

INSPECTION REPORT

Knowsley Central Primary Support Centre

Liverpool

LEA Area: Knowsley

Unique Reference Number:104500

Inspection Number: 66833

Head-Teacher: Mrs P G Thomas

Reporting inspector: Mr A Simm
21138

Dates of inspection: 06/12/1999 - 10/12/1999

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
Type of control:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mossbrow Road Huyton Merseyside L36 7SY
Telephone number:	0151 489 5024
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: (Where appropriate)	Cllr E Robb BEM
Date of previous inspection:	10/06/1996 - 14/06/1996

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David Russell		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Links with Parents and the Community Efficiency of the School
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Jennifer Taylor	English Information Technology Art	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Integration
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils, including those with additional and more complex difficulties, make very good progress.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are very good; their relationships and personal development are excellent.
- All staff and governors have a total commitment to increasing standards and providing the best quality education for all of the pupils.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall, and is very well supported by learning support staff. This has a significant effect on pupils' achievement and progress.
- The curriculum is effective and exciting and is enriched by links with the community.
- The centre's literacy and numeracy strategies are very effective and impact positively across the curriculum
- The centre's provision for spiritual and cultural development is very good and is excellent for moral and social development. Everyone is valued. The 'Code of Conduct' permeates the whole centre and is understood by the pupils.
- The partnerships with parents are very good. These partnerships make very significant contributions to the quality of pupils' progress.
- Accommodation is very good. The centre has undergone a planned programme of refurbishment and re-decoration to a high standard, which has resulted in a very attractive and stimulating learning environment. The site manager contributes substantially to this.
- The centre cares for the pupils extremely well and is very conscious of promoting pupils' wellbeing.
- Integration programmes with local mainstream schools are very good. Close liaison between the centre and receiving schools results in very good joint planning and monitoring systems.
- The effect of the headteacher and governors upon the leadership of the centre and in raising standards is substantial. The centre is excellently led and managed. The monitoring of teaching is significant in raising pupils' standards. Financial planning and day to day control by the centre's administrator is very good. The headteacher has achieved a very successful 'corporate vision' for development. The current leadership is excellently placed to improve the school even further.

Where the school has weaknesses

Knowsley Central Primary Support Centre is a very good school. It has many strengths and no significant weaknesses.

• **How the school has improved since the last inspection**

The centre has very clear priorities for development. These are linked very well to staff development; all staff are trained and knowledgeable in child protection issues and some staff are trained in first aid. The centre now has an effective assessment policy, including baseline assessment, which is monitored very well by a co-ordinator. Teachers now have an agreed approach to planning, and the curriculum for the centre is co-ordinated very well and is very effective. The centre now has policies in place for physical education; personal, social and health education(PSHE); and the daily act of collective worship. Both of the curriculum policies have had a marked effect on raising standards particularly in teachers identifying opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to be more independent. Overall, whilst pupils' spiritual development is now very good, only the minimum statutory requirements of a daily collective act of worship are met for all pupils. All issues connected with the accommodation that were raised at the time of the last inspection, have been addressed in a very well planned programme of alterations, additions and refurbishment. The centre's heating system is still difficult to regulate but the governors are continuing to investigate ways of ensuring that classrooms do not become too warm. A very effective senior management team is now in place with a very clear corporate view for developing further all aspects of the centre. They are excellently placed to improve the centre even further.

• **Whether pupils are making enough progress**

Progress in:	By 5	By 11	Key	
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	<i>very good</i>	A
English:			<i>good</i>	B
Listening and speaking	A	A	<i>satisfactory</i>	C
Reading	B	A	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
Writing	B	A	<i>poor</i>	E
Mathematics	A	A		
Science	B	A		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	A		

*IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs

By the age of eleven, pupils, including those with additional and more complex difficulties, make very

good progress overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in religious education. The very good progress in English and mathematics is also evident in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Many of the foundation subjects are restricted in time on the timetable. Judgements of progress in these subjects are made in relation to the time that is available. Progress in design and technology, geography, history and physical education is very good across the centre and is good in art. Progress in information technology is satisfactory. Insufficient evidence was available to make a judgement in music. Progress across the centre in pupils personal, social and health education(PSHE) is very good, and in meeting the challenging targets set in IEPs and in other areas of the curriculum. Improvements in the quality of teaching, curricular planning, pupils' response to lessons, in particular, their level of independent work, and the quality and use of resources have all contributed to a significant increase in standards since the last inspection.

