

INSPECTION REPORT

Elleray Park School

Wallasey

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105132

Headteacher: Ms Margaret Morris

Lead inspector: Alan Tattersall

Dates of inspection: 28th February 2005 to 2nd March 2005

Inspection number: 268561

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	105132
Age range of pupils:	2-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	61
School address:	Elleray Park Road Wallasey Merseyside
Postcode:	CH45 0LH
Telephone number:	0151 6393594
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Chris Male
Date of previous inspection:	05-Jul-1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Elleray Park School has 61 pupils on roll aged between three and eleven who have statements for special educational needs for complex learning difficulties. The school population is changing and a third of pupils have autistic spectrum disorder. Most of the remaining pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and a few pupils have additional visual, hearing or behavioural difficulties. Twenty children are in the Foundation Stage and a few pupils in Year 1 share lessons with them. Over half the pupils are boys. Pupils' attainment on entry is very low as a consequence of their special educational needs. Pupils come from the Wirral area. The one pupil not from a white British background has English as an additional language. Half the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average for similar schools. The school provides a teacher for a 'satellite' group of 5 of its pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and share lessons full time with the pupils in a local primary school.

At the time of the appointment of a new headteacher just over a year ago the number of pupils in school was falling. Consequently, the funding for the school was reduced considerably which meant that 4.2 members of staff were made redundant. However, pupil numbers are rising again and significant internal building improvements have been completed recently.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20466	Alan Tattersall	Lead inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, physical education, art and design and English as an additional language
31754	Charlotte Roberson	Lay inspector	
18498	Denise Morris	Team inspector	Science, religious education, design and technology, Foundation Stage
23412	Alvin Jeffs	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, music, personal, social and health education and citizenship, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Elleray Park School is a **good** school. Pupils achieve well and make good progress as a result of good teaching. The leadership, management and governance of the school are good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's leadership is very strong and effective.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and make very good progress in developing their communication, language and literacy and personal and social skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants guide pupils very effectively to behave very well, develop a very good attitude to learning and form very good relationships.
- Many activities, in and out of school enhance pupils' learning and contribute to pupils' very good achievement in personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- There are very good arrangements for pupils to be included in lessons in other schools and increasing opportunities for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties to share lessons with their peers in the main school.
- Although much improved, the accommodation does not fully meet pupils' needs.
- Overall, staff lack sufficient skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and science to raise standards in these subjects.

The school has improved well since the last inspection. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties follow a better curriculum and make more progress. Assessment procedures have improved greatly. Effective guidance from senior staff has led to good improvements in teaching and learning in most subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. Subject leaders now make a satisfactory and improving contribution overall to developing their subjects. The accommodation for learning has improved, but remains a priority for further development.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 2	Good	Very good
Year 6	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

Pupils' achievement is **good**. Children in the nursery and reception achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. Their achievement is good in all other areas of learning except knowledge and understanding of the world, which is satisfactory. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in personal, social and health education and citizenship. Their achievement is good in speaking and listening, reading and writing, mathematics and physical education and satisfactory in science, information and communication technology and religious education. Pupils regardless of their special educational needs and those pupils in public care or with English as an additional language achieve equally well. Most pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make the same progress as others but those who share lessons with their peers in classes often achieve very well

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **very good**. Their attitudes to school are also very good and so is their behaviour. Attendance is good and pupils are very punctual to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching is **good** and, as a result, pupils learn well. Teachers are very skilled at choosing activities and resources that interest and enable pupils to learn well. The school recognises the need to continue to improve staff expertise in ICT and in teaching science to raise standards in the subjects. Recent training has ensured that most teaching assistants provide pupils with effective support.

The curriculum is well organised to meet pupils' needs and is supported by good resources. Although satisfactory overall, aspects of the accommodation, including the provision of toilets and outdoor play areas are poor. There are many activities provided to enrich the curriculum and make learning enjoyable. These are supported by strong links with parents and the community. There are very good links with other schools for staff to share expertise and for pupils to benefit from learning and socialising with pupils in mainstream classes. Pupils are cared for and given good support for example, when they join the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **good** overall. The headteacher's leadership is very good and has resulted in important changes, which have improved teaching and learning and created an effective learning environment in classrooms. Management is good and there is a very strong sense of teamwork which exists in the school. The school is well aware of what it needs to do to improve. Governance is good. Governors fully meet their statutory responsibilities and keep themselves well informed about the school. School developments are well supported by very good procedures to make the best use of finance.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school and value the way that the headteacher listens to them and involves them in the school's work. They are very happy that their children enjoy school and that they are taught well and treated fairly. Parents are very pleased with recent improvements to the buildings and what pupils learn.

Pupils like being in school very much and particularly value opportunities to swim.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the opportunities for all pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to share lessons with their peers.
- Improve the accommodation for learning and recreation.
- Improve staff expertise in science and ICT.

All of the above areas for improvement already form part of the school's plans for school improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

Throughout the following commentary, overall judgements about provision relate to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum, leadership and any other significant aspects.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong focus upon improving pupils' achievement has been successful.
- Children in the nursery and reception years achieve very well in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils make equal progress overall no matter what their special educational needs are.
- The inclusion of pupils in mainstream schools has a positive effect on their achievement.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in science and information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education as they do in other subjects.

Commentary

1. There has been a good improvement in pupils' achievement since the last inspection. This has been brought about mainly through the guidance of senior managers to improve teachers' effectiveness in planning lessons for pupils. The main priority has been to improve pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. This has been effective since these subjects are now taught well and the curriculum for these subjects is well planned to meet pupils' needs and they achieve well. Teaching is particularly good in personal, social, health (PSHE) and citizenship education, and pupils have many opportunities to develop and practise their skills, consequently, achievement is very good.
2. Children in the nursery and reception years, achieve well overall. Achievement in mathematical development, creative development and physical development is good and satisfactory in knowledge and understanding of the world. The reason why children make such good progress in communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development is because teachers place a strong emphasis upon these throughout the day and they are taught very well. A few pupils in Year 1 share lessons in two of the Foundation Stage classes. They achieve equally well and make good progress overall towards targets set for them to learn because the tasks that they follow are planned effectively to meet their age and needs.
3. Overall, pupils throughout the school with the range of their special educational needs including those with English as an additional language achieve equally well. Those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) also develop well in these respects. It is noticeable that where these pupils are included within other classes they often achieve more and benefit well from the range of challenges and the examples of other pupils. This increases their opportunities to interact with their peers to the benefit of all pupils in the class to achieve more.
4. The very good opportunities for pupils to be included in lessons in local schools have a beneficial effect on their achievement. The pupils in the 'satellite' class based in a local primary school are achieving very well. They share lessons full time with other pupils in the host school, and, consequently, they follow the example set, which is to work very hard to participate and achieve very well in challenging tasks. Pupils have achieved similarly well in personal and social skills to become full members of the school community and to fit in and benefit from all the school can offer them.

