

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MICHAEL-in-the-HAMLET COMMUNITY
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 133330

Headteacher: Mr P Fleming

Lead inspector: Mr D S Roberts

Dates of inspection: 15 – 17 November 2004

Inspection number: 271088

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 390

School address: Neilson Road
Liverpool
Postcode: L17 7BA

Telephone number: 0151 727 3215
Fax number: 0151 726 0522

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr D Patmore
governors:

Date of previous inspection: n/a

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Situated within four miles of the centre of Liverpool, the school was established in September 2003, following the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools. It is a larger than average sized school, providing education for 414 pupils from three to 11 years of age, and including 48 children who attend the Nursery on a part-time basis. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is above the national average. At present just over 20 per cent of pupils are from families belonging to minority ethnic groups. Nearly 3 per cent speak English as an additional language, which is a little higher than in most schools. The rate of mobility in the area has grown in recent years. In the Year 6 cohort taking the national tests in 2004, for example, less than 80 per cent of pupils had attended Year 2 at the previously separate infant school. The proportion of pupils on the register for special educational needs is currently slightly above the national average. On entry to the school, the intake of children represents a wide range of ability, but overall attainment levels are below those found nationally.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1743	D S Roberts	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education English as an additional language
19669	F Kennedy	Lay inspector	
17767	S Power	Team inspector	Science Geography History
29504	S Herring	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
7222	A Watson	Team inspector	Music Religious education Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
 Anglia House
 Carrs Road
 Cheadle
 Stockport
 SK8 2LA

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. It provides a high level of care for its pupils and promotes their personal and social development very successfully. Teaching of a generally high quality enables most pupils to achieve very well, in relation to their capabilities, particularly in the key areas of learning. The school is highly successful in ensuring that all pupils are included and involved in all aspects of the curriculum. It is well regarded by its pupils, their parents and the local community, **and provides very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children are given a good start to their education in Nursery and Reception classes at the Foundation Stage of their learning.
- Throughout the school, pupils acquire a very good grasp of key skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), and achieve high standards in science.
- Teaching is of high quality, particularly in the key areas of learning.
- The school provides a very good curriculum and makes highly effective provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and their behaviour is of a high standard.
- The school is led and managed very effectively.
- Although standards in ICT are high, its use to enhance learning in other subjects is inconsistent and insufficiently systematic.

This is a newly amalgamated school, which has been in existence for just over a year. The school's improvement plan already demonstrates a capacity to identify relevant educational priorities accurately, and to work steadily towards them.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Inspection evidence indicates that pupils **achieve very well** in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment during their time in the school. Having entered the school with standards of attainment, which are generally below average, children at the Foundation Stage, in Nursery and Reception classes, make good progress, and achieve the appropriate learning goals in all of the areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing and science are above the average for the pupils' age, and standards in mathematics are well above average. This is a broadly similar picture to the most recent National Curriculum test results. By Year 6, standards for age are above average in English, and well above the average for

mathematics and science. This is similar to the national test results for mathematics and science, but better than the test results for English. The same national test results also show that the Year 6 pupils' performance, compared with those in similar schools, was above average in English and very high in mathematics and science. Throughout the school, pupils, at all levels of attainment achieve very well in ICT, where standards are similar to the average for age, by Year 2, and above average by Year 6. In other subjects, pupils' achievement is at least good in most subjects, and very good in art and design and physical education, where standards for age are above average. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve highly, and make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans.

Pupils work hard and show **very good** attitudes to learning. They are keen to involve themselves in the rich variety of learning opportunities on offer. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very successfully and standards of behaviour are high. The school is working hard to improve attendance rates which are showing improvement during the current year, although falling short of the average found nationally.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **very good**. The school provides a high quality curriculum, including a very good programme of extra curricular activities. Literacy and numeracy skills are generally promoted successfully in work across the curriculum, but there is scope for achieving greater consistency in the use of ICT to support and enhance learning in other subjects. Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal, social and health education, and the school is highly effective in ensuring that all pupils have equality of access and opportunity to all aspects of provision. Overall, the teaching is **very effective**. Good quality teaching at the Foundation Stage, helps children to settle quickly and achieve well in all areas of learning. In other year groups, the teaching is highly effective in the key areas of learning, providing pupils with a very good grasp of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, and enabling them to achieve high standards in science.

Throughout the school, teaching assistants co-operate effectively with class teachers, and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Their work in supporting pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is particularly effective in enabling pupils to make very good progress. The highly effective use of assessment to help pupils to improve is a very strong feature in the teaching, contributing significantly towards the pupils' very good achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The school is very well led by the headteacher, who demonstrates clear educational vision and a strong sense of urgency. The deputy headteacher and senior management team also provide very good leadership, and the school benefits greatly from the commitment and support of an effective governing body.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is well regarded by parents and pupils. Parents feel that their children like school, the teaching is good, and their children are expected to work hard and make good progress. They are of the view that there is a good range of activities and feel comfortable in approaching the school when problems arise. Most pupils appreciate the help that their teachers give them. They feel that they have to work hard, but acknowledge the help

which they get when difficulties arise. Some feel that the behaviour of a minority of children is not always as good as it should be.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Achieve greater consistency and a more systematic approach towards the use of ICT to support and enhance pupils' learning during work in other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The attainment levels of children on entry to the Nursery are generally below average. Pupils achieve **highly** during their time in the school and, by the time they reach the end of Year 6, standards in the key skills of learning (literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology), and in science, are at least above those found nationally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment.
- Very effective teaching enables pupils to achieve highly in the key areas of English, mathematics and ICT.
- Pupils achieve particularly high standards in national tests for mathematics and science.
- High quality provision in art and design and physical education results in above average standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

Commentary

- 1 The effective work of teachers and support staff in the Nursery and Reception classes, enables children to make good progress and achieve the appropriate early learning goals in all of the areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The successful emphasis placed on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development results in their increasing confidence, and contributes significantly towards the children's rapid progress during the remainder of their time in the school.
- 2 At both key stages (Years 1 to 6), pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2, overall standards in English are above the national average, and standards in mathematics are well above those found nationally. This is consistent with the most recent National Curriculum test results which also showed pupils' performance to be well above that of pupils in similar school in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 6, standards are above the average found nationally in English, and well above average in mathematics and science. The picture in mathematics and science is consistent with the most recent National Curriculum test results. Inspection findings in English present a better picture than the national test results.
- 3 Pupils also achieve very well in ICT. Standards for age are at least appropriate, by Year 2, and are above average by Year 6. Pupils benefit greatly from a well-planned programme of work and access to very good resources. Pupils are challenged consistently by highly effective teaching, and their progress is helped significantly by the availability of an ICT support technician. Pupils' achievement is at least good in most other subjects. It is very good in art and design and physical education, where high quality provision, including very good teaching, promotes standards for age which

are above average. In religious education, particularly good teaching enables pupils to achieve very well and produce work which is sometimes of high quality.