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• **Quality of teaching**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Up to 5 years	Good	PSHE and speaking and listening	
5 – 11 years	Very good	Science at Key Stage 1	Information technology
English	Very good		
Mathematics	Very good		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Excellent		

Overall the quality of teaching is very good and is one of the most significant strengths of the centre. No teaching is less than satisfactory. Teaching is at least good in just over nine out of every ten lessons, and at least very good in very nearly half of all lessons. Very good teaching occurs in some lessons in every classroom in the centre and there are examples of excellent teaching at both Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and its quality has a direct effect upon the progress made by the pupils in their achievements, personal and social development, confidence and self-image.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses

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Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Behaviour is very good in class, around the centre, and in the community. Pupils' self-control is generally outstanding. No instances of racist misbehaviour, bullying or sexism were seen.
Attendance	Good and above the national average for similar types of school. Pupils are very punctual for lessons and this reflects their enthusiasm for their work.
Ethos*	The centre offers pupils an excellent learning environment. Staff, governors, pupils and parents are committed to the highest possible standards.
Leadership and management	The centre is excellently led and managed. Financial planning, controls and administration are very good. One of the main reasons for the centre's significant improvement in the last three years is the headteacher's success in achieving a 'corporate vision'.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced, exciting and reflects the aims and

<p>Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development</p> <p>Staffing, resources and accommodation</p>	<p>values of the centre extremely well. It is highly relevant to the pupils' needs and interests. It provides appropriate challenges to all the pupils as they progress through the centre. Assessment is continuous and very good</p> <p>Very good overall with moral and social provision outstanding. The 'Code of Conduct' permeates the whole centre.</p> <p>Accommodation and learning resources meet the demands of the curriculum extremely well. The satisfactory number of staff are very well experienced and the arrangements for their further professional development are very good.</p>
<p>Value for money</p>	<p>The very good provision and standards achieved by the centre mean that it gives very good value for money despite the high costs per pupil.</p>

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

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The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- I. It is approachable and open to parental partnership
- II. Its values and attitudes have a positive effect on children
- III. Children like the centre
- IV. The good level of information about children's progress and about the centre's life in general

What some parents are not happy about

- V. All parents who responded to the th the inspectors were completely happy with the

Inspectors' judgements support parents' very positive views.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

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There are no key issues for the centre to address but, in the context of its many strengths, the following minor points for improvement should be considered as the basis for an action plan.

* Ensure the accuracy of the data collected for comparative purposes so that its use can be fully effective; (Paragraph 68)

* Ensure the technical problems with the new computer network are overcome and that

all staff are confident and competent with the new hardware and software;
(*Paragraphs 67,74,78,96,102,110,136*)

- * Rectify the omissions from the centre's prospectus and the governor's report to parents; (*Paragraph 62, 68*)
- * Introduce a charging policy which includes the issue of any charges to pupils for their education. (*Paragraph 68*)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 Knowsley Central Primary Support Centre is a maintained special school for pupils aged between 3 and 11 years who have moderate and complex learning difficulties. The centre is funded for 67 pupils and has 72 pupils on roll; 44 boys and 28 girls. Currently, approximately 20 of the pupils have more complex difficulties. This includes 5 pupils identified as being on the autistic spectrum and 6 pupils with behavioural difficulties. Nursery and reception pupils are taught together. One under fives pupil in this class attends the centre on a part-time basis.

2 Pupils attend the centre from Huyton, which is an area of considerable social deprivation. Fifty three pupils are eligible for free school meals and whilst this has reduced slightly since the last inspection, it is still very high in comparison to other schools. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils have English as an additional language. Sixty five pupils have statements of special educational needs.

