bears' house' for a picnic. The language used was accurate, and the children listened to suggestions made by their peers. In one classroom, the children involved with the 'Children around the world' role-play area worked co-operatively together to enact a story involving a village girl, an animal and a fairy. When asked, they were able to retell the story to an adult. Many children recognise taught key words and sound out known three-letter words. They demonstrated knowledge and understanding of writing a letter as they composed a class thank-you letter for a Year 2 class which had presented an assembly. A scheme of handwriting and letter formation is in place but it has not been implemented successfully. This is because the handwriting displayed around the rooms, on whiteboards and on children's work is not uniform in style. Adults do not model the school's chosen handwriting style consistently.
40. All children are encouraged to take home a reading and a library book. When choosing a library book, most children are able to use picture clues and known words to predict the content.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Good use is made of resources to help the children to learn.
- The staff provide a good range of activities to develop the children's skills.

Commentary

41. Learning and teaching are good. The staff use appropriate mathematical language at all times to set a good example for the children. The latter respond positively and are able to answer questions and to explain their calculations. Most children are in line to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. The class teachers use a wide range of strategies and activities based on the theme being covered to enable all children to achieve. In one water activity, a child was asked how many bears would it take to sink a given boat while another was asked to first guess how many he thought would sink the boat before completing the task. A wide variety of well-presented resources is used to engage the children in learning and to enhance the teaching taking place. Children use the interactive whiteboard to practise writing numbers on and to perform simple calculations. Opportunities are taken at all times by practitioners to develop taught skills and concepts. For example, during registration, children are encouraged to count dinner totals to find out how many children are absent and to sing number rhymes. Displays around the rooms enhance mathematical learning. Number lines encourage the children to count on and to count back.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff plan imaginatively and effectively to help the children to learn.
- Children are able to talk about significant events.
- A range of interesting activities is used to promote this area of learning.

Commentary

42. The class teachers plan effectively through themes to cover all aspects of learning in this area. Within each theme, elements of reinforcement of knowledge, skills and understanding are planned. For example, when the children went in groups on a planned 'Bear Hunt' with the nursery nurse one of the challenges was to describe and chart the weather. This is part of the class routine. Another challenge was to use known numbers but to count in Spanish. Again this was reinforcement of knowledge taught earlier in the week. The range of interesting activities keep the children focused and allow them to achieve. A three-dimensional wall display depicting the local area was made from the children's work. The children are able to discuss significant events. After watching the Year 2 assembly about birthdays the children recall previous birthday treats and share them with the class. They describe Christmas as 'Jesus' birthday'. Themes are recorded through photographs, print, children's work and pictures into class books. These books form part of the library. Children are encouraged to take them home to share with their parents and carers. A comments page has proved to be popular; parental comments are positive and supportive. Standards at the end of the reception year are expected to be above the expected level for children of this age.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for the development of fine motor skills are good.
- Children move confidently and have good co-ordination.
- The use of the outdoor area could be further developed.

Commentary

43. Standards are in line to exceed the expectations of this age group at the end of the reception year. The children are given many opportunities to develop fine motor skills. In free choice activity time they frequently use scissors, tape, staplers and jigsaws with accuracy. In the home corner they are encouraged to use chop-sticks, dress in role-play clothes, put out equipment and tidy it away. Manipulative skills are encouraged by the use of dough. The children are able to move with confidence and try out new movements when challenged. In a 'Walk the Plank' game the children were challenged to take turns at walking along a low beam using different forms of travel. They were able to jump, walk, turn around, balance on one foot, move forwards and sideways and one child attempted to move backwards. An outdoor area has been created for the use of the reception children; however, only one class has direct access to it. The area needs to be planned for carefully and developed further as it is a good resource for physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good use of role-play areas.
- Skills in design and technology are developing well.
- Children are encouraged to further develop skills taught in art.
- Lack of easy access to sinks and water make management of this area challenging.