- 4 Teaching and support staff work very effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, in terms of gender, race and levels of attainment. This enables pupils, including those who are particularly gifted, to achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Very effective support provided by teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils with special educational needs to achieve highly and make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The careful attention provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language, including those from families seeking political asylum, enables them to make very good progress in improving their English.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (n/a)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.7 (n/a)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.5 (n/a)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (n/a)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.1 (n/a)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.5 (n/a)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils show very good attitudes to learning. Behaviour and relationships throughout the school are very good. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour is very good.
- Relationships are very good.
- The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
- Punctuality is good.
- The school is strongly committed to improving further the pupils' rates of attendance.

Commentary

- 5 The pupils enjoy school. They work hard and are enthusiastic about all school activities. Their behaviour is very good. During the past year there have been two exclusions, one fixed period and one permanent, involving two pupils.

- 6 At the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and Reception classes, particular attention is given to promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development. Teachers and support staff provide many opportunities for the children to express their feelings, to share the books, toys and other learning resources, and to develop an increasing awareness of the needs and feelings of others. The children in Reception are on course to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the time they enter Year 1.
- 7 The pupils behave very well in lessons. They work with good concentration and participate enthusiastically in class discussion. Pupils readily help one another in lessons, for example when working on the computers in the ICT suite. The very good relationships which exist within the school community create a warm and friendly environment in which the pupils trust and support one another. All the adults working in the school provide very good role models for the pupils.
- 8 Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire consider their children are treated fairly, expected to work hard and encouraged to become mature and responsible. Almost all are of the opinion that their children like school.
- 9 The pupils move around the school buildings quietly and sensibly. They behave very well in assembly, in the dining rooms and in the playground. Pupil advocates, from Years 5 and 6, have been trained in how to encourage good social interaction in the playground and how to make play times enjoyable for everyone. This is a newly established scheme, and already a very popular 'friendship stop' has been set up in the Year 1 and 2 playground, where pupils can wait if they need a friend to play with. Pupils are given many opportunities, in lessons, to work in collaboration with a partner or as part of a small group. This greatly assists their social development. The reward system is used effectively to encourage helpful, caring attitudes and to foster good teamwork. Very good provision for extra curricular activities, including residential visits for older pupils, strongly support the pupils' all-round development.
- 10 Provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. The whole school behaviour policy is consistently implemented by the teaching and support staff and provides an effective framework for encouraging positive behaviour and sound moral values. The pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and appreciate how unkind words and actions can affect other people. Good procedures are in place for dealing with isolated incidents of bullying and other serious misdemeanours.
- 11 Provision for the pupils' cultural development is very good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the cultures represented in the school and in the local community. They plan a very rich curriculum, with a great deal of multicultural work, particularly in art, music and literacy. The many visitors, including artists, musicians and theatre groups, who come into school to work with the pupils and a very wide range of educational visits contribute significantly to the pupils' personal, social and cultural development.
- 12 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual development. Many opportunities are provided, in lessons and in assemblies, for the pupils to reflect

quietly and thoughtfully on the wonders of modern technology, the beauty in art and music and the value of personal qualities such as creativity, truthfulness and forgiveness. Highly effective use is made of music, in the daily life of the school, to create a calm atmosphere and to promote the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. For example, music is used to signal the end of lessons and the start of assembly. A strong sense of spirituality was evoked when the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils filed into the hall in complete silence, save for the beautiful music that permeated the whole building.

- 13 Arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are good, although attendance remains below the national average. Most absence is due to illness or holidays and the incidence of unauthorised absence is low and broadly in line with the national median. The learning mentor makes a first day response to any unexplained absence and works hard to keep parents fully informed as to the importance of regular attendance in relation to their children's standards and progress. Punctuality throughout the school is good. The vast majority of the pupils arrive on time in the mornings and lessons start promptly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.0
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
294	1	1
2	0	0
12	0	0
24	0	0
4	0	0
4	0	0
3	0	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
6	0	0
16	0	0
24	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **very good**. The school provides a very good curriculum for its pupils and works very effectively to promote their academic and all-round development.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are generally of **very good quality**, and highly effective arrangements are in place for assessing pupils' progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery and Reception classes, good quality teaching helps children to settle quickly and enables them to achieve well in all of the areas of learning.
- At both key stages (Year 1 to 6), the teaching is highly effective in promoting pupils' literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills.
- Consistently effective teaching in science promotes significant progress and high standards.
- Very good teaching in art and design and physical education is reflected in the high quality of pupils' work.
- Support staff work effectively with teachers to meet the particular needs of pupils.

Commentary

- 14 The good teaching, which children receive in the Nursery and Reception classes, helps them to settle quickly and make a good start to their formal education. They acquire confidence in working with other children and develop an increasing sense of independence. The very good use of "circle time" for this purpose is a strong feature in the teaching. The fact that pupils are made to feel secure and confident contributes significantly towards their good progress in all areas of learning.
- 15 As pupils progress through Years 1 to 6, the teaching is highly effective in developing the key skills of learning in English, mathematics and ICT. Teachers show very good levels of knowledge and understanding and draw effectively on national curricular guidance in all three subjects. Teachers and support staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to achieving a good level of personal competence in ICT. The on-site availability of a support technician provides valuable assistance for teachers and ensures that time is not lost when difficulties arise with ICT equipment.
- 16 In the key areas of learning, the very effective use of assessment information is a strong feature in the teaching. This is used carefully to set individual targets for improvements for pupils in English and mathematics, which are shared with the pupils and their parents. The targets help to give pupils a good understanding of their own learning, and enable teachers to measure the pupils' progress with greater accuracy. The effective use of homework contributes significantly to pupils progress. Parents are informed of areas to be covered in various subjects during the term ahead, enabling them to play a part in their children's learning.
- 17 In science, teaching is very effective in promoting high standards, which are reflected in pupils' very good performance in National Curriculum tests. Teaching is consistently of good quality, and pupils' learning is considerably enhanced by high quality resources. In most other subjects, the teaching is usually of at least good quality. Teaching in art and design is highly effective in promoting pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, which is reflected in the rich variety and high quality of art work on display throughout the school. Teaching of physical education is also highly effective, promoting particularly high achievement by pupils in gymnastics, games and swimming.
- 18 Very effective co-operation between teachers and support staff to meet the needs of all pupils is a strong feature throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The increasing emphasis placed on supporting particularly gifted and talented pupils is reflected in their good achievement. Children for whom English is an