5. Pupils have made good progress towards achieving the whole school targets set for them in English and mathematics. Their achievement is good in speaking and listening, reading, writing, all aspects of mathematics and physical education. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) improve well with regard to their ability to concentrate, interact with others and actively enjoy the content of lessons. Following the successful drive to raise achievement in English and mathematics, the school has identified the need to improve pupils' achievement in subjects where it is currently satisfactory. The school has made good improvement to ICT since the last inspection to ensure that achievement is satisfactory. There are good plans for the development of the subject to improve pupils' achievement further. Pupils generally do not achieve as well in science as they do in most other subjects and achievement is satisfactory. This is because teachers do not provide pupils with the range and depth of opportunities needed for good or very good achievement. This particularly relates to pupils' ability to undertake investigations in science. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory. However, the subject is a current priority for improvement and the school has developed good planning for teachers to follow to improve pupils' learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Interesting lessons and very good relationships with adults contribute to pupils' enthusiasm for school and learning.
- The school ensures that expectations for conduct are clear and this contributes to pupils behaving very well.
- A strong emphasis on helping pupils to succeed in challenging tasks contributes very well to the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- Although good, the school is improving opportunities for pupils to gain more experience of other faiths and cultures.
- Effective school measures ensure high rates of attendance.

Commentary

6. As a result of the interest and excitement that staff generate, pupils look forward to coming to school and enjoy what they do. Pupils are guided very well by the rules for conduct and behaviour within class and around the school, which assist them in understanding what is correct or inappropriate behaviour. Staff develop effective relationships with pupils to provide a secure and caring atmosphere. Consequently, pupils' personal development is very good. Through effective guidance, pupils show their willingness to work and co-operate together and their confidence to meet and talk to visitors sensibly. Through staff help and support, pupils are willing to participate in group activities, performances, role play and other events, overcoming any fears or inhibitions that they might have.
7. Occasionally, a few pupils show challenging behaviour, which can disturb both themselves and their peers. Their behaviour improves as pupils become older because of the consistent approach of all staff and the fact that correct behaviour is demonstrated by staff and other pupils. As a result, there have been no exclusions in recent years.
8. All staff are successful in promoting pupils' personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development very well. There are many opportunities, from group work within class to the carefully managed lunchtime arrangements for pupils to live and work together and meet the requirements placed on them as members of a community. The PSHE and citizenship curriculum also contributes very well to pupils' understanding of right and wrong, insight into their own feelings and their ability to value the qualities of others.

9. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies celebrate success well and the school provides opportunities for pupils to reflect and pray during the week. This, together with the celebration of each other's success means that the school develops pupils' spirituality well. PSHE and citizenship also contribute well to this. Pupils' cultural development is good. They are introduced to a range of other cultures and faiths, illustrated through the use of good resources. For instance, during an assembly pupils enacted and participated in a traditional Chinese New Year celebration. This was complete with prawn crackers, gongs and pupils forming a dragon. The school provides pupils with good opportunities to promote their culture including visits to concerts, galleries and museums. It is the school's plan to provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about faiths and other cultures from the wider world.

Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.8	School data :	0
National data:	8.7	National data:	1.7

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

10. Many pupils have very good rates of attendance. Although rates of attendance have dipped a little this school year, last year's attendance was good and rates at 94.2% were above those found in similar schools. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are effective. Illness or hospital appointments are the main reasons why pupils do not attend. Unauthorised absences are very rare because parents are very supportive of the school and send their children whenever possible and pupils are very keen to come to school. Pupils arrive very punctually in the mornings in transport that is well organised and rarely late.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are **good**. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported **well**. The partnership with parents and the community is **good**, and with other schools is **very good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. The assessment of pupils' work is also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective planning for lessons ensures that children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start in learning.
- Teachers choose and prepare activities and learning resources very well to match pupils' needs.
- Very good guidance from teachers and teaching assistants for pupils leads them to behave very well and develop very positive attitudes to learning.
- Although good overall, teachers and teaching assistants require more expertise to meet the needs of all pupils and for all subjects.
- The teaching of pupils with PMLD has improved, particularly when they share lessons with other pupils.
- Good assessment systems for several subjects have been introduced and are beginning to provide valuable information that is used satisfactorily to plan for pupils to make more progress.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11 (30 %)	14 (39 %)	10 (28 %)	1 (3 %)	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 but care should be taken when interpreting the data since each lesson represents almost three per cent..

11. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school including in the Foundation Stage. Recent guidance from senior managers has led to improvements in teaching and learning which ensures that teachers often plan lessons very well particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers have established effective routines so that pupils expect that lessons begin promptly and that they will need to concentrate during the introduction so that they understand what they have to do and be able to give their views. Pupils then rise to teachers' expectations to work on their own or with staff to complete work for themselves. However, occasionally teachers do not make learning objectives clear and this prevents pupils and teachers fully understanding how much pupils have learnt.
12. In many lessons, teachers provide exciting resources and use them effectively to involve pupils in learning. This was evident in a very good English lesson for pupils in Year 5 as they prepared to write a story about the class reading book of a bear hunt. Pupils' interest was stimulated through looking at the 'big book' as they revised the story with the teacher. They developed ideas very well for their stories through 'hunting' for the bear by entering the large bear cave that the teacher had constructed in the classroom and this helped them to find words to describe their surroundings.
13. Teachers plan very well to provide opportunities to develop pupils' personal and social skills. There is a strong focus in lessons and throughout the day to encourage pupils to develop an interest in their work and the desire to achieve through praise, encouragement and celebration of achievement. Because of teachers' effective planning, pupils enjoy the lessons that are prepared for them and this is an important reason why pupils develop such an interest in work. They receive consistent guidance on how to behave and this leads to them conducting themselves very well. They learn to wait their turn through constant reminders and develop very good consideration of others. The very good behaviour that teachers and assistants encourage in class leads to teachers concentrating successfully on planning for pupils to progress in skills.
14. Teachers are skilled at teaching most subjects and this means that they plan lessons effectively to ensure that pupils develop the required skills. Although satisfactory overall, several teachers lack sufficient abilities in teaching science and the effect is that they plan lessons that only enable pupils to make satisfactory progress. For instance, in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher did not ask searching questions or demonstrate sufficiently to extend pupils' knowledge of pushing and pulling to enable them to understand forces. Teaching and learning is satisfactory in ICT. Although there are good examples of teachers planning to use ICT to support pupils' learning, several teachers and teaching assistants lack sufficient skills in the subject and, consequently, pupils do not receive consistent opportunities and guidance to use it to help them with their work. In most classes, there are fewer girls than boys and teachers take care to ensure that girls are not overlooked and boys are not allowed to dominate lessons. This ensures that there is no difference in their relative achievement. Teachers follow the guidance provided to ensure that any pupils with English as an additional language receive the support that they require to participate and achieve equally with others. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' personal needs and provide well for the few pupils with vision, hearing and behavioural difficulties. Overall, teachers are successful in planning to provide good opportunities for pupils who have ASD to learn, although there is a recognition that a few staff require further training.