Commentary

44. The children make full use of the variety of role-play areas within each classroom, including the puppets and puppet theatre. They are able to model their play on known stories and events. A display of three-dimensional model houses made by the children is of a high standard. The children have successfully made wind chimes out of a range of objects. The children are taught art skills in focus groups based on a theme. They are then encouraged to develop the skill in free activity time. The children are able to access the painting area at all times. Lack of access to water and sinks in the classroom makes management of the area challenging and does not allow the children to experience the cleaning of equipment used. The children are taught by a music specialist for twenty minutes each week. They enjoy singing and readily join in songs and rhymes. The children are in line to exceed expectations for children of this age by the end of the reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND A MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Standards in writing are not high enough.
- Standards in reading are above average in Year 6.
- There are examples of very good teaching in each key stage.
- The role of the co-ordinator is not fully developed.

Commentary

45. The pupils make steady progress in the infant classes and standards are broadly average in reading and writing in Year 2. Progress is better in Years 3 to 6, where pupils make good gains in their learning, largely as a result of the stronger teaching, so that overall, pupils achieve well. Standards are above average in reading in Year 6, although overall standards in writing are average. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school has made writing a priority area and has introduced a number of strategies to improve standards. However, there remain weaknesses in the approach to the development of writing skills and current standards are not as high as those reported in the last inspection.
46. Standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school. This is because the pupils are expected to listen carefully both to the class teacher and to each other in discussions. Furthermore, from a very early age, the pupils are provided with a rich vein of opportunities to speak to a range of audiences. For example, in class assemblies, the pupils

speak with confidence and clarity with a good level of expression. This good practice builds on the success of good quality discussion work in class which is a feature of the more successful lessons across the curriculum.

47. Standards in reading are above average in Year 6. The pupils make good progress because of the effective teaching based on a strong and well-planned curriculum. Each class has regular reading sessions when the pupils are encouraged to read and understand a wide variety of stimulating texts. Lower attaining pupils benefit from a very structured approach where the early skills are very well taught and from the investment in an improved range of books. The teaching assistants play a vital role in supporting this work. Many parents reinforce the school's efforts by providing support and encouragement at home within the context of a carefully planned homework system, particularly for the younger pupils. Reading is taught systematically in the junior classes. In Year 6, there is strong encouragement for the pupils to research particular themes. However, although the library provision is much improved since the last inspection, it is a rather underused resource.
48. The quality of teaching in lessons observed in literacy ranged from satisfactory to very good. The quality of teaching is particularly good in Year 3 and in Year 6 and in one class in Year 2. In these classes the teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and have very good classroom and behaviour-management skills. These teachers use day-to-day assessments very well to match tasks to pupils' abilities and learning needs and the lessons progress at a very good pace. The quality of learning is very good because of the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject, their impressive rapport with the pupils and their comprehensive subject knowledge. However, in other classes and in other year groups, the pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their writing. Furthermore, the feedback to pupils, whilst very supportive, often fails to provide guidance for the pupils on how they can make improvements. Throughout the school, the teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning. Furthermore, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good and this strongly supports learning. In the best cases, the pupils work enthusiastically together, respond very well and confidently to their teacher's questions and work independently without the need for frequent intervention by the teacher.
49. The school has developed good procedures to assess the achievements of its pupils, based on regular evaluations by class teachers and standardised tests. This information, alongside that gained from the assessment of pupils' attainment in national standardised tests, is used to plot the achievements of pupils as they move through the school. Teachers are beginning to make good use of this information to monitor the pupils' progress more closely and to set individual targets in writing. These are shared with the pupils, who are quite clear about what they need to concentrate on if they are to improve.
50. The leadership of the subject by the co-ordinator is barely satisfactory at present. However, the headteacher has made the development of writing a priority in the school improvement plan and has introduced a more rigorous approach to raising standards. For example, the school has started to evaluate the pupils' achievements to identify common weaknesses and there have been opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. The school recognises that there is scope for greater improvements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education as there is an over-dependence on the use of worksheets or other exercises that do not require the pupils to develop their writing. There are some opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills, particularly word processing, in writing and in using the Internet for research, although these opportunities are not yet sufficiently well structured within teachers' medium-term planning.

Spanish

Provision in Spanish is **good**, although it is not extended to all year groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of listening and responding are good.
- The quality of specialist teaching is very good up to Year 2 and pupils achieve very well.
- Class teachers effectively reinforce the pupils' learning during the week.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning Spanish and they behave very well.
- The school has not yet appointed a teacher to lead the subject and develop it across the age range.