additional language, including those belonging to families seeking political asylum, are supported very effectively and achieve very well. The provision of a learning mentor, appointed by the governors and working closely with the home, contributes significantly towards overcoming some of the barriers to learning experienced by a minority of pupils.

- 19 Throughout the school, very good classroom management contributes greatly towards high standards of behaviour and the purposeful atmosphere which exists in the school. Teachers are generally very successful in making all pupils feel valued, taking account of their needs in terms of gender, race, prior attainment and background. This approach increases pupils' confidence and helps them to develop positive attitudes to learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (3.6)	27 (49.1)	20 (36.4)	6 (10.9)	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.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad, relevant and rich curriculum that meets all statutory requirements.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The pupils' personal, social and health education is promoted very effectively.
- Very good opportunities are provided for curriculum enrichment.
- High quality resources for learning provide very good support for the curriculum.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

- 20 Throughout the school, the curriculum is carefully planned and structured to provide effectively for all the required subjects. At the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes), rapid progress has been made in establishing a secure curriculum that enables children to achieve the Early Learning Goals for this age group. Particularly good provision is made for learning in the context of outdoor play. In Years 1 to 6, the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are securely established. National guidance for other subjects is generally followed closely to provide a very good curriculum structure overall. Although some good examples were seen of ICT being used effectively to support work in other subjects, this is not yet a consistent feature in the learning. Planning for pupils to use ICT in work across the curriculum is not sufficiently systematic throughout the school. Opportunities for promoting pupils' literacy skills in work across the curriculum are generally well taken, but there are instances when the over-use of worksheets limits opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills.
- 21 The curriculum is highly inclusive and meets the needs of all pupils very effectively, regardless of gender, race or prior attainment. Boys and girls achieve equal success across the curriculum. Careful analysis of test data enables the school to ensure that the needs of boys and girls are met in curriculum contexts that appeal to both sexes.
- 22 Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Effective procedures have been established for the early identification of specific needs, and provision is reviewed regularly. Individual educational plans are of very good quality, containing targets which are realistic and measurable. Increasingly good provision is

made for pupils who are particularly gifted and talented. They are carefully identified and supported effectively.

- 23 Pupils' personal, social and health education is promoted very effectively in well planned opportunities throughout the curriculum, notably in circle time, religious education, science and collective worship. Citizenship issues are well provided for and involvement in schemes such as the Healthy Schools award further strengthens curriculum provision in this area.
- 24 Provision for curriculum enrichment is of high quality and is greatly appreciated by parents. Pupils' learning is greatly enhanced by a very good range of extra curricular activities. Teachers give freely of their time to provide after school activities such as judo, fencing, gardening and music. A carefully planned programme of day and residential visits provides enriching and stimulating experiences for pupils, and greatly enhances curriculum provision in many subjects such as history, geography, art, music, physical education and literacy. Visitors to school provide further valuable enrichment, such as the visit of a practising chemist to work with Year 6 pupils in a science lesson.
- 25 The accommodation is of good quality and provides a very good indoor environment for teaching and learning. Resources for learning are generally very good and particularly good provision is made for ICT and art in specialist areas. However, the split nature of the site means that the school has to work particularly hard to maintain continuity of curriculum provision. Outside play space is satisfactory for children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2, but the availability of outside space for those in Years 3 to 6 is more limited.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a high level of care for its pupils and gives them very good support, advice and guidance. Good procedures have been established for seeking and acting upon pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides its pupils with a safe and healthy learning environment.
- The school works in close co-operation with a wide range of support agencies.
- Pupils are given very good support, advice and guidance.
- The school makes good arrangements for seeking and acting upon pupils' views.

Commentary

- 26 The school provides a very good level of care for its pupils. Child protection procedures are very good, adhering to guidelines provided by the local education authority. The school buildings are clean, fire procedures are displayed clearly and accidents to pupils are recorded appropriately. The school achieved Healthy School status in 2003.
- 27 Good induction procedures help the youngest children to settle quickly and happily into the Nursery and Reception classes. Throughout their time in the school the

pupils are provided with very good support, advice and guidance. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Before and during the inspection the parents spoke very highly about this aspect of the school. The learning mentor supports pupils and their parents who, for a variety of reasons, are in need of additional support or advice on family matters.

- 28 The school is very inclusive and works in close co-operation with a wide range of support agencies to cater for the specific needs of individual pupils and to ensure that all pupils are fully included and involved in all aspects of school life. The school is closely involved in Liverpool's Attention Deficiency Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Project, which is supported by Liverpool City Council and the Children's Fund. Through the project, not only are the affected pupils and their parents supported, but also staff are helped to develop strategies for dealing with a wide range of behavioural difficulties experienced by other pupils in the school. A recent survey of the whole school, organised by the ADHD Project, resulted in a number of changes to the school's outdoor play provision. These include the appointment and training of pupil advocates from Years 5 and 6, whose job it is to encourage creative play and to make sure that everyone has someone to play with.
- 29 Relationships throughout the school are very good. The pupils enjoy school and have a good understanding of the code of conduct and the system of rewards and sanctions. Reported incidents of bullying and other forms of harassment are rare and recorded appropriately. The local education authority operates a 'negotiated transfer' system, which enables the school to give pupils a fresh start where needed, in order to avoid imposing an exclusion, except as a last resort.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established a very good partnership with parents, other local schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning.
- The quality of the information provided for parents is very good.
- The school has established very good links with other local schools.
- The school has very good links with the community.