15. The school has made good improvements to the way that teachers plan for assistants to help pupils to learn. Teachers often provide specific tasks for assistants to perform such as to supervise groups of pupils during mathematics and to ask the same searching questions that the teacher poses such as 'how did you get that answer?' and 'can you explain that?' This has a significantly positive impact on improving all pupils' achievement during the lesson. Several teachers plan for teaching assistants to keep notes on pupils' progress during lessons and this provides invaluable information for the teacher to determine how much each pupil has understood. Following this success, the school plans to ensure that more teaching assistants are similarly trained and involved in specific activities to help pupils to learn and this is an important school priority.
16. There has been a good focus recently on improving teaching and learning for pupils with PMLD and teachers provide appropriate activities and experiences that assist in the development of early relationship and concentration skills. The recent incorporation of most pupils who have PMLD in classes with other pupils has led to improvements in the way that teachers can plan to encourage pupils to work together and learn from each other. Overall this leads to those pupils achieving more.
17. The assessment of pupils' achievements is satisfactory overall. There are good procedures in place for assessing pupils' skills in English, mathematics and science. These are helping staff to monitor pupils' progress and to inform them about what pupils know, understand and can do. The procedures are new, but provide data to show that pupils often make good progress in these subjects. The school recognises that pupils are not consistently involved in their own assessments or consideration about how they might improve or help to set their own targets and this is a further priority for school improvement. Although part of school improvement plans, the assessment of several subjects are not as well developed as English and mathematics, therefore, currently, the systems of assessment provide limited evidence of how well pupils achieve in these areas.

The curriculum

Provision for the curriculum is **good**. Enrichment of the curriculum and provision of resources is **good**. Accommodation is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good curriculum has been established and is having a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- Opportunities for enrichment greatly enhance what pupils learn in lessons.
- The school provides very well for pupils' PSHE and citizenship.
- The arrangements for pupils with PMLD and ASD to learn have improved and more improvements are planned.
- The indoor accommodation has improved significantly, but there are still weaknesses in facilities.

Commentary

18. The curriculum has been improved well since the last inspection. Staff have worked effectively to ensure that pupils follow a full range of subjects in all areas of the school, including the Foundation Stage. Effective long-term plans help teachers to plan tasks appropriate to pupils' abilities and this has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning in several subjects.
19. Teachers' planning for the enrichment of the curriculum through additional experiences is good and provides many opportunities for pupils to learn more about most subjects. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in sports and arts activities and benefit from a wide range of visits to places of local interest. A particular strength is the residential experience offered to

pupils in Years 5 and 6 each year. They spend a week at a specialist outdoor education centre undertaking an excellent range of outdoor pursuits.

20. Provision for PSHE and citizenship is very good. The school is involved in the Healthy Schools initiative and this means that teachers often take the opportunity to guide pupils to improve their personal care and diet. Pupils have many regular opportunities to undertake responsibilities around the school and gain an understanding of citizenship. The arrangements to teach pupils about sex education are well supported by the school nurse. Pupils are well cared for by the school staff who provide very good role models and this has an important effect on encouraging pupils themselves to be very caring. The PSHE and citizenship provision has a very positive impact on pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes.
21. Good use is made of a wide range of support services for the few pupils with additional special educational needs and those with ASD. Visiting support services are effective to assess and provide programmes for pupils with English as an additional language, visual, hearing and language difficulties. Provision of speech therapy programmes is developing well. An important school priority has been the placement of most pupils with PMLD in classes with other pupils rather than in a special class. However, several do not have access to lessons with other pupils to benefit for instance, to the day-to-day interaction with higher attaining pupils in class and on the playground to enable teachers to plan more effectively for those pupils to make better progress educationally and socially. There is also a lack of appropriate access for pupils in wheelchairs to many of the outdoor play areas and this reduces social interaction. Occasionally, the arrangements in lessons do not permit pupils with PMLD to participate fully for instance, if the furniture height prevents pupils working together and sharing the lesson.
22. An important part of the school improvement plan is to continue to develop expertise with pupils who have ASD. Training has been undertaken by several staff and there is impressive use of 'workstation'¹ facilities in some classrooms and good development of symbol and picture exchange communication system (PECs)² to assist pupils in choosing and communicating. The school has good plans to provide more workstations and to extend staff expertise in this area so that all can respond to ASD pupils with the full range of techniques that informed staff demonstrate.
23. The indoor accommodation at the school has benefited from very good improvements since the last inspection. Several classrooms, including those in the Foundation Stage, are spacious, and the school is clean and welcoming. The pool has been refurbished and is now a very valuable asset. However, there are some significant weaknesses in toilet facilities for pupils in Years 3 to 6, and for all pupils with PMLD. These weaknesses impact on pupils' privacy and independence. The outdoor fabric of the building is poor. Several windows are cracked and window frames and surrounds are rotting. Access is poor to the play areas for several pupils and pools of water form in the yard. The hall is a thoroughfare and this distracts pupils during lessons.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good and good** support, advice and guidance are provided. The ways in which the school seeks to involve pupils in its work and development are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors and senior managers work well with staff to ensure that standards of care are good and to make improvements.

¹ An individualised workspace with minimum distractions for pupils with ASD.

² The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs) is an augmentative communication system developed to help individuals acquire a functional means of communication.

- The school works effectively with parents to draw up plans and programmes to support pupils' needs.
- Good links exist with many agencies and professionals who support pupils' different needs.
- Greater opportunities for pupils to be more involved in their own assessment and learning is an area the school has rightly identified for improvement.

Commentary

24. Many policies and routines, which guide pupil welfare, have been reviewed and updated well recently. Very good attention has also been given to staff training needs such as child protection. Governors give effective support and bring their expertise to ensure care and welfare arrangements are good and constantly improving. The use of risk assessments to promote high standards of safety and welfare are well developed.

25. Staff do much to monitor and support pupils' social and personal development and react sensitively to pupils' individual needs as they change, and to incidents as they arise. The headteacher, senior staff and teachers are readily available to meet parents and together they resolve any concerns regarding pupil welfare and support. The 'pastoral co-ordinator' carefully oversees pupils who have individual programmes, which support positive behaviour.

26. There are good procedures for assessing and reviewing pupils' statements of special educational needs. In this way the school ensures that pupils receive the education to which they are entitled in school. There are many outside agencies that work closely with pupils and their families. Some, such as the nursing team, work on site and give constant and effective daily care to those with specific medical needs or who need assistance with feeding. There is good provision of staff who are suitably qualified in first aid to care for pupils. Physiotherapists work with many pupils and help to devise programmes, which staff follow. They provide a valuable service that benefits many children's physical development and education. Limited space means that sometimes therapists lack quiet and undisturbed areas in which to work. School escorts are an important link with families and many work in school as teaching assistants which aids liaison and consistency of approach for pupils. The school ensures that the small number of pupils in public care are well catered for since they have their own plans which are shared with professionals from outside the school. They receive the same effective support from senior staff as families do to meet their needs.