3 The centre provides part-time places for 26 pupils with specific learning difficulties who are on the roll of other schools. It also offers support to a geographically defined cluster of 19 mainstream primary schools and 4 secondary schools. This involves working with pupils at Stage 3 of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, and supporting them as requested with other stages. This work is financed through service-level agreements and does not form part of the inspection.

4 The centre has recently been awarded 'beacon school' status as part of an initiative to further extend the centre's service to mainstream schools.

5 The main aims of the centre are:

- to provide appropriate, exciting and motivating learning experiences with a broad and balanced approach to the National Curriculum; modified where necessary to meet the individual needs of the child;
- to successfully return pupils to mainstream education when appropriate;
- to provide high but realistic goals in all aspects of learning;
- to provide a stable and consistent approach to all aspects of behaviour;
- to provide a stimulating and attractive environment
- to provide a positive commitment to work in partnership with parents and professional services in promoting the best interests of the children;
- to provide high quality support in both material and human resources to the staff and pupils of associated schools;
- to provide equal opportunities for all members of the centre community;
- to be aware of the impact we have on our environment; to work together to improve our school and grounds.

• **Key indicators**

6 **National Curriculum Statutory Assessment Results 1998/99**

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

12 pupils

English	Level W	Level 1	Level 2
Speaking and listening	70% (33% ⁰)	30% (50%)	(17%)
Reading	50%	50% (100%)	
Writing	90% (100%)	10%	
Mathematics	50%	50% (100%)	
•	50% (17%)	50% (82%)	

¹ Percentage in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

15 pupils

	Level W	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
English	7%	13% (31%)	80% (69%)		
Mathematics	7%	13%	60% (92%)	20% (8%)	
Science*	7%		40% (33%)	40% (67%)	7%

* One child was absent

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised	School	%
	Absence	National comparative data	7.2%
	Unauthorised	School	0.5%
	Absence	National comparative data	3%

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:	Fixed period	Number
	Permanent	0%

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:	Very good or better	%
	Satisfactory or better	49%
	Less than satisfactory	100%

² Percentage in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

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· **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**
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· **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

· **Attainment and progress**
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7 It is inappropriate to judge attainment of pupils for whom the centre caters against national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in the pupils' statements, annual reviews and individual education plans. In this report, progress is reported during or at the end of key stages. Pupils are making better progress than they were at the time of the last inspection in their achievement judged against prior attainment. This is as a result in improvements in all areas of provision, in particular, teaching and the curriculum.

8 Overall progress for the children under five in the Nursery and Reception class is at least good in all areas of learning and very good in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal and social development. The children also they make very good progress in the swimming aspect of physical development; it was not possible to see enough work in other aspects to make a judgement.

9 Pupils, including those with additional and more complex difficulties, make very good progress overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in religious education. The very good progress in English and mathematics is also evident in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Many of the foundation subjects are restricted in time on the timetable. Judgements of progress in these subjects are made in relation to the time that is available. Progress in geography, history and physical education is very good across the centre and is good in art. Progress in information technology is satisfactory. Insufficient evidence was available to make a judgement in music. Progress across the centre in pupils personal, social and health education(PSHE) is very good. Improvements in teaching, curriculum planning, pupils' response to lessons, in particular, their level of independent work, and the quality and use of resources have all contributed to a significant increase in standards since the last inspection.

10 In English pupils make very good progress. This is equally good in speaking and listening, reading and writing. At Key Stage 1, pupils listen very attentively, seldom interrupt their friends, relate what they know and occasionally predict what will happen. By the end of Key Stage 2 most children have extended their vocabulary and are able to use such words as 'acrostic' in the appropriate context. They can express their ideas in complete sentences, most recall and recount events accurately and fluently. In reading at Key Stage 1, pupils understand that text is used for reading. Some pupils read simple sentences but often forget the story once it has been read; others still guess at the text and have little to say about the pictures. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils develop a range of strategies to help them read. Many can use simple phonic strategies whilst others use picture clues especially in 'big books'. They recognise letter combinations and identify them in words. At Key Stage 1 writing skills develop so that most children can write their name unaided. Several children can copy given phrases or sentences and a minority are attempting to write independently. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils experience a wide range of writing for different purposes such as lists, poems, letters and diary accounts in addition to story writing. Many pupils can write independently using a clear form of cursive handwriting.