Commentary

- 30 The quality of the information provided for parents is very good. Parents are kept fully informed about the life and work of the school through the prospectus, the governing body's annual report, regular newsletters, school notice boards and general correspondence. A formal parents' evening is held every term, when parents and pupils have the opportunity to meet with class teachers and discuss progress made and standards achieved. At the beginning of every term, parents are given detailed information about the planned curriculum and this is very useful, both in helping parents to support their children's learning and in forming a basis for discussion at the termly meetings. In addition to these meetings, the infant department sets aside one evening each week when parents, by appointment, can

come into school to talk to class teachers. Pupils' annual written reports, the format of which is currently under review, provide parents with information about progress in all areas of the curriculum.

- 31 Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning. A number of parents help inside school by listening to readers, helping in classrooms and making learning resources, such as story sacks. Parental support for the home-school reading scheme and for homework in general is having a positive impact on standards throughout the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs meet with the co-ordinator at suitable intervals and are closely involved with setting and reviewing their children's targets and individual education plans.
- 32 The school arranges numerous courses for parents, which encourage and enable them to support their children's education. Currently, a 'Chatterbox' course is helping the parents involved to develop their children's speaking and listening skills. Other courses, organised in conjunction with the local neighbourhood learning centre, include a very helpful 'Kick Start' programme which helps parents to prepare their children for starting school. More general courses, open to parents and the local community, are organised in conjunction with Knowsley Community College. Recent courses have included flower arranging, art and craft, first aid and digital photography. Parents' views are canvassed regularly, as to the type of courses that might be of interest to them.
- 33 The school has established very good links with other local schools. It hosts weekly sessions, organised by Liverpool's ADHD Project, for pupils with this disorder and their parents, open to pupils aged 5 – 13 years from all the local schools. Transition projects with local secondary schools, for example in art and design and design and technology, help to prepare the Year 6 pupils for the next stage of their education. The school also benefits from close liaison with other local primary schools on matters such as school security, the introduction of a 'walking bus' and a joint bid for funding for a toy library.
- 34 The school has very good links with the local community. Church leaders come into school to lead assemblies and police officers, fire officers and health professionals talk to the pupils on aspects of health and personal safety. Educational visits, within and beyond the local area, broaden and enrich the curriculum and strongly support the pupils' personal, social and cultural development. The school choir, the orchestra and the recorder group participate annually in the city's performing arts festival in St. George's Hall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is **very good**. The headteacher provides leadership of a high calibre, and is supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher and senior management team. The governing body works successfully with the headteacher to ensure that statutory requirements are met and to provide an equitable and inclusive school where every child matters.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clear educational vision provided by the headteacher is an important factor in this school's success.
- Hard working and committed leadership by the senior management team contributes significantly to the high quality of provision.
- School improvement planning procedures are well-established and very effective.
- Strong emphasis is placed on the professional development of staff.
- The school is working hard and effectively to overcome the disadvantages presented by the split-site accommodation.

Commentary

- 35 This school has been in existence for just over a year. The very good leadership provided by the headteacher, including his clear educational vision, has made a strong contribution towards the successful amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools. Significant progress has been made in creating a very positive whole school ethos. The headteacher is supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher and senior management team, who contribute strongly towards an increasing sense of continuity and cohesion throughout the school. They, in turn, benefit from the hard work and support of the staff and the enthusiastic and dedicated contribution of the governing body. All of these factors contribute significantly towards the very good quality of provision made for the pupils and their high achievement.
- 36 Governors show very good awareness of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement, and know the school well. The governing body works effectively with the headteacher to meet all statutory requirements, and to ensure that the school provides equality of opportunities for all pupils. Governing body initiatives take full account of the principles of best value. Two examples provide particularly good illustrations of this. Firstly, the steps taken to appoint a learning mentor to work with pupils experiencing barriers to learning and, secondly, the initiative to appoint a support technician for ICT. Both of these initiatives were considered carefully before being implemented. They provide valuable support for pupils and represent very good quality and value for money.
- 37 The governing body, headteacher, senior management team, and co-ordinators for subjects and aspects of learning, co-operate effectively to ensure that pupils are provided with a rich and appropriately challenging curriculum, particularly in key areas, but also in the creative and physical areas of learning. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning and achievement are monitored regularly. Criteria for lesson observations are shared with teachers in advance, and feedback is provided. The information from lesson observation contributes towards agreed targets for improvements as part of performance management.
- 38 Procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress are generally highly effective in the key areas of learning, where they contribute considerably towards pupils' very good achievement. The school is working progressively to strengthen the arrangement for co-ordinating and monitoring subject coverage throughout the curriculum, to ensure a whole-school approach. Despite the fact that much has improved in a short period of time, there is scope for achieving further improvements in the co-ordination and monitoring of some of the subjects outside of the key areas of learning to ensure continuity and consistency throughout the school.

- 39 Very effective school improvement planning procedures are now in place, which enable the school to work systematically towards identified targets. Targets for improvements are identified clearly, appropriate criteria for measuring success are listed and cost and time implications identified. The headteacher and governing body, together with the highly efficient school administration, provide very effective financial management of all resources. This ensures that money is used very effectively to address educational priorities. Strong emphasis is placed on staff training and development. Teachers and support staff benefit from opportunities to attend training designed to enhance their skills in various areas of the curriculum. Some of the school's teachers who are particularly knowledgeable and gifted in certain aspects of the curriculum, share their particular expertise with teachers in other schools as well as with their own colleagues.
- 40 All resources and the accommodation are managed very effectively. Learning resources are of high quality and the accommodation is generally good. The school works hard and successfully to overcome the difficulties presented by the split-site nature of the accommodation, which means that provision for the three to seven year olds and the seven to 11 age-range are housed in separate buildings. Ambitious and imaginative plans for improving the quality of the external learning environment are beginning to be implemented and reflect the school's determination to make the best possible provision for its pupils. All areas of the school are well maintained by an efficient caretaker and cleaning staff. The quality of the learning environment is considerably enhanced by displays of pupils' work, which are of a high standard and used effectively to celebrate pupils' achievement, support their learning and encourage further enquiry.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	705,932
Total expenditure	694,342
Expenditure per pupil	1,458

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	n/a
Balance carried forward to the next	11,590

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children at the Foundation Stage is **good**.