Commentary

52. Standards of listening and responding are good. Year 2 and Year 3 pupils can recognise numbers one to ten in Spanish when presented in chronological order. The most able pupils can identify them when presented at random. They understand and respond to classroom commands. They can respond to clear, standard speech although they may need to have some items repeated. Standards of speaking are not quite as high yet. Pupils respond to what they see and hear in single words. For instance, they can identify the elephant and use the word 'elefante' after listening to a description of the animal. They understand and respond to simple questions meaning 'What is your name?' and 'What colour is...?' Their pronunciation is mostly accurate. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because the teacher plans a wide range of suitable tasks and pupils are well supported during activities.
53. The quality of teaching is very good in Year 2. The teacher is a native speaker and uses a wide range of methods and activities to consolidate prior learning and to introduce new items while maintaining pupils' interest and enthusiasm. She plans suitable games and songs, and makes visual resources that closely match pupils' needs. The teacher boosts pupils' confidence by praising them and ignoring minor mistakes. She ensures that pupils understand at all times by using English when appropriate. She consistently gives equal opportunities to boys and girls. She uses games effectively to assess pupils' understanding and progress. The teaching was not so successful in the Year 3 lesson because the teacher's pace was too slow for this age group, the objectives were not clearly shared with pupils, the learning was not reinforced at the end of the lesson and there was not enough whole-class repetition to promote speaking skills.
54. Pupils' attitude to learning Spanish is very good and they behave very well. They show their enthusiasm and lack of inhibition. Their learning is enhanced by their class teachers who share the Spanish teacher's planning and reinforce Spanish during the week. For instance, a Year 2 teacher conducted a numeracy session in Spanish as well as in English. Although the contribution of Spanish to the pupils' cultural development is still at an early stage, it is already having an impact in some subjects. For instance, a Year 5 art display clearly showed that pupils had been introduced to Spanish artists.
55. The school has not yet appointed a co-ordinator to lead Spanish across all year groups. It intends to continue with the subject and plans to develop appropriate schemes of work, build up resources and train class teachers to cope with the demands of a full curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and are in line to reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Standards are in line with those expected in Year 2.
- Teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Assessment targets are not clearly used to indicate what pupils need to do to improve.

Commentary

56. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are in line to achieve standards that are at the expected levels by the end of Year 2. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 so that by the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils are in line to achieve the expected levels, with a higher than average number achieving at the higher level. This is similar to the overall results in the 2004 national tests.
57. Since the last inspection, results in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated, with a dip in 2004. At the end of Year 2 there was a lower than average percentage of pupils achieving at the higher level, whereas in Year 6 the percentage achieving the higher level was above average. This is largely as a result of the stronger teaching overall in Years 3 to 6. In order to improve the standards that the pupils achieve, the school has, this year, delayed setting until Year 5. This arrangement is “fluid” allowing pupil movement from one set to another, depending on progress. This represents an improvement of the former setting structure that was far more rigid from Year 3 onwards. The new arrangements help in the planning of work that meets the needs of the individuals more closely.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6. However, since the last inspection, teaching has improved overall with lessons ranging from excellent to satisfactory and no lessons that were unsatisfactory. Planning is clearly based on the National Numeracy Strategy with lessons that have clear objectives and are carefully structured. In the most effective lessons, teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, which are reflected in the good pace and the careful development of strategies to ensure that pupils understand one process before moving on in their learning. In these lessons, the teachers’ levels of questioning and discussion are challenging and take the pupils’ learning forward well. There is very good use of a range of strategies that engage the interest of the pupils and tasks given are challenging and appropriate. Where lessons are less effective, the teachers do not always ensure that pupils understand one idea fully before moving on to the next, with a lack of a clear staged approach to developing pupils’ learning. There is also a lack of sufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils in some lessons. In most lessons, the oral and mental sessions are used well, engage the interest of the pupils and present appropriate challenges.
59. Pupils’ work is marked regularly. In some classes the marking gives good suggestions and direction on how to improve. In some books, however, although pupils are given appropriate praise, there is no reference to what they need to do to improve and no reference is made to pupils’ targets. The school has developed sound procedures to assess the achievements of its pupils, based on regular evaluations by class teachers and standardised tests. This information is now being used to plot the achievements of pupils and to set targets. However, the targets that are set with individual pupils are not yet used specifically enough to give them a clear picture of how they are progressing or of the next stage of their learning. The presentation of pupils’ work is satisfactory. The setting arrangements have gone some way to ensure that teachers plan carefully for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils also receive very good support from the teaching assistants. Teachers make good use of a

wide range of resources; however, there are few opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning.

60. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. She evaluates the results in standardised and national tests to identify any common weaknesses within year groups. She has regular opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in lessons and also examines pupils' work from across the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. There are a few planned opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in subjects, such as in science when recording results in graphs or in geography when using co-ordinates. At present, the use of information and communication technology to support learning is not fully developed.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are satisfactory, the lack of rigour in the development of investigative skills and scientific language is a weakness.
- The newly appointed subject leader has not yet had time to develop her role to raise standards.
- The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good.
- Pupils have a good attitude to their work and behave very well.

Commentary

62. Review of Year 2 pupils' work shows that pupils are encouraged to record their observations in their own words. They use basic scientific vocabulary appropriately. They develop their skills across a good range of topics. For instance, when sorting minibeasts into habitats, they present their findings in a table; and they carefully label diagrams of electric circuits. The less able pupils cannot always explain why a phenomenon occurs, such as why a bulb lights or does not. The more able pupils can do so but their understanding is not sufficiently extended.
63. When carrying out experiments, Year 6 pupils of all abilities can make predictions, describe the method used, understand what a fair test is and present their findings in tables, charts and graphs. However, when evaluating their work, few can suggest ways of improving it. Furthermore, the less able pupils do not have the linguistic skills required to record what they see as competently as they would like to. Pupils of average ability cannot always comment on the accuracy of their predictions. The more able pupils cannot always link their observations to wider scientific knowledge.
64. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of very good practice. In some lessons, pupils' investigative skills are underdeveloped because teachers do not plan tasks that match their needs closely enough. For example, in a Year 2 lesson where pupils had to classify materials into 'natural', 'man-made' and 'don't know', the same set of words was given to all pupils. All benefited from discussing with their teacher whether a brick was a 'natural' or 'man-made' material considering it was made of clay and most could apply their understanding to other materials. However, some materials were too challenging for the less able pupils who did not have the literacy skills to read their names or check them in a dictionary. In some lessons, pupils' achievement is only satisfactory because they do not have opportunities for direct experimentation or because the teacher's pace is too slow. In a very successful Year 6 lesson on irreversible changes, the teacher modelled precise scientific vocabulary and ensured that pupils had a thorough understanding of the meaning of key words by engaging them in dictionary work at the beginning of the session. She planned

paired experiments to enable pupils to develop their skills through first-hand observations and discussions with their partners. She asked probing questions to make them link their findings to prior scientific knowledge.

65. Teachers use a wide range of resources that hold pupils' interest. The way they assess pupils' understanding and progress is at least satisfactory but they do not use this information to plan the development of pupils' investigative and recording skills. For instance, when marking books, teachers invite pupils to answer further questions to extend their knowledge and understanding but do not follow this up.
66. Pupils have a good attitude to science and enjoy their work, although their presentation is often poor. They behave very well and work productively independently as well as in groups. Their learning is greatly enhanced by visits to the beach, plant nurseries and nature reserves, as well as by project work.
67. The new co-ordinator needs training and time to develop her role to raise standards. She is keen to develop the use of information and communication technology in science and has planned to train her colleagues in the use of virtual experiments. Improvement since the last inspection has been insufficient because skills and language are not developed with enough rigour.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because of effective leadership, the provision has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- The pupils are making good progress.
- The school does not make enough use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum.
- The staff have improved their level of expertise and are keen to make the most of new resources.
- Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development.