27. Plans are in hand to set up and develop a school council so that the views of pupils can be taken on board more formally. In the meantime, teachers provide individual pupils with choices and listen to their views throughout the day. For those pupils who have limited or no speech, staff are skilled at interpreting other means of communication such as eye contact to reveal much of how they are feeling and what they want and need. Pupils contribute to annual review meetings and to the end of year reports. Systems to involve pupils in their own self-assessment, including in target setting, are satisfactory currently and the school has itself identified this as an area to develop.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good** links with parents and within the community. Partnerships with other schools are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with other schools are very well established and many pupils enjoy spending time with their friends in mainstream schools.
- Parents think highly of the school and recognise its strengths and improvements.
- Links within the community effectively promote opportunities and experiences for pupils.

Commentary

28. The very well established partnerships with many other schools are a significant strength of the school. This was identified at the time of the previous inspection but it has developed even more since then. A third of pupils spend some time every week in a mainstream school. The arrangements are thoroughly planned, families prepared and consulted properly, and then overseen by enthusiastic staff who are committed to its success. Three pupils who have PMLD attend their local primary school for half a day every week and in a short space of time receive huge benefits and evident enjoyment working alongside their peers in a mainstream class. Parents are delighted with the extra confidence this gives their children and the greater acceptance and understanding which this leads to within the pupils' own community. The 'satellite' group of pupils in a nearby primary school has been very successful and five pupils now attend full time. Links are firmly in place with local secondary schools and colleges and pupils and students from them are welcomed as volunteers. They help for example by supporting work in physical education. The deputy headteacher further strengthens links with other schools in the Wirral when she leads numeracy training for other teachers. Overall, links with other schools are very good.
29. Parents have a very positive view of the school and they are impressed with the way it has improved since the arrival of the new headteacher. They approve of the changes she is making and the way that she keeps them very well informed. The reports of pupils' progress now fully address all subjects of the curriculum. Newsletters are well written and regular. Home-school books are being used much more consistently and for those parents who wish to write every day they offer a very good method to communicate. Home visits are rarely undertaken but nevertheless, links and friendships are good with the vast majority of parents. Many live far away from school and for them transport is arranged to help them attend review meetings, which the majority do, as well as special school functions. These are also well supported by the local community and much enjoyed. Homework and topic sheets are effective because they inform parents how they can help at home. Parents valued the participation in a recent successful ICT project over 10 weeks, which the school is hoping to repeat.
30. Links within the community are developing well and are currently good because of the outward looking approach from the school, which is seeking to develop even more productive, purposeful and closer partnerships. The Parent Teacher Friends Association is very effective and works very successfully to raise money and resources. Pupils enjoy visits into the community when they walk to shops and the post office or go further afield into Liverpool museums and galleries. Members of the nearby community help voluntarily within school when, for example, they assist at the poolside. Governors represent the community and are fully involved in the school. Local community groups are very supportive in sending donations to the school and this impacts significantly on the improvement of resources as well as to fund the annual residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. Governors know and support the school **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides leadership of a very high quality and this has moved the school forward significantly.
- Governors are very active and play an influential part in the school's development.
- Good procedures are in place to evaluate what the school is doing and for staff to reflect on and develop their own practice.
- Educational developments are well supported by very good financial procedures.
- There is currently restricted time provided for subject leaders to develop their subjects.

Commentary

31. The headteacher has been in post for little more than a year. Parents, staff and the local area education authority attest to the fact that she has brought a very good vision of the school's future role. The strong emphasis on care provided by the school is now being matched by a greater emphasis on pupils' achievement. This is supported by very good planning for the next three years, which is being implemented through detailed and well costed year-on-year development plans. There has been a high degree of success in a short space of time. It is impressive that the headteacher has worked well with staff to create a high level of commitment to new developments and ensured that they are happy to undertake further training to enhance skills.
32. The headteacher is ably supported by a governing body that ensures that statutory requirements are met, is enthusiastic and committed to inclusion and achievement. Governors feel able to challenge new ideas that are increasingly shared in a very detailed and professional way. It is a body that is experienced, well informed and represents parents, staff and the wider community well. It ensures that statutory duties are all carried out and makes regular visits to classrooms and the school to examine issues relating to teaching, care, finance and accommodation. Its skills and activity show it has made good improvement in its effectiveness since the last inspection.
33. The headteacher is well aided by senior staff, including a strong and effective deputy. Both present very good role models of teaching, have a clear understanding of the renewed emphasis on teaching and learning and show management skills which ensure that new policies are put into effect and staff supported in their implementation. The senior management team and other teaching staff have also developed very good partnerships with other schools and educational personnel, all of which has contributed to the good developments.
34. Over the past year, performance management and the appraisal of teaching assistants have been introduced and are working very well. All staff have the opportunity to discuss and review what they are doing and, as a result, follow new courses of study, in for instance ICT or techniques to support ASD pupils. There is a good programme of classroom observations, by senior staff, which has already assisted teachers in developing good practice. There are also effective procedures for collecting and analysing data relating to the progress that individual pupils are making. Senior managers are able to use this data effectively to assist subject leaders in improving their subjects and for them to ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	998295	Balance from previous year	-2009
Total expenditure	946903	Balance carried forward to the next	49383
Expenditure per pupil	15523		

35. After a difficult period a year ago when the budget was cut severely, the school has planned appropriately to create a sound financial basis for the next three years. The school is addressing the need to provide teachers with preparation time to meet national requirements for workforce remodelling within the coming year. It will also provide teachers with time out of lessons to make improvements as has been the case with English and mathematics, to allow subject leaders to implement important elements of planning and classroom practice.
36. All of the school's planning and developments are underpinned by very good financial procedures. Governors, the headteacher and senior managers have clear responsibilities within this framework and meet regularly with the bursar from the local education authority. The work of

the secretary, who acts as the school's finance officer, is crucial in this and is of a very high standard. The level of communication and efficiency within finance is very good and has already contributed well to developing a dynamic approach to the wide range of initiatives that the school has embarked upon.

37. Following recent improvements to provide a satisfactory learning environment and to improve the quality of teaching and learning, the school is now well placed to move forward and is working with the local education authority to meet the school's challenges. Most noticeably, the school finds it difficult to cater effectively for the full range of special needs due to shortcomings in the accommodation and outside environment.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Eleven lessons and pupils' work and records were seen and discussions held with pupils and staff.

Provision in the Foundation Stage of Learning is **good**.

38. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and has ensured that the provision evident at the last inspection has been maintained. Good, spacious accommodation and bright, colourful displays promote a good learning environment for the children. Children achieve well overall during their time in the Foundation Stage and benefit from good teaching and support. Resources are plentiful and are used well to support learning. Management is good and this has enabled the school to adapt well to the changing needs of pupils to cater for the increase in the number of children with ASD. Planning has been good to provide arrangements for most staff to develop the required skills to support pupils with ASD and it is a priority to ensure that the remaining staff become similarly skilled. Children with PMLD benefit from being part of the classes because of the way that the experience enhances their educational and personal development and ensures that they often achieve very well. However, in a few parts of lessons during work in small groups, difficulties for instance with the furniture or their position in relation to other children prevents them deriving maximum benefit from lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children behave very well and have positive attitudes.
- There is a very good emphasis on healthy living and independence.

Commentary

39. Children enjoy coming to the Foundation Stage classrooms. They have very positive attitudes to learning and look forward to all activities. They behave very well in and around the school and work well together sharing resources. This was exemplified well in the early morning activities in which children shared books and toys as they waited for the day to begin. Children were greeted warmly by staff who pay very good attention to their personal needs. Staff are very efficient at helping children with PMLD to settle in to class and, consequently, children are relaxed which enables interaction with others and development of social skills. Teaching in this area of learning is very good, leading to very good achievement for all pupils. Pupils are expected to help themselves wherever possible, fostering very good independence skills and contributing to their very good achievement in personal development. Routines have been established well to ensure that children with ASD are able to achieve equally well. There is a very good emphasis on healthy eating in line with the school's initiative. Children are offered fruit daily and are encouraged with new and different tastes and textures.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use of means of communication suitable for all children promotes high levels of interaction.
- Literacy lessons are very effective in promoting children's enjoyment of books.

Commentary

40. Teaching is very good in communication, language and literacy, leading to very good achievement in this area of learning. Teachers make very good use of signs and symbols to promote understanding. This was evident daily as teachers explained what was happening that day through speech supplemented by symbol timetables that allowed children to follow the sequence of activities very well. The use of PECs enables children with ASD to participate effectively. Consequently, children are secure and happy in their learning. Very good literacy lessons encourage children to share books and enjoy stories. They listen very well and join in with familiar parts of the text with enthusiasm. Children further their enjoyment of books for instance, through making collages to illustrate the story of the 'gingerbread man' and developing movements and dance to represent the story about 'the hungry caterpillar.'

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are planned well to meet children's different abilities.
- Resources are used very well to stimulate children's interest in numbers and counting activities.
- A few children with PMLD do not participate fully in a some tasks.

Commentary

41. Lessons are planned effectively so that different groups of children are given tasks that meet their needs. Because of good teaching, children achieve well. Teachers make particularly good use of resources to help children with their counting activities and understanding of numbers. Children benefit from many familiar and repetitive songs to help them remember sequences. For example, in one class, they showed that they could count up to five as they sang 'Five little ducks went swimming one day'. The use of toy ducks helps them to visualise the objects as they counted. Children with PMLD participate well with others overall during the whole class session because they usually have resources matched to their ability. Very occasionally, in group activities factors such as the height or position of furniture prevent children interacting with the group successfully.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from participation in imaginative activities.
- Occasionally, children with PMLD do not have enough access to resources.

Commentary

42. Teaching in this area is satisfactory and children achieve satisfactorily overall. They benefit from the interesting but limited range of resources to improve their enquiry skills. For example, in one session the children chose from a range of toys to stimulate children's imagination and several were enquiring who would join them in using a tea set to make tea. Good demonstration by the teacher enabled these children to imitate well, pretend to pour, drink and share the tea with others, achieving well. This led them to initiate ideas for staff to participate in their play activities. However, a few of the children with PMLD cannot access the small tables on which group activities take place. There are shortcomings in resources for learning provided and although

they are satisfactory overall for this area of learning, they were not suitable for all children. This leads to children's achievement being only satisfactory rather than good or better.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and teaching assistants know the children very well so that support in physical education is well directed.
- Very good partnerships with physiotherapists enhance provision for physical development.
- The hall area is unsuitable for physical activities for children with ASD.

Commentary

43. Teaching is good and children mostly achieve well in physical development. This is because staff know children very well and, as a consequence they are very well supported. The partnership with physiotherapists is a major strength, ensuring that physical needs are well met. Children are able to participate because of the high levels of expertise of staff. Children behave well in the hall and enjoy physical education. However, the hall is not suitable for many of the children with ASD and does not help them to concentrate and take part fully, consequently, they do not always achieve as well as they could. Children have good opportunities to swim in school and very good encouragement from staff to develop independence in dressing and undressing. This makes a good contribution to their physical and personal development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff encourage children's imaginative play well.
- Good multi-sensory approaches help children to enjoy creative activities.

Commentary

44. Teaching is good and children achieve well in creative areas of learning. Staff frequently show children how to play effectively through playing with them, helping them to 'pretend play', dress up and act out their own ideas. This helps children to get along very well with each other and to develop confidence. The good multi-sensory approaches, such as hand painting, finger painting and activities using their senses of touch, taste and smell, promote high levels of fun and enjoyment. Pupils often receive opportunities to make models, collages and paint pictures about the work that they are doing. For instance, they contribute to a school display to show the effects of cold weather.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Seven full or part lessons were seen, pupils' work and records scrutinised and discussions held with staff and pupils.

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from skilled teaching, which motivates them well.
- Staff help pupils to develop good speaking and listening skills and an interest in books.
- Achievement in early writing skills is improving as the result of good action by the subject leader.
- The subject is well led with good assessment procedures that assist teachers in their planning.
- Not all staff use and share learning objectives precisely enough to assist pupils in developing literacy skills.
- Library provision is not adequate and limits pupils' ability to carry out independent research.

Commentary

45. Pupils' achievement is good overall. They progress well in their development of speaking and listening skills. There are good opportunities in every lesson for pupils to develop communication skills, respond and answer questions, express their feelings and share news and experiences. Pupils who are still developing communication gradually acquire greater control over eye movements, gesture and articulation to respond to questions and choices and to express pleasure in activities such as singing and storytelling. Those pupils who have PMLD and share lessons with their peers achieve very well since they are included so well in lessons and have the opportunity to interact with their peers. Teaching throughout the school places a strong emphasis on pupils' participation in all subject lessons. Good questions are asked that challenge individual pupils at their own level of development. In addition, teachers allow time in discussions to enable pupils who find communication difficult to answer or express an opinion.
46. Through perseverance, pupils achieve well in reading. Because teachers encourage pupils to listen to stories and use a wide range of imaginative resources, pupils develop a love of books. All come to understand the way to use books, to turn pages and appreciate the link between pictures and text. A few pupils develop a small, but significant, vocabulary together with a good knowledge of letter sounds and names. They read the early stages of a popular reading scheme and have a wide experience of fiction, non-fiction and poetry books. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learnt the sequence involved in making a milkshake. The teacher used an interactive whiteboard to enable pupils to read and follow the recipe and instructions. This gave good opportunities for the 'readers' to identify individual words and to learn how to use the contents' page. Teachers ensure that work is accompanied with both signs and symbols, and that PECs are used effectively for pupils with ASD and this ensures that all pupils were fully involved in lessons.
47. Pupils make good progress in writing. As they get older, pupils understand that marks have meaning and that writing goes from left to right. The school has recently invested in writing 'frames' which allow pupils with very limited skills to develop pieces of writing that comprise perhaps one or two words or short phrases that are relevant to the topic in hand. In addition, the school ensures that pupils' writing is celebrated. Pupils, who are able, write comments on their own reports of progress and everyone's writing is celebrated in wall displays. There is a good structured plan for writing development and good emphasis is placed on this skill in English lessons. Very good teamwork, careful matching of tasks to pupils was evident in the 'satellite class and, as a result, pupils developed enthusiasm for writing. The topic of making a 'spinning wheel' was used to develop pupils' ability to take notes, follow a sequence and use reading in the form of instructions for a practical purpose. The success of this very good lesson highlighted the high standard of English teaching, and the valuable experience for pupils to work and learn alongside their mainstream peers.
48. Good achievement in English results from good leadership in the subject. The subject leader is a skilled teacher, who uses a wide range of resources, including ICT, very well to stimulate pupils and reinforce vocabulary. She has ensured that the concern of the last inspection report regarding the involvement of pupils with complex learning difficulties has been addressed. In addition, she has introduced good assessment processes and uses day-to-day assessment well in her own class to assist planning for individual pupils.