When children start in the Nursery, their attainment levels are generally below what is usual for their age. All children achieve well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment during their time at the Foundation Stage. Good teaching and interesting activities help children to achieve well in the Nursery, although the attainment of many remains below average when they enter Reception. Good teaching in Reception classes enables children to make good progress and achieve the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. This is confirmed by the school's very good assessment procedures, which include detailed profiles completed for each child. Adults observe children closely to assess their progress and teachers use this information very well to plan the next stage of learning.

The accommodation for the children in the Foundation Stage Unit is very good, providing direct access to secure outdoor areas. A highly successful school initiative has involved providing children with increasing access to attractive outdoor areas in order to extend learning outside the classrooms. Throughout the Foundation Stage, learning resources are of very good quality and are used effectively in a stimulating range of practical activities that meet the needs of young children in all areas of learning.

The Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The recently appointed manager has clear educational vision and is strongly supported by teaching and support staff. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. A strong feature is the way adults talk to and question children to develop their speaking and listening skills. Learning is sometimes less effective during parts of the continuous provision activities particularly during afternoon sessions in Reception classes, when some activities offered as a choice to the children lack a clear learning focus.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good arrangements for introducing and settling children into the Nursery.
- Very good emphasis is placed on learning about different cultures.
- Children make very good progress in developing independence.
- Circle time is used very well to promote confidence and self esteem.
- Activities are interesting, so children enjoy coming to school.
- Judicious use of rewards promotes good attitudes and behaviour.
- Children sometimes become restless when kept too long sitting on the carpet.

Commentary

- 41 The high priority given to this area of learning enables children to achieve well. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below average for their age. Good teaching enables most of them to achieve well and reach the recommended goals by the time they enter Year 1. There are very good induction arrangements for introducing children to the Nursery. These include planned visits before they start school and, during the early stages in school, parents are welcomed and encouraged to stay with their children if necessary to help them settle. Children are encouraged to develop independence from the start by putting their

picture name card in the box to show they have arrived in school. Children in Reception respond well to the high expectation placed on them to tidy up, put up their hands to ask questions, and to get themselves changed for physical education.

- 42 The very good use of "circle time" is a strong feature in both Nursery and Reception classes. Children develop confidence and self esteem by completing sentences beginning with, "I can" or "I am good at". Children enjoy the good range of interesting activities on offer and so develop a good attitude to school from an early age. Class rules are clearly explained and the judicious use of praise and stickers promotes good behaviour. Occasionally children are kept a little too long on the carpet in class sessions and so they become restless and lose concentration.
- 43 Staff make considerable efforts to recognise and celebrate the varied cultural backgrounds of the children. The visit and demonstration from a Hindu dancer, for example, was very effective in helping children to learn about Indian music and about celebrations such as Divali.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills.
- Letter sounds are taught systematically.
- Writing skills are less well developed.

Commentary

- 44 The speaking skills of many children are below average when they enter the Nursery. Good teaching enables children to achieve well in communication, language and literacy. As a result, most children reach the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children at the early stages of learning English achieve well and benefit from clear explanations and demonstrations provided by adults.
- 45 Good emphasis is placed on the systematic teaching of letter sounds to develop reading skills. In a good literacy lesson in Reception, for example, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard well to illustrate objects starting with the sound of the week and children were well motivated to learn as they enjoyed moving the objects beginning with "m" across the screen. Initial class introductions are supplemented well by activities such as reading a story about the Monster's Party.
- 46 In many activities, children are invited to "make marks," about what they are doing to develop early writing skills in the Nursery. Children in Reception can write some words to label objects they have drawn. However, the range of opportunities to develop writing skills are less varied than those which are provided for other aspects of communication.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Counting skills are developed well.
- Teachers plan a good range of practical activities to develop an awareness of shape.

Commentary

- 47 Good teaching enables children to achieve well. From below average standards when they enter the Nursery, children make good progress and most reach the recommended early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children in the Nursery learn a good range of number rhymes, which help their counting skills, and good use is made of resources such as number lines in Reception to help children to order and write numbers to ten independently. In a good activity, involving the use of the interactive whiteboard, children in Reception moved teddies around the board when playing a counting game.
- 48 Children develop a good understanding of shapes through a wide range of practical activities. Children in the Nursery can match equipment to their silhouettes and spot which pieces are missing. Good questioning in a numeracy lesson, helped children to recognise a cube as a "popped up square". The good use made of correct mathematical language, to help children learn the names of flat and solid shapes, for example, is a strength in the teaching.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop good computing skills.
- Good use is made of the interesting outdoor area.
- Children learn about a good range of celebrations and festivals.

Commentary

- 49 Teaching is good and children achieve well to attain the recommended goals by the start of Year 1. Children develop good computing skills through teachers' clear explanations and good demonstrations, often making effective use of the interactive whiteboards during lessons, and by using a good range of programs on the computer, for example creating pictures using a paint program.
- 50 A recent development is the planning of a good range of focused activities to enhance learning in the interesting and attractive outdoor areas. Children enjoy looking at the creatures around them, for example a support teacher in the Nursery focused children's attention on a cluster of snails that had appeared on the patio following a spell of wet weather. Older children learned about the effects of the weather as they enjoyed experimenting with equipment in "the windy day box." Festivals and celebrations feature strongly in the curriculum, and so children have gained a good understanding of birthdays, and festivals such as Harvest and Divali.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to use a good range of appropriately selected implements and tools.
- Children use large apparatus with increasing confidence.

Commentary

- 51 Teaching is good. Children achieve well, and the majority reach the recommended early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children learn to use a wide range of tools effectively, for example they colour and cut out their Divali masks accurately and are pleased with the result.
- 52 The hall is very well equipped with appropriate apparatus for this age group. In a very good lesson, the teacher explained and demonstrated movements carefully so that Reception children achieved a good level of skill in jumping and rolling, and in joining movements in a sequence. They extended these movements onto the apparatus with increasing confidence as the teacher, well aided by the Nursery Nurse, provided calm and safe support.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use a good range of techniques and materials.
- There is a good emphasis on singing and moving to music.
- The imaginative play areas sometimes lack a clear focus.