11 In mathematics, progress is very good across the centre. At Key Stage 1 pupils recognise and count numbers up to 20. They understand the concept of more than and less than and build up number stories to 10. They have a firm understanding of forwards, backwards and middle and use these words competently over a range of activities. When making comparison between the weight of two toys they are able to say that one is light and the other heavy, and make very good progress using the balance scales to check their findings. They use their knowledge well in other lessons such as weighing ingredients in food technology. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know and understand that to add two numbers together they must hold the largest number 'in their head'. They demonstrate this by adding 90 and 3 together and explaining how they achieved their answer. Most have a firm grasp of numbers to 100. They are able to explain how they successfully achieve the answer to 64-59 using mental strategies such as 'count back from 64'. Some pupils use number lines and number squares to aid them in these activities. When using fractions pupils know and understand that fractions are equal portions and comment that otherwise it wouldn't be fair if they weren't. They use games to consolidate understanding.

12 In science, pupils make very good progress at both Key Stages 1 and 2 and on occasions in Years 2 and 3, some of the work of the more able pupils is very close to national expectations. At Key Stage 1, pupils name and discuss different sources of light such as the sun, stars, fires and lamps. They tentatively describe the difference between light and dark, begin to understand the concepts involved and know they need to have their eyes open to 'see' light. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils know that sounds 'end up in your ear' for them to be heard. They know this involves vibrations and investigate this using drums and tuning forks. They know how to test for vibrations when they cannot easily be seen. By the end of the key stage, they carry out practical investigations to help them understand absorption and have a simple understanding of the angle of reflection and develop an awareness that the angle between two mirrors affects the number of reflections observed.

13 Pupils make very good progress in religious education at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils know clearly the sequence of the Nativity Story and use the stable and figures to demonstrate the events. They know when Christmas is and have some understanding of the difference between giving and receiving. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils study Christianity alongside other religions and are aware of some aspects of festivals such as Hanukkah and Divali. They know the religious significance of different foods and how light is used as a means of celebration across different faiths.

14 In most other subjects, progress is also very good. In design and technology at Key Stage 1, pupils design vehicles and discuss these with others. They label their designs and make their models with much adult help. Subsequently, the efficiency of the vehicles is tested and evaluated by rolling them down a slope. By the end of the Key Stage 2, pupils are much more independent and make decisions. They plan their lesson with the teacher and decide the order in which they need to progress. They know the order of a design project and use computer aided design satisfactorily in support of a lighthouse project incorporating a simple electrical circuit; some pupils extend this to include a 'built-in' switch. In geography, at Key Stage 1, pupils study the centre and local community and contrast this with a different location such as the seaside or a farming area. The pupils develop an awareness of the wider world through the use of the continuous theme 'where in the world is Barnaby Bear'. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know about rivers, water and mountains, and go on field trips such as orienteering at Kinder reservoir. In history at Key Stage 1, pupils make comparisons between being alive now to a long time ago. They understand the differences and similarities between toys of today and those of the past. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils develop an understanding of the slave system. They come to the conclusion that Roman

Roads were straight so that the soldiers would be able to travel to London more easily and in studying Ancient Greece, they enjoy remembering new words such as 'marathon' and 'Sparta'. In physical education at Key Stage 1, pupils creep and skip around the room, changing direction and stopping to the beat of the tambourine. They develop control, co-ordination, balance and poise in the basic actions of travelling, skipping, hopping and stillness. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make very good progress in gymnastics and games. They understand the importance of warming up and the changes that happen to their body when they exercise. They are familiar with the vocabulary of gymnastics and can comment that a pupil is in 'control,' when he holds his balance. In games, most pupils travel with a large ball whilst bouncing and keeping it under control. Attainment of some pupils is close to that expected for pupils of this age.