49. The stock of 'big books' is good and covers a wide range of texts. Good use is also made of audio books and stories on computers in several classes. There is a library, but it is too small to display a comprehensive enough selection of books or provide a suitable environment for pupils to develop reference skills or read and relax at different times of the day.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. English skills are developed well in most subjects throughout the school. All staff provide good models of talking and listening which assist development in all subjects. There is also a good emphasis placed on subject vocabulary, such as shapes and numbers with mathematics. However, there is not a consistent emphasis placed on pupils contribution to recording for themselves in other subjects for all teachers to enhance pupils' literacy skills through incorporating for instance, requirements for pupils to write and or record within their lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Five full or part lessons were seen, pupils' work scrutinised and discussions held with staff.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond well to the high expectations in lessons for them to find answers to problems.
- Teachers use resources imaginatively in lessons and this has a very positive effect in developing pupils' interest and attitudes to learning and working with each other.
- Teachers and support staff work well together and their partnership has a good effect on teaching and learning.
- Computers are not always used effectively to support pupils' learning in mathematics lessons.
- Effective leadership and management in mathematics ensure continuing improvements.
- Although not formally planned as part of the teaching of other subjects, pupils have good opportunities to develop mathematics skills.

Commentary

51. Teaching and learning is good and as a result, pupils achieve well. One important factor is that pupils expect lessons to get off to a brisk start and, consequently pupils concentrate fully to answer questions during lesson introductions. Pupils respond very well by considering the question they have been asked, knowing that they must also give an explanation for instance, of how they have made a calculation. This was very successful in the 'satellite' class where pupils in Year 4 share lessons with their peers in a mainstream class. Through very effective guidance and questioning, pupils were able to explain to each other the strategies that they used to add together numbers such as thirty-two and twenty. Pupils find the tasks suitably demanding because the teacher directs questions to pupils according to their ability.

52. A significant feature in most lessons is the teacher's planning for and use of imaginative resources, and this ensures that all pupils, including the few with additional special educational needs are able to participate fully and, as a result, all pupils make equally good progress overall. Resources for pupils who have PMLD are good because they are designed effectively to help them to participate. For instance, pupils in Years 3 to 6 received good visual reinforcement of distance through holding ribbons and observing them being extended. There are very good examples of the use of resources for pupils with PMLD who share lessons with other pupils and this leads to those pupils achieving very well. For instance, pupils in Year 1 make very good progress helping to make the toy mother duck 'quack' in response to the whole class activity of counting of the baby ducks on the 'pond'. The interaction between all the pupils during counting and participating in the rhymes consolidates the counting skills of all pupils very well. Teachers use PECs well to ensure that pupils with ASD can understand the tasks and support pupils effectively to include them in all parts of lessons so that they make equal progress.

53. Teachers and teaching assistants are consistent in their management of pupils and the very effective relationships that are built up in class leads to pupils understanding rules and expectations and, consequently behaving very well. In most lessons, staff work effectively together, often by each adult taking responsibility for a group of pupils where tasks are matched to pupils' ability. A teaching assistant in the class for pupils in Years 3 to 6 made an important contribution by noting pupils' achievements during the lesson to enable the teacher to assess each pupils' progress and to plan future work. However, not all teaching assistant challenge pupils sufficiently to explain their answers. It is a school priority to improve the effectiveness of the support that pupils receive to raise standards further.
54. The new interactive whiteboards are proving to be successful in helping pupils to learn more through participating with the teacher and each other in response for example, to counting on the screen. Although there are satisfactory opportunities overall, there are several occasions where pupils could benefit from more opportunities to use ICT to investigate numbers and consolidate their understanding for instance, of shapes or data handling.
55. Effective leadership and management of mathematics have ensured that there has been good progress since the last inspection. The improvement of teaching and learning is a consequence of the headteacher's commitment to improve the subject, supported well by senior managers and the subject leader. Pupils follow a good curriculum and good systems of assessment have been established. These are beginning to provide evidence of pupils' progress over time and a basis for teachers to plan targets for pupils to learn more.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Pupils have good opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, pupils often sing counting songs in music lessons. Pupils measure in science lessons for instance, when they compare the distances that toy cars travel after descending a ramp. However, although teachers often take advantage of opportunities to promote numeracy skills, they do not consistently plan to include these in all lessons, which results in missed opportunities to ensure that they provide regular opportunities for all pupils.

SCIENCE

Four lessons were seen, pupils' work scrutinised and discussions held.

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' knowledge of the subject is sometimes limited and this impacts on achievements overall.
- There are very good examples of the use of resources to encourage pupils' interest.
- Lessons in science do not consistently meet all pupils' needs.
- The subject leader lacks opportunities to make improvements.

Commentary

57. Teaching in science is satisfactory and this leads to satisfactory achievement. This is not as good as at the time of the last inspection. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy the many different activities and exciting resources provided and because of this they are often able to find things out for themselves. They explore different materials with enthusiasm, and in one lesson, pupils in Year 2 were able to identify objects made of wood, metal and plastic. They were able to handle the different materials provided by the teacher and commented that some could be 'bent' and 'stretched', while others could not. They used their senses well to find answers to questions. Good questioning by adults helped them to extend their skills. Older pupils are able to explain

how 'pushing' and 'pulling' made objects move. They enjoyed pushing wheeled toys and pulling objects around the hall. Learning in science is often fun and includes practical tasks which pupils look forward to and eagerly participate in. However, teachers' knowledge of the subject is not always secure and because of this, pupils' scientific knowledge is not extended well enough overall and this leads to their achievement being satisfactory. For instance, occasionally pupils are confused because they are not sure of what they are trying to find out. Consequently, in these lessons, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. For instance, in a lesson about forces, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were unsure about the conclusion they needed to make about a car travelling down ramps since there were too many variables to consider such as the height and the material used for the ramp.