Commentary

- 53 Children benefit from good teaching and achieve well, attaining the recommended early learning goals by the start of Year 1. Children use a good range of materials and techniques to make pictures, from printing with leaves, in the Nursery, to creating colourful bonfire pictures using paint and glitter in Reception. They also experiment with different materials, for example making clay Divali lamps.
- 54 A good feature is the wide range of musical opportunities provided, including singing and playing percussion. In a very good dance lesson, Reception children were inspired by a previous visit from an Indian dancer to move gracefully to the music of the scitar. Children enjoy imaginative play. This was evident when a group of boys created a den using plastic milk crates outside. At times, however, there is scope for greater involvement of adults to enrich the children's learning experiences.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- At both key stages, high quality teaching is the most important factor in promoting high standards of achievement.
- Good planning and highly effective assessment procedures ensure that pupils are challenged appropriately in all aspects of the subject.
- Class teachers and support staff work very effectively to meet the needs of all pupils.
- High quality learning resources are used very effectively.
- The subject is led and managed very effectively.

- In some subjects, the over-use of worksheets limits the development of pupils' writing skills.

Commentary

- 55 In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve highly in speaking and listening, reading and writing and, by the end of Year 2, overall standards in English are above the national average. This judgement is consistent with the most recent National Curriculum test results, which also show the pupils' performance to be well above average compared with those in similar schools. Pupils benefit from high quality teaching, which enables pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, to achieve highly in relation to their capabilities.
- 56 In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment and, by the end of Year 6, standards for age are above those found nationally. This is a better picture than that indicated by the most recent National Curriculum tests. The fluctuation in performance is due to varying ability levels and proportions of pupils with special educational needs in different year groups. Pupils, at all levels of attainment, benefit from challenging work and very effective teaching.
- 57 In speaking and listening, pupils demonstrate well developed skills by the time they move close to the end of their time in the school. They show a capacity to vary expression and vocabulary to engage the listener, and to use their skills confidently to express views and ask questions. They are very competent readers. They read accurately and fluently with good expression, and derive great enjoyment from their reading. They talk confidently about their preferences, in terms of authors and types of books, and explain enthusiastically why they like particular characters in the various stories which they have read.
- 58 Improving pupils' speaking and listening, and writing skills, is a school improvement priority, which is clearly having a positive effect on the quality of pupils' work. In classes for younger pupils, for example, the emphasis placed on good expression when pupils share ideas during literacy lessons makes a significant contribution to speaking and listening skills. As pupils progress through the school, they benefit from a range of opportunities to write at length and for different purposes. They demonstrate increasing skills in adapting their writing to suit different requirements and audience. Some of the extended writing produced by pupils in Year 6 is of a particularly high quality. Their writing is lively and imaginative, making regular use of an adventurous vocabulary.
- 59 Teachers and support staff make very good use of high quality resources to support learning. Well selected texts for the introductory elements of literacy lessons help to stimulate pupils and capture their attention. Very good use is made of interactive whiteboards to present lessons and help pupils to participate during the whole-class elements of lessons. In addition, the imaginative use of items such as phonic fans, enables pupils to build up sounds and words and contribute during whole-class learning activities.
- 60 Class teachers and support staff co-operate successfully to meet the particular needs of individuals and groups of pupils. They take careful account of the pupils' race, gender and ability, and give close attention to assessing and monitoring pupils' performance in order to ensure that they work to their potential.

- 61 Teachers are highly successful in ensuring that all pupils are included and involved appropriately in all aspects of the subject. Very good provision is made for those with special educational needs, who make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The success of the emphasis placed on helping gifted or talented pupils to make progress is reflected in their increasingly good achievement.
- 62 Work in English is led and managed very effectively. Very good curricular planning, which cover all aspects of English effectively, and highly effective assessment procedures ensure that pupils, at all levels of attainment, are challenged appropriately. The setting of individual targets for improvements in various aspects of English, gives pupils a good understanding of their own learning. The targets also help parents to contribute towards their children's learning at home.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 63 Good examples are found of pupils' literacy skills being promoted very effectively during work in other subjects. In religious education, for example, good extended writing enables pupils to apply the skills acquired during literacy lessons to write about their learning in the subject. However, there are instances in some subjects, such as history and geography, when worksheets require too little of the pupils in terms of writing, making only a limited contribution towards the development of their literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematical skills are taught thoroughly and systematically so pupils learn very well.
- Very good assessments are used very effectively to plan challenging work for all pupils.
- Teachers make very good use of resources.
- The pace of most lessons is very good.
- The use of ICT to support learning is inconsistent.

Commentary

- 64 Standards are well above average for the pupils' ages in Years 2 and 6. The proportion of pupils attaining a level higher than expected for their age is above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- 65 Pupils achieve very well throughout the school because very good use is made of thorough, regular assessments to plan work which challenges and supports different groups of pupils according to their needs. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the good level of support in class, from teachers and teaching assistants.
- 66 The overall quality of teaching is very good, and this is a major factor in the very good standards achieved by pupils. A strong aspect is the way in which skills are taught systematically, through clear explanations and regular practice, so pupils develop very good arithmetic skills. Teachers make very good use of resources to demonstrate and to give pupils practical experience to help them understand. This

was seen in a very good lesson in Year 6, for example, when pupils used interlinking shapes to predict and test which arrangements of six squares could be folded to make a cube. Many teachers are now making very good use of the interactive whiteboards to focus pupils' attention and to explain new ideas. Lesson planning in Years 1 and 2 includes opportunities for pupils to make good use of ICT to enhance their learning during group activities. In many classes, however, pupils make insufficient use of ICT to support their work in mathematics. This is an aspect of provision which could be improved further by a more systematic approach to planning of ICT opportunities in the subject. Throughout the school, lessons generally move at a brisk pace, keeping pupils involved and challenging them to think through and explain their strategies. The subject is led and managed very well by two very knowledgeable co-ordinators. Each takes the lead in co-ordinating the subject within the stage of learning for which they have particular responsibility, and they co-operate effectively to promote very good achievement by the pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 67 Good use is made of mathematical skills in other subjects. In design and technology, for example, their accurate measurement is a good feature. In science, pupils produce a variety of graphs to present information following experimental and investigative work, such as that to discover the rate at which sugar dissolves in water. In art and design, work produced by older pupils indicates that very good use was made of their knowledge of geometrical shapes when designing mosaics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very high proportion of pupils achieve standards that are above average in the national tests.
- By the age of 11, pupils have achieved very well in extending their scientific knowledge and enquiry skills.
- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils of all ages in practical lessons are significant factors in their very good achievement.
- Resources for science are plentiful and of high quality.
- The use of ICT to support learning in science is not a consistent feature in the provision.