Commentary

68. Standards in Years 2 and Year 6 are in line with the levels expected. The pupils are making good progress because lesson plans are detailed and well focused upon developing pupils' skills. The school's commitment to training all staff has led to increased confidence. There is a willingness to use the information and communication technology suite to ensure that the basic skills are taught systematically and the programme is working well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. However, opportunities to use computers to extend the pupils' understanding in other subjects are missed.
69. The quality of teaching is good overall. The development of the teachers' expertise and knowledge in this subject has been well managed and this has enabled the new resources to be used to good effect. For example, the staff make effective use of the interactive whiteboards in those classrooms where they are installed. The computer suite is carefully timetabled to enable pupils to have regular access to computers. This enables all of the necessary skills to be taught systematically. In one good lesson on control technology, the teacher had high expectations of the work the pupils were going to produce. She gave clear guidance on the use of the floor robots as well as how to plot the movement of a screen icon, so that the pupils were clear about the aims of the lesson. All of the pupils were involved and were very enthusiastic about the task. The teacher's explanations and instructions were clear and she was very well supported by the teaching assistant. When the pupils found difficulties with the process these were dealt with quickly. This meant that the pupils were kept busy and

involved in their work. These factors, together with the quality of the relationships, which enabled the pupils to feel comfortable about sharing their mistakes, created a successful positive learning environment.

70. The school has a satisfactory number of computers for the number of pupils and most other resources are readily available. Although simple assessment procedures have been introduced to provide staff with clear information about each pupil's progress, the subject leader recognises that more use could be made of the data to pitch the work more accurately for the different ability levels in each class. There is a clear and appropriate vision of how standards in information and communication technology should be raised and how its use in other subjects will be achieved. The improvement made since the last inspection has been very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The school is making limited use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum. There is little consistency in the practice and the school recognises that this is an area for development. For example, in Year 6, the pupils word process their persuasive writing when preparing for a debate on school uniform. As a result of a recent investment in a set of laptop computers, groups of pupils carry out research in geography and history, but there is no consistent planning for the use of information and communication technology in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory** with improvements being made.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Schemes of work are clear, informative and support teaching.
- The co-ordinator has a clear vision and overview of the area.
- Presentation skills could be improved.
- Resources are insufficient for the number of pupils.

Commentary

72. From looking at the pupils' work, discussion with pupils, teaching staff and the co-ordinator and lesson observation it is evident that provision for geography is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. One good lesson was observed in Year 6; the teacher was secure in the subject knowledge, expectations were high and the pupils' achievement was good.
73. By Year 2, the pupils are able to respond accurately to questions about places and environments. They are able to show an awareness of places beyond their own locality. Progress can be seen in the recorded work of pupils from different ability levels. Standards seen are of an expected level but could be improved upon with concentration on presentation skills and more challenge for the higher achieving pupils. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are generally beginning to use primary sources of evidence in their investigations; for example, pupils' recorded work in Year 6 demonstrated how they were able to use a given census to retrieve accurate information. Higher achieving pupils are able to communicate their findings using appropriate geographical language.

74. In a short space of time the newly appointed co-ordinator has worked with the headteacher to produce a clear plan to teach geography throughout the school in themed, cross-curricular blocks. Her enthusiasm is evident. Medium-term planning reflects the teaching of enquiry skills, practical activities, visits and visitors. A planned event of 'Children Around the World' was successful and all the school was involved. Pupils visited other 'countries', had passports stamped, and learned about the areas. A similar activity is being planned for the summer term. Displays around the school reflect the visits that have taken place, allowing for hands-on experiences for the pupils. This has had a positive impact on pupils' learning.
75. Assessments are in place and being used. A system of 'Blue Boxes' has been put into place that contain new and up-to-date resources but these are not yet sufficient or always appropriate to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.

History

The provision in history is **satisfactory** with improvements being made.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The schemes of work and medium-term planning support teaching and learning and contribute to the achievement of pupils.
- Pupils are beginning to use enquiry skills effectively.
- The assessment arrangements are inconsistent.
- There are shortcomings in the availability of suitable resources.