58. In a lesson for pupils with PMLD in Years 4 to 6, they were engaged in pulling and pushing dough to change its shape, showing appropriate levels of understanding about the changes they were able to make. However, teachers' planning does not always ensure that pupils with PMLD and those with ASD can always take part fully in the tasks set. Occasionally, the pupils watch adults demonstrating a task but do not have the opportunity to do it for themselves. This impacts on their achievement on these occasions.

59. Leadership and management of science are satisfactory. Although there is a new curriculum for what pupils will learn, this has not yet led to improvement in standards. Lack of monitoring of what pupils are learning throughout the school by the subject leader is a weakness, inhibiting awareness of what needs to be done for pupils to achieve more.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Three discrete lessons were seen, ICT was observed supporting pupils in other subjects, pupils' work scrutinised and discussions held.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership has ensured that good opportunities for training are provided, but a few staff lack skills in using ICT.
- The resources provided for ICT are good and contribute to pupils' motivation and learning.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and several have become very proficient at using a range of equipment.
- ICT is being used increasingly throughout other subject areas, but this is not consistent.

Commentary

60. Pupils' achievement in ICT was unsatisfactory at the last inspection and although the subject leader has moved the subject on well since that time, achievement is currently satisfactory. Teachers now have access to training although several have not been able to participate fully in this and, consequently they do not make the best use of ICT to help pupils learn. There is now a good basis in planning for the curriculum and a detailed system for assessment of small step learning skills in ICT is available, which some staff are already using. Leadership is now good. Plans are already underway to ensure that all classroom practice in ICT meets that of the best teachers.

61. The school has made a good investment in equipment and programmes. It has improved the range of what pupils will learn. Each class is well provided with computers, printers and accessories such as special switches and interactive computers that operate by touching the large screens. This, together with the purchase of good software, will provide a useful resource on those occasions when pupils use computers in class. When the equipment is used, it adds to their motivation and provides pupils with the opportunity to write, draw and read using electronic equipment. There is a good stock of toys, games and programmable 'robots'. These provide a good resource for pupils to learn how to use technology to control electronic apparatus.

62. Although achievement is satisfactory overall, pupils achieve well on occasions in lessons for instance, using the large touch screens and alternative keyboards and switching systems which ensures that all pupils can use the programmes. Thus, in a small group session using an art programme, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were able to use large interactive screens to draw mathematical shapes and fill them with colour. A higher attaining pupil carried out the same process on her own computer. Everyone progressed well in painting skills at their own level. As the result of good equipment and motivating tasks, there was a good level of enjoyment and confidence in the use of ICT evident throughout.
63. The purchase of interactive whiteboards and digital cameras has meant that most staff have access to these regularly. They are used for instance, to incorporate sound effects into the telling the story of 'The Hungry Giant' to pupils with PMLD and they replicate a cookery book on the large screen to provide a sequence in the making of milkshakes. Teachers use a presentation programme to help pupils to create individual books with digital photos of pupils and their friends. Teachers use photographs well and include dates and annotations, to highlight the progress made by pupils in several subjects to aid assessment process.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. There is good use of alternative switches and touch screens throughout the school to ensure equality of access to computers. Effective use is being made of ICT within English, mathematics and art. However, staff, although identifying opportunities within their planning, have not consistently established appropriate working procedures to allow them to use computers on a day-to-day basis to enhance their subjects. There has been some improvement, but there is still more to do to ensure that ICT becomes an everyday resource for all subjects.

HUMANITIES

One lesson of history and one of geography were seen. Judgements were not made about these subjects. Two religious education lessons were observed. Discussions were held with staff and pupil's work scrutinised for each subject.

65. Pupils follow a wide range of topics in **history**. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have studied customs in China and have related them to celebrations in the present day. Pupils in Year 3 are looking at toys and compare toys of the past with those of the present day. They are learning how to use the Internet to locate information from museums to find out more about old toys and to print pictures for the class display. In Year 6, pupils learn about the life and times of *Beatrix Potter* in part of a study about authors of the past.
66. In **geography**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 consider the jobs that people do in the community and benefit from talks and demonstrations. During the inspection week they watched a demonstration of the work of the caretaker and cleaner and related this to locations throughout the school. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have studied the local area and photographed and mapped the position of shops. Pupils are gaining experience of studying a variety of maps depicting important features including local wildlife areas. They relate their area to the wider country and the world by comparing its position on maps of different scales. Pupils study a good range of contrasting areas and are presently studying Alaska.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy learning about different aspects of the religions they study.
- There are good examples of teachers planning well to include all pupils in learning.

- Planning for religious education is not fully established.

Commentary

67. Achievement in religious education is satisfactory. Pupils are beginning to appreciate differences between the faiths that they study by the time they reach Year 6. Pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, showed that they are aware of some of the special symbols of Buddhism. They were able to talk about the special symbols in their own lives as they responded to the stories from the Buddhist faith. They enjoyed handling the artefacts and listening to music from India as they looked at the materials worn by people of that faith. Pupils showed high levels of interest and enjoyment benefiting from the sights and smells, linked to Buddhism as they worked in the sensory room.
68. Teaching and learning in religious education is satisfactory. Lessons are planned from the good locally agreed syllabus. Consequently, pupils are developing appropriate awareness of the different faiths of the wider community as they move through the school. Teachers make the best use of the available resources to keep pupils focused and ensure that learning is active. Pupils, including those who have PMLD and additional special educational needs consequently learn by looking, touching and listening to promote their understanding. However, at times, lessons focus too much on verbal information and not enough on real experiences. The lessons are occasionally too short so that not enough learning takes place.
69. There is an acknowledgement that the subject needs to be improved throughout the school. There are good examples of pupils studying a few faiths and a recognition of the need for more emphasis in the planning to provide opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the range of faiths in society.
70. Leadership is satisfactory. It is currently being maintained by the deputy headteacher until an appointment is made. There is a good long-term plan for development. However, the lack of monitoring of what is happening in religious education in each class is a weakness.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

In art and design, music and design and technology there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about pupils' achievements and the quality of provision. The subjects were sampled by looking at a few lessons, pupils' work, school documents and talking to pupils and teachers. Four full or part lessons in physical education and swimming were seen.