Commentary

- 68 Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in relation to their capabilities, and their rate of achievement accelerates significantly in Year 6. This is due to challenging teaching within practical contexts that is very effective in developing the pupils' scientific enquiry skills. By the time pupils are seven, standards are slightly above those found nationally and, by the age of 11, pupils' attainment is well above the national average, with nearly all pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in the 2004 National Tests and 61% achieving the higher level 5.

- 69 The quality of teaching is consistently good or better. Teachers have a secure grasp of scientific knowledge and generally high expectations of what pupils can do. In Years 1 and 2, teachers plan interesting lessons that engage pupils of all abilities in practical investigational learning. This is very effective in developing understanding of concepts such as electricity and forces, and promotes high levels of excitement and enthusiasm for learning in science. In a very good lesson in Year 1, for example, pupils learned very effectively about forces, through hands-on exploration of how old toys worked and what magnets could do, and achieved very well in relation to their abilities. Good teaching enables older pupils to build on this very good start, in well planned lessons set firmly in practical contexts that promote very good understanding of scientific enquiry and secure understanding of scientific concepts. The consistent use of planning boards to teach scientific enquiry skills is instrumental in the successful development of older pupils' understanding of how to plan and carry out an investigation. The use of ICT to support learning in science throughout the school has not yet been established consistently. However, some good examples of its successful use in Year 6, show how it contributes significantly towards pupils' scientific learning in data collection and graph generation. Teachers' marking is effective in praising effort and achievement, but there is scope for placing more emphasis on what individual pupils need to do better in order to improve.
- 70 Very effective leadership and management is reflected in the high standards achieved by pupils during their time in the school. The school is still at a relatively early stage following the amalgamation, and the two subject co-ordinators, with specific responsibilities for separate key stages, have had limited opportunities for observing practice throughout the school. This means that the particularly good practice apparent in some year groups is not shared across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Highly effective teaching enables pupils throughout the school to achieve very well.
- Pupils benefit from a well planned programme of work in the subject.
- The subject is led and managed very effectively.
- Very good resourcing has a positive effect on pupils' learning and achievement.
- There is scope for more consistent and systematic use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

- 71 Pupils at both key stages achieve highly in relation to their capabilities and prior attainment. Standards are appropriate for the pupils' age, by Year 2, and above the average for age by Year 6. The curriculum for ICT provides pupils with well-planned and appropriately challenging activities in all aspects of the subject.
- 72 The most important factor in promoting pupils' high achievement is the very good teaching which they receive. Very well planned and organised lessons, in all aspects of ICT, challenge and extend pupils at all levels of attainment, capturing their interest and attention, and stimulating a strong desire to learn.
- 73 The expertise of the support technician is particularly beneficial. In addition to co-operating with class teachers to provide a good level of support for pupils, his ability to address problems quickly means that time is not lost unnecessarily when technical difficulties arise.
- 74 Younger pupils use ICT very effectively to support work in English and mathematics. They gain a good insight into the principles of control technology by programming the Roamer to travel various distances and change directions. They extend their skills in handling information, using ICT generated graphs to represent the findings of class surveys, for example. They show increasingly good skills in communicating information, adjusting the style of texts and incorporating illustrations to enhance text.
- 75 The pupils' ability to use ICT to present their work in ways which meet the requirements of particular purposes and audiences is a strong feature by the end of their time in the school. They adjust the style, shape and colour of text confidently, shift text, using cut and paste techniques, and use illustrations and sound to enhance their presentations. They know how to use spreadsheets, using formulae appropriately to change variables. They show a good understanding of control technology, entering a set of information accurately to programme a screen image and, at a later stage, to control external devices connected to the computer.
- 76 All aspects of ICT are accessible to all pupils, and teachers and support staff take good care to check that boys and girls enjoy the same opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very carefully and make good progress. Opportunities

are also created to ensure that higher attainers, and those that are particularly gifted, are set tasks which challenge and extend them appropriately.

- 77 Work in ICT is led and managed very effectively by the subject co-ordinators. The computer suites and very good resources have a very positive effect on pupils' learning and achievement. The ability to give pupils direct access to computers and other ICT facilities such as digital cameras and sensors for measuring heat loss, sound and light, help to capture pupils' interest, challenge their thinking and extend their learning in the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78 There are some good examples of the imaginative use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects, such as the provision linked to literacy and numeracy lessons for younger pupils. However, this aspect of provision in ICT is not yet firmly established in all classes. There is scope for more systematic planning for ICT in other subjects to ensure greater consistency in the coverage.

HUMANITIES

Geography

No geography lessons were seen and so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in the subject. However, pupils' work in books and on display throughout the school was evaluated and discussion took place with a sample of older pupils about their geographical learning. This evidence indicates that standards in Years 2 and 6 are similar to those expected nationally. Teachers of younger pupils provide learning contexts that are well matched to the ages of the pupils and enable them to recognise similarities and differences between their own locality and contrasting areas at home and overseas. In Year 1, a particularly well-planned activity enabled pupils to make direct comparisons between the human and physical features of their home area and nearby Hale village. This enabled them to achieve well in developing basic geographical study skills and vocabulary.

Although available evidence indicates that the programme of work for older pupils is generally satisfactory, the current curricular organisation leads to some deficiencies which need attention in order to ensure that pupils develop the geographical skills, knowledge and vocabulary of which they are capable. There are some good examples of work in geography contributing to the development of pupils' literacy skills but some teachers rely heavily on worksheet-based tasks which limit opportunities for pupils to use and extend their writing skills.

History

Insufficient lessons were seen to make a secure judgement about provision in the subject. Work on display in Years 1 and 2 and teachers' planning indicate that standards are similar to those expected for the ages of the pupils in these year groups and that the teaching is good. Lessons are based securely in contexts suitable for the ages of the pupils and this is very successful in helping pupils to recognise differences between past times and the present. A visit to Speke Hall provided a vibrant basis for learning about Tudor daily lives, while a study of old toys brought childhood in the more recent past alive for pupils.

The work produced by older pupils indicates that standards are generally appropriate for the pupils' age. Visits to relevant destinations, such as the Egyptology Section at Liverpool Museum and the Roman Museum in Chester, are effective in providing pupils with good opportunities to explore primary and secondary sources of information about the past. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils increased their understanding of aspects of Victorian life significantly through the close examination of domestic items of the period, and their interest and enthusiasm was very apparent. The work produced by pupils in some classes, from Years 1 to 5, indicates that the tasks set are sometimes not sufficiently challenging in developing appropriate historical study skills, particularly for higher attaining pupils.