• 15 Progress in art is good at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 pupils cut, glue given shapes and make observational drawings from artefacts for which they need a high level of adult support to complete their tasks. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils can work independently. Their manipulative skills have developed and they cut, paint, sew using a basic stitch and stick various materials together with a greater degree of accuracy. They show a developing understanding of the effects of mixing colours and of design and colour contrasts when making mosaic patterns. They produce paintings in the style of Monet, Van Gogh and Kandinsky and in so doing study the effects of colour and differing paint techniques. On occasions pupils make good use of the computer program 'Paint' as an alternative medium.

16 Progress in Information Communication Technology is satisfactory overall including in other subjects across the curriculum such as the use of a block graph to record the findings of a survey of street furniture in mathematics. At Key Stage 1 pupils control the cursor using a mouse to 'Dress Teddy' and talk about what they are doing. By the end of Key Stage 2 some pupils use basic word processing skills to delete, space and insert words. At the end of the 1999 school year, the centre's comparative data shows that all pupils could enter, save, redraft and print including text and graphics. Some pupils access the internet without adult help.

17 Owing to timetabling and the organisation of the inspection, no lessons in music were observed during the inspection week. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement about pupils' progress.

18 Progress across the centre in pupils' personal, social and health education(PSHE) is very good. Pupils work very well in groups and as a class. As they become older, they become confident in undertaking self-supporting independent work. In circle time they discuss, as a group, issues that are of importance to them which often involves expressing their feelings. This they do very well, sharing their concerns within a secure and stable environment. They talk about happiness and sorrow and give examples from their own experiences. Pupils support each other, such as in a science lesson where they discuss how a kaleidoscope works or in English where they make very good suggestions to improve their writing. Pupils respect each other's views and listen, particularly when there is a discussion session. Most wait for their turn to speak without calling out or interrupting. They celebrate each other's successes and are pleased when they receive a reward. Everyone works well together regardless of his or her gender or learning difficulty.

• **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

19 The very good relationships that exist between pupils and between staff and pupils contribute significantly to the excellent ethos that exists within the centre. All pupils respond very well to the encouragement and the positive discipline approach which all members of staff use and most pupils try hard to do their best. Pupils enjoy coming to the centre each day and there is a policy of not excluding pupils but working with them to resolve their difficulties whatever they may be. Personal and social education is a strength of the centre.

20 Most children under the age of five start at the centre with low self-esteem and poor social development. They respond very well to the hard work and efforts that staff make initially in the Nursery and Reception class, and subsequently by staff in the rest of the centre, to encourage confidence and self-worth. Some are able to work on activities not directly supervised by staff. Although staff work consistently well with the children and they make good progress, many of them at the age of five are still immature socially and can only concentrate on tasks for short periods of time.

21 At both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, most pupils show very good standards of behaviour. Pupils learn self-discipline and self-control through the commitment of the centre to the code of conduct. Pupils know this well and it is referred to each day at appropriate points for positive reinforcement or if behaviour of pupils is not meeting the high standard set by the centre. No instances of racist misbehaviour, bullying or sexism were seen. Pupils are polite, helpful and friendly towards visitors. They are proud of their centre and take care of it.

22 Pupils' behaviour is very good overall in the classrooms, the dining room and around the centre. Targets are set for personal and social education and these are known clearly by the pupils. Pupils are reminded of the targets at appropriate times during the day both as a positive approach to maintaining high standards and on the occasions when pupils are not achieving them appropriately. Pupils reflect on the targets and this is very effective as they focus on how they should be conducting themselves.

23 Most pupils are consistently interested in their work and show enthusiasm about the tasks presented. For example, they enjoyed the Advent wreath, and making candles for their work on festivals of light and using mirrors for reflections. The Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 children enjoyed taking part in the Nativity story and being dressed up in costumes for the whole centre's collective worship. In most classes pupils continue to learn how to concentrate for longer periods of time. Although some pupils can lose their concentration for short periods they are well managed and supported and with help they complete their work.

24 Pupils usually work well in groups and as a class. As the pupils get older they become confident in undertaking self-supporting, independent work. For example in circle time the older pupils are able to discuss, as a group, issues that are of importance to them. This often involves expressing their feelings which they do sharing their concerns within a secure and stable environment. They talk about happiness and sorrow and give examples from their experiences to support these. Pupils support each other, such as in a science lesson where pupils working in an independent group helped each other and talked about how a kaleidoscope would work. In an English lesson pupils make good suggestions to improve their writing. Pupils respect each other's views and listen particularly when there is a discussion session. Most wait for their turn to speak without calling out or interrupting others. They celebrate each other's successes and are pleased when they receive a reward. All pupils work well together regardless of gender or ability. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in pupils' personal development; their independence and initiative are outstanding. This area of development is excellent and is as a direct result of staff

planning opportunities for this in lessons, in lunchtime clubs and throughout the centre's day.

25 Pupils respond well to the opportunities presented to take on responsibilities. In the Nursery and Reception class children enjoy taking the register to the office with an adult. Older pupils are prefects and have a range of duties round the centre; they water the plants, help with the youngest children at playtimes and look after the library. They make a good contribution to the running of the centre's community.

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· **Attendance**

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26 Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is good at 92.3%. This is above the national average for similar schools. Unauthorised absence is very low at 0.5%. Statutory requirements are met. Pupils enjoy coming to the centre because the positive environment is attractive and inviting. Very rarely are they late for lessons. This good level of attendance and punctuality reflects the pupils' enthusiasm for their work, which has a very positive effect on their progress.

· **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

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· **Teaching**

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27 Overall the quality of teaching is very good and is one of the most significant strengths of the centre. No teaching is less than satisfactory. Teaching is good or better in just over nine out of every ten lessons, and very good or better in very nearly half of all lessons. There is very good teaching in some lessons in every classroom in the centre and examples of excellent teaching at both Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is now greater efficiency in medium and long term planning supported by resource packages, and in assessing and recording pupils' achievements. The management of lessons has improved and now follows the style of the 'literacy hour'. Pupils are encouraged to take a full and active part in their learning. All of these improvements have had a direct effect upon the progress made by the pupils, in their achievements, personal and social development, confidence and self-image.

28 With the pupils generally aged under five years, teaching is good in all areas of learning with some very good teaching seen in language and literacy. Good teaching occurs when children are well managed and are encouraged to join in fully and there are consistent references to personal development. Support is given consistently during lessons. This motivates pupils and ensures that they give of their best. On occasions there is very good dialogue between the pupils and all staff which encourages pupils to listen very carefully and respond accordingly. At all times teachers and support staff work well as a team and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Very good activity boxes for children to take home are readily available and used to help pupils to develop their skills. Long term planning is very thorough and there is a smooth transition from the focus of the Desirable Learning Outcomes to the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum.

29 At Key Stage 1, teaching in the core subjects of English and mathematics, and in religious education is very good; in science it is excellent. In one lesson about 'light and dark', the teacher

expertly used intonation and pitch in her voice, and non-verbal signals to build up the excitement in the pupils. Excellent questioning made the pupils think about where, when and how they could use different sources of light; it 'teased' out the answers from pupils and subtly helped those short of ideas but without telling them. In other subjects observed during the inspection such as art, history and physical education, it is good or better.

30 At Key Stage 2, teaching in English and art is good and in all other subjects observed during the inspection, it was very good overall. Thorough planning is backed up by a broad range of very good quality resources; which are extremely well organised and readily available. This is a feature of the whole centre. In one design and technology lesson, a broad range of good quality resources was prepared and readily available to pupils for their 'winding mechanisms' module. Pupils were expertly encouraged to choose their own resources appropriate for their plans for models representing nursery rhymes. Teaching encouraged improvement in their skills of cutting, gluing, fixing and decorating but with a freedom to make choices and improvements without fear of criticism or failure. The readiness of resources and resource packages allows teachers to concentrate on their planning for individual lessons, and for the pupils with more complex needs. No matter the pupil's ability or the additional learning difficulty, staff expect all pupils to achieve and progress at as high a level as possible. Most pupils rise to this challenge which is a feature of most lessons. On very rare occasions that some pupils become uninterested in activities, staff re-focus their interest gently but purposefully to ensure that the majority of pupils continue unaffected. The high expectations and the management of the pupils are outstanding.