71. The very good displays of pupils' work around the school demonstrate the varied work that pupils participate in during **art and design** lessons. Lessons often provide opportunities for pupils to use art to extend their learning in another subject for instance, to make collages about their reading book for a class display. Art and design contributes very well to pupils' cultural development. There are good examples of pupils creating art in the style of famous artists and pupils in Years 3 to 6 have made their own interpretations of the art of *Matisse*. There is a good emphasis upon pupils creating original work such as when those in Years 3 and 4 develop a range of representative and abstract pictures using continuous drawn lines to make pictures.
72. Pupils' work in **design and technology** show that requirements for the subject are fully met. There are good examples of practical tasks that have led to good quality finished items on display in several classrooms. Younger pupils, for example, have made masks using card and materials, showing good proportions and use of different textures and colours. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have just completed wooden picture frames. They were able to explain clearly how they had used a saw to cut the wood and glue to stick the pieces together. Evidence of designing and evaluating is limited. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. Assessment is not fully developed enough to measure progress.
73. **Music** makes a good contribution to pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Parents value the opportunities their children are given and regularly attend school productions. Planning indicates

a wide and rich curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on song and composition. Music and song are used within many lessons to reinforce concepts, such as counting or to enliven stories, for example using gongs and tambourines in a dragon story for Chinese New Year. There are many opportunities for pupils to sing and they enjoy this. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to attend concerts such as with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Musicians from this orchestra and other performers, such as percussionists, regularly visit the school to undertake workshops. The subject leader is new to the role, but has already developed imaginative plans for the development of her subject. This includes using ICT to help pupils to develop composition skills and interactive music techniques to support pupils who have PMLD or ASD. Resources are good and contribute well to classroom and school performances.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop very positive attitudes to physical education because of the interesting lessons they follow.
- The school is working effectively with local sports co-ordinators to make improvements to lessons.
- There is good liaison with physiotherapists to support pupils' learning and physical development.
- Leadership ensures a rich curriculum.
- The hall is unsuitable on occasions and the grounds provide limited facilities for physical education.

Commentary

74. Pupils achieve well in physical education overall. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teaching was very good to ensure that pupils in Year 1 were very keen to participate in physical education because they were prepared so well in the classroom before going into the hall for the lesson. Consequently, they quickly began to develop individual ways of moving to music to pretend to be caterpillars. The teacher guided them very well by reminding them of the movements of the 'hungry caterpillar' in the class book that they are reading and they improved the way that they crawled and demonstrated the life cycle of the butterfly through dance, achieving very well.
75. Pupils follow a good range of activities throughout the school to promote their physical development. There are good relationships with local sports co-ordinators, who support pupils and provide guidance for staff in the development of the subject. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good progress in a games lesson led by the sports co-ordinator. There was very effective co-operation of all staff to use their extensive knowledge of pupils to provide encouragement to each pupil in accordance with their needs to complement the instructions provided. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had participated in challenging activities to improve their skills in moving quickly to avoid obstacles, making good progress.
76. There are good arrangements for pupils to work with therapists to promote their physical development. For instance, younger pupils who have PMLD receive very effective support to leave their wheelchairs and receive individual support for programmes of physical development to help them with movement. whilst more able pupils participate in activities in the hall to meet their needs. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 with PMLD followed modified activities to participate in simple games with the class teacher. They experience holding a ball. However, they perform all their activities in their wheelchairs and do not have opportunities to experience a wide range of movements. Teachers plan well and staff work effectively together to help pupils with ASD to participate for most of the lessons through re-focussing them on the activities in spite of the many distractions they find in the hall. However, this occasionally has an impact on the overall achievement of the class because of the disruption of all pupils' concentration.

77. Achievement in swimming is good. Teachers plan well to encourage pupils to get themselves ready and this makes an important contribution to them learning to be independent. The very good care that staff take of pupils and the excellent relationships that exist has ensured that pupils feel very safe and have developed very good confidence in the water. Staff encourage pupils to move and hence develop different ways to travel in the water. Pupils build on the experiences of swimming that they have developed in the nursery and reception years and those in Year 1 are able to learn to kick their legs and others can float. Pupils continue to receive good guidance to improve as they get older. This is good preparation for when they have the opportunity to gain access to larger pools in the community and a few pupils are able to learn to swim.
78. Leadership and management are good and has led to an extensive range of activities in which pupils can participate. Pupils compete with pupils from other similar schools in games of soccer and tennis. They have a sports day on site and compete in several athletics competitions. Good sporting events are held such as bowls competitions with other schools, dance with visiting tutors and yoga. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 attend an annual residential course which provides good opportunities for pupils to participate in outdoor adventurous activities. Although teachers prepare lessons well overall, the school recognises the need to develop more formal planning for teachers to follow and better systems for assessment to raise standards further.
79. The hall is a thoroughfare and lessons are disturbed frequently as staff, pupils and visitors move through to gain access to classrooms. There are many entrances, some of which do not have doors and there are many items of furniture in the hall. Pupils, particularly those with ASD become distracted and want to wander off or explore furniture or leave the room. Staff are vigilant and encourage pupils to concentrate again on activities but overall the accommodation is unsuitable for them. The grounds provide generally unsuitable facilities for physical education since there is poor access for pupils with PMLD and the yard is unsuitable on occasions because of surface water.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Five lessons were seen, pupils' work scrutinised and discussions held with pupils and staff.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' confidence and independence.
- Very high quality teaching has a significant effect on promoting pupils' maturity and awareness of themselves in the community.
- Very good use is made of the services of a wide range of professionals to assist health education in particular.
- The leadership of the subject has led to good improvements.

Commentary

80. The teaching of PSHE and citizenship contributes strongly to pupils' very good achievement and understanding of valuing each other's contributions. Citizenship is being well developed as an integral part of this curriculum. Through effective planning, many pupils come to understand themselves and others better, learn the value of health and develop a sense of right and wrong. The school places an emphasis on ensuring that pupils learn to look after themselves such as becoming healthy citizens and provides pupils with the opportunity of becoming sensitive to each other's needs.
81. Pupils make very good progress in self-awareness and understanding of what it is to be an independent and co-operative member of a community. The youngest pupils learn to interact

appropriately with each other. Through very skilled teaching, pupils learn through topics such as friendship, to help and co-operate with each other. Aspects of health, such as dental care, tidiness and personal hygiene are taught as a class lesson or as appropriate to the personal needs of individual pupils. As pupils get older, co-operation skills remain an important element of the curriculum. Pupils learning is enhanced well by tasks set by teachers for pupils to learn about feelings and how to form relationships. A good policy has been developed that relates to sex and relationship education. This has been shared with parents and is implemented as appropriate to the maturity and development of individual pupils.

82. The school works closely with a good range of professionals to enhance what pupils learn. The strongest link is with the medical staff on site. They contribute particularly well to areas of personal hygiene and personal development. Occupational health workers and therapists also contribute to lessons and all pupils receive a six-week dressing skills programme on entry to the school.
83. Effective leadership and management has ensured that citizenship is now a major strand within the school's curriculum and there is a strong emphasis upon pupils taking responsibility and stating their views. Within class and around the school pupils are encouraged to undertake tasks such as milk and register monitors and a school council is in the process of formation to ensure wider and more regular involvement of pupils in the use of the social skills they develop. This is intended to further enhance the effectiveness of the school's promotion of citizenship for pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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	2
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).

*In a special school such as this, 'standards achieved' are judged in relation to pupils' individual targets and not to national standards.