A good feature in the teaching is the way in which pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed through planned drama and role-play activities linked to work in history. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' communication skills. In some year groups, however, the over-use of work sheets, with questions which require only a few words in the answers, restricts opportunities for pupils to increase their writing skills. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory but there is room for further development of the coordinator role to include closer monitoring of standards and subject quality, particularly in relation to the key elements of history study.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum meets fully the requirements of the Liverpool Agreed Syllabus.
- Pupils acquire a very good understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths.
- The quality of teaching is very good.

Commentary

79 Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and prior attainment. By Years 2 and 6, standards are at least appropriate for the pupils' age and some of the work is of a high quality. The programme of work meets fully the requirements of the new Liverpool Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and makes very good provision for all pupils.

80 Very effective teaching enables pupils to achieve a good knowledge and understanding of stories and issues arising from Christianity and other major world religions. This was evident, for example, when pupils in Year 6 studied four stories from different cultures which were all linked in some way to the Christmas story. They were able to identify the common themes and relate aspects of the story to their everyday lives. In another lesson, younger pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of the Jewish celebration of Hannukah and the Christian symbolism of Christingle. The teaching in religious education is very good and the subject is well led and managed. Pupils benefit from educational visits to local places of worship, which extend their knowledge of their own community as well as their religious knowledge.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well led and managed by a highly skilled co-ordinator.
- There is a very good balance between learning skills and creativity.
- Resources are very good.

Commentary

- 81 By Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards which are clearly above average for their ages, and all pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities.
- 82 Teaching is of a very good quality. In the lessons observed, teachers showed a high level of expertise, and used this very effectively to demonstrate how pupils could improve their work. Pupils' skills are developed systematically, making very good use of sketch books to capture and record ideas. Teachers have a very good understanding of different techniques, and use high quality resources so that pupils achieve very good results. This was evident, for example, in one of a series of lessons in Year 5, where pupils had researched the work of William Morris to inspire their designs, which they painted very effectively onto silk.
- 83 Art and design makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development through the study of famous artists and by taking inspiration from other cultures, as in the African masks created by Year 2. The school derives great benefit from the very good leadership, management and expertise of an advanced skills teacher who provides training and support for colleagues in school and for teachers in other schools. Very effective subject leadership is a strong factor in the very good standards achieved.

Design and technology

Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements it was not possible to observe sufficient lessons to make an overall judgement on provision in this subject. However, examination of work completed previously indicates that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met fully. A particularly good feature in the provision is the careful way in which pupils look at and evaluate a range of commercial products before designing their own. This was seen in Year 6, where pupils looked at a variety of gazebos and survival equipment, before designing a shelter. In Year 1, the teacher pointed out important features of commercially produced pop-up puppets, to give pupils a clear idea of factors to be taken into consideration when producing their own products.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit greatly from the expertise of a music specialist.
- The subject is well resourced.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Many pupils benefit considerably from participation in extra-curricular activities.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

84 Pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are appropriate in terms of the pupils' age and some pupils achieve above the levels expected for age. Throughout the school, pupils benefit greatly from the teaching provided by specialist musicians. Twelve pupils have achieved well in Associated Board Examinations in clarinet, flute and violin. Pupils benefit from the fact that the subject is well resourced. The school has a good range of quality tuned and untuned percussion instruments, which are used effectively to support the pupils' learning. Pupils are taught to hold percussion instruments correctly. In Year 4, for example, pupils played and sang a calypso carol very effectively to their own accompaniment. They were able to adjust volume appropriately, playing quieter and louder as necessary. In Year 4, pupils were able to identify repeated phrases and instruments in a recording of 'Loopy Weather' and used correct vocabulary when doing so. Throughout the school, teaching of a consistently good quality successfully captures and holds the interest of the pupils and motivates them to work hard. The subject is well led and managed and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in dance and gymnastics.
- Pupils benefit greatly from extra-curricular activities.
- Many pupils achieve particularly high standards in swimming.
- The quality of teaching is very good.

Commentary

- 85 At both key stages, pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment. Standards for age are at least appropriate, by the time pupils are seven, and are above average by the age of 11. Throughout the school, the programme of work meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum and the needs of all pupils. Pupils are included and involved in all aspects of the work, and careful account is taken of their particular requirements in terms of gender, race and ability levels. In all aspects of the work, pupils are helped greatly by very good quality teaching and by a highly relevant programme of work, which is led and managed very effectively by the subject leaders.
- 86 In dance and gymnastics, pupils achieve very well and reach good standards. They use space very effectively, and move in different directions, varying their speed and the levels at which they work in response to teacher guidance and music. They transfer their work effectively from floor to small apparatus, working purposefully and demonstrating very good quality movement and finishing techniques. In games, pupils at both key stages develop very good skills through practice, and are able to apply them in competitive situations. Many pupils benefit greatly from extra-curricular sporting activities, which include opportunities to participate in soccer, netball and athletics competition with other schools.
- 87 In swimming, nearly all pupils complete at least 25 metres unaided, before leaving the school at the end of Year 6, and many achieve higher standards. For example, a significant proportion of Year 6 pupils are on course to achieving the Honours Award, which includes being able to swim 1000 metres, by the end of the current school year.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's own timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe lessons in this area of the school's work and, therefore, no judgements are made about overall provision. Careful examination of curricular planning and pupils' work, and discussion with pupils, staff and parents, indicate that the school places strong emphasis on this aspect of its work. The programme of study focuses on four main areas: personal development, citizenship, health and safety and relationships. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 follow the 'Health for Life' scheme of work. Younger pupils are taught through carefully planned work in a number of subjects, including science, religious education, literacy and history. Circle time takes place throughout the school and provides the pupils with valuable opportunities to share their experiences and express their feelings on topics such as bullying, playground rules and how to be a good friend.

Very good provision for extra curricular activities, particularly in music and sport, contribute significantly to the pupils' personal and social development. Fund raising for numerous

charities heightens the pupils' awareness of the needs of others and makes an important contribution towards their development as world citizens. Visiting speakers, such as health professionals, charity workers, church leaders and police officers, increase the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the role they themselves might play in helping to create a positive and supportive local community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	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	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7); not applicable (8).