31 Teachers and support assistants have a secure knowledge in most areas of the curriculum. Difficulties with the centre's computer network is currently causing frustration and varying levels of confidence with its use. Despite this, staff work with energy, enthusiasm and humour. Teachers use a consistent style of approach to lessons. This involves initial discussion and recap of previously covered work; the introduction or development of the objectives for the lesson; and whole class teaching of new facts or skills, often using discussion and questioning very carefully to probe the ideas and assess the understanding of the pupils. Depending on the age and ability of the pupils, or the type of lesson, an appropriate level of independent or investigative work is included, and all pupils are expected to have some record of their work and to evaluate how successful they have been in the lesson. The teaching seen during the inspection ranged between satisfactory and excellent. Excellent teaching achieves the perfect balance between the different parts of the lesson; in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunity to take part in the discussions and that all pupils are purposefully occupied during the investigative parts of the lesson. On extremely rare occasions at Key Stage 2, teaching in science, mathematics, art and religious education does not achieve an appropriate balance between pupils' independent work and work directed by the teacher, and pupils have insufficient opportunity to express their own thoughts.

32 Homework is used well both formally and informally to encourage pupils to become more independent learners. Reading provides a major focus but the pupils often extend this themselves, with the older and more able pupils carrying out writing and research independently.

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• **The curriculum and assessment**

33 Since the last inspection, the centre has made considerable improvements in curricular

planning and has successfully implemented these initiatives across the whole centre. There are now policies and schemes of work for every subject that follow National Curriculum requirements. A strength of the work on the curriculum is the way in which all teachers have not only been part of its development, but have also agreed a common approach for planning, and teaching. This promotes a consistency that is very important in ensuring pupils' progress.

34 The curriculum is broad, balanced and exciting, and reflects the aims and values of the centre extremely well. It is highly relevant to the pupils' needs and very successfully addresses their interests. It provides appropriate challenges to all of the pupils as they progress through the centre. The centre has decided on a balance of curriculum-time between the subjects. This balance is high in its allocation of time to English and mathematics at both key stages but it is judged to be appropriate to the needs of the pupils. Steps are being taken to compensate for any shortage of time in other subjects by planning for cross-curricular themes such as in design and technology, art, geography and history. This is enhanced by 'block weeks' on topic work such as the recent 'Health Week'.

35 The curricular planning for the under fives in both the long and medium term for the Nursery and Reception children, is good. It covers the six areas of learning and leads to nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age group. Short term planning states the objectives of lessons clearly and details the learning opportunities. There is careful transition to National Curriculum subjects, which are well integrated within the planning of the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

36 Very good curriculum planning in both the long and medium term continues at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Lessons are very well planned and the balance within and between the various subjects well considered to produce overall, very effective programmes of study for all pupils. This ensures that overall pupils make very good progress. Very good emphasis is placed across the centre on developing communication skills, and these are promoted very well in each subject. In addition some pupils are withdrawn from lessons to receive specific individual language work. This is well planned to ensure that pupils do not miss the same subject each time.

37 Across the centre, pupils' personal, social and health education(PSHE) is very well supported by a very strong scheme of work with a focus on teaching independence skills that effectively promote pupils' self esteem and confidence. Sex education is addressed as part of the health education that forms part of the programme. There are very good plans for both the literacy and numeracy strategies and these play an important part in the delivery of the whole curriculum. The whole curriculum makes an extremely positive contribution to the pupils' moral and social development.

38 The previous report criticised the limited range of extra curricular activities. This has now been successfully addressed and there are very good lunchtime activities, which are often organised extremely well by support staff. These activities form an essential part of the planned curriculum and suitably include individual targets for social behaviour. The pupils are given free choice as to which activity to attend on a half-termly basis; the clubs are generally well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils. Much positive learning stems from these activities. There is usually a 'performance' by pupils at the end of each half term, before they change to another club, with all clubs making a contribution. For example the 'making and doing' club made hats for the dance club's presentation. The after school football club is another excellent example of extension to the

curriculum. Two teachers, ably supported by