Commentary

76. Provision for history is satisfactory throughout the school and pupils from both key stages make satisfactory progress. They achieve in line with expectations by the age of eleven. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
77. The co-ordinator has been newly appointed. With the headteacher and liaison with members of staff, the subject has been blocked into cross-curricular themes that make more effective use of time. The themes are broad and balanced. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the area and teaching staff find the emerging medium-term planning supportive. Pupils are taught the skills of enquiry which can be used to underpin learning in other curriculum areas. Although this has been in place for only a short period of time it is evident that pupils are beginning to use these skills effectively. In a Year 5 class, pupils were observed using brochures to discover 'What Greece looked like in the ancient past'. From the information found, they were able to suggest how difficult it would have been for Greeks in ancient times to travel, how they would have travelled and the mode of dress they might have worn. Pupils are given opportunities to write independently and for a variety of purposes. In Year 6, pupils wrote newspaper reports on the death of John Lennon and Year 2 pupils wrote letters as soldiers on front-line duty in World War One. However, these examples of good practice are not evident in other classes.
78. Pupils use historical vocabulary accurately. A Year 2 class was able to differentiate between the two lists of famous people that the teacher had written from their suggestions. They were able to offer 'past' and 'present' as headings. The pupils were eager to learn in all lessons observed and settled quickly to given tasks and activities.
79. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Assessments have been put into place that show what a pupil knows at the beginning of a theme to be taught, the questions and information they need in order to find out more and what they know and understand at the end of the theme. These assessments are not yet used consistently across the year groups. Where they are in place, pupils are using questions well, are developing a sense of enquiry and are able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding learned. Planning now reflects more elements of

first-hand experience. Class museums have been created, with other pupils being invited to visit them. The level of achievement and standards of learning have improved through the use of these strategies.

80. Resources are being replaced with interesting artefacts, visual aids and information and communication technology software but, as yet, they are insufficient for the number of pupils in the school. The co-ordinator has identified that more resources for role-play are needed in order to aid achievement and raise standards for the lower achieving pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

81. **Design and technology** could not be a main focus of the inspection because of time restrictions. No lessons were observed. Discussions were held with teachers and samples of pupils' work were examined. The following evaluative comments were based on this evidence.
82. In Year 2, standards in design and technology are above average and pupils' achievement is good. When working on a hand puppet project, pupils in Year 2 show a good sense of size, proportion, symmetry and colour in their initial sketches. The more able pupils draw in greater detail, adding interesting features such as clothes or imaginative eyes or ears. They are aware of the purpose of their design and understand the function of the opening. Pupils are given the opportunity to practise their cutting skills on very small pieces of paper before cutting out the felt. They practise their sewing skills by joining two pieces of card before sewing the front and back of their puppets. At the making stage, they are encouraged to refer to and evaluate their original designs and some pupils make changes to improve the final look. Finally, they put on a puppet show for each other, which enhances their sense of purpose and their enjoyment. All this indicates good or very good teaching.
83. Year 6 pupils' standards are above average and they achieve well overall. When designing a shelter, they understand that their structure has to meet a variety of needs. They apply their knowledge of mathematics (shapes, measure) and science (materials, forces) to design the structure. Most pupils estimate dimensions in metres or feet, whereas the less able pupils use language, 'tall, but not that long'. When writing instructions on how to make the shelter, the most able pupils use very good instructional language whereas the less able pupils forget to use commands and bullet points. Most diagrams are detailed and well labelled. Having built their shelter during a school trip, all pupils can evaluate their work and that of others but not all can think of improvements. Pupils' achievement denotes good teaching overall despite some shortcomings in language work and marking.
84. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has the expertise to advise colleagues and the improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
85. As only two lessons were observed in **music** it is not possible to make a secure judgement about standards or the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors observed the music in assemblies and listened to the choir and gospel choirs perform in these. It is evident from teachers' planning, the lessons and some extra-curricular sessions seen that provision for music remains a strength.
86. Teachers plan their work using national guidelines as the basis and a commercial scheme to support this in lessons. The subject is enriched by a good range of opportunities for pupils to take part in the traditional and gospel choirs and the opportunities for pupils to learn to play the recorder in extra-curricular clubs. There are also opportunities for pupils to learn to play the guitar, violin and cello from peripatetic music teachers. When performing in assemblies, the choirs sang well and to a high standard, maintaining the tune well when singing in two parts, unaccompanied. They regularly perform both locally and in LEA festivals. Pupils'

learning in music is further enriched through special workshops such as the percussion, jazz and steel drum workshops led by outside providers. Plans are in hand for pupils to attend a concert at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall later this year.

87. **Physical education** was sampled during the inspection. No overall judgements have been made. The co-ordinator was on maternity leave and some planned lessons did not take place due to adverse weather conditions. Evidence available from the acting co-ordinator shows that the school is keen to improve physical education and all staff have been involved with further training. Schemes of work from this initiative have been adopted by the school in athletics and dance. Further training for teaching staff in gymnastics has been planned for the near future. Swimming is a strength. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 have access to swimming and all of them are able to swim 25 metres. Many of these pupils are expected to reach the standards of silver / gold in personal survival skills by the end of Year 6. The availability of a very full range of extra-curricular sporting activities is very much appreciated by the pupils and their parents.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers give clear demonstrations and build enthusiasm for art.
- Teachers lack the confidence and knowledge in the subject to teach a wide range of techniques.
- The drawing skills of the most able pupils are not sufficiently developed to help them achieve as well as they should.
- The leadership of the subject is good and its management satisfactory.

Commentary

88. Standards in art and design are above average in Year 2 and in line with national expectations in Year 6. Pupils' achievement is good in Year 2 and satisfactory by the time they reach Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as they can because they receive appropriate support.
89. Review of pupils' sketchbooks shows that pupils develop their drawing skills well. Their compositions show a good sense of proportion. The most able pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of symmetry and significant detail when drawing buildings. The birthday party invitation cards and party hats they made recently reveal a strong sense of design. They can think of different symbols to denote birthdays and when illustrating party games, they successfully draw children joining hands and dancing. However, there are missed opportunities for using mathematical skills such as using a ruler and measuring. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils can draw three-dimensional as well as two-dimensional shapes. They can represent light, dark and shadows. The most able pupils can convey texture by using various grades of pencils and by using shading techniques to good effect. They produce neat and elegant compositions. A Year 5 display shows that pupils have gained a good understanding of colour combination in design and mosaic technique.
90. In a very successful Year 2 lesson, pupils gained a clear view of what makes one drawing better than another because the teacher began by evaluating the work they had done the week before. They understood how detail and use of colour were important to give interest. The teacher conveyed awe and enthusiasm and pupils wanted to excel. When the teacher introduced the fruit and vegetables pupils had to draw, they were very well prepared to observe and discuss the complexity of their shape, colour and texture. This translated into drawings that were consistently good across the ability range. When reviewing their work, pupils could use appropriate vocabulary to talk about shades of colour and texture. However, the more able pupils need to develop their shading skills to convey light, dark and texture. In

a Year 4 lesson, pupils' achievement was satisfactory because their teacher did not develop their skills sufficiently and did not give them the opportunity to improve by assessing each other's work.

91. Pupils visibly enjoy art and design. The school has raised the profile of the subject by involving parents in a series of projects to decorate the school environment. Art and design makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, Year 4 pupils have looked at the work of Paul Klee and Year 5 at the work of Antoni Gaudi. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by the opportunity to join after-school art clubs and visit local museums and galleries.
92. The co-ordinator is an art specialist who has been in post for one year and has identified the correct priorities. She has the required subject knowledge to develop her colleagues' skills and confidence. She acknowledges that the current schemes of work do not support non-specialist teachers and needs to be adapted. She has ensured that the subject is adequately resourced. She recognises the need for further management training to fulfil her role effectively and to raise standards in the junior classes.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage establishes a very good basis for further learning.
- There is a strong sense of school community.
- There are very good relationships.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the impact of their actions on others.

Commentary

93. There is a clear programme for this aspect which has a high priority in the current school development plan. The core social and emotional skills are taught through the Emotional Intelligence Programme so that there is clear progression in promoting and developing an understanding of a range of moral and social issues. These lessons contribute significantly to the school's good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
94. Aspects of health education are taught as part of these lessons and in subjects such as science. There is a clear programme for sex and relationships education which is taught to Year 6 pupils. This is based on the Diocesan and LEA guidelines. The school follows a commercial scheme to ensure that pupils' understanding of citizenship is developed progressively through the school. Recently, the school has set up a school council with representatives from the Foundation Stage to Year 6 in which pupils are given formal opportunities to discuss ways in which they might contribute to the improvement of the school. This, together with the strong links that the school has with the local community, further promotes the pupils' sense of responsibility and of belonging to a community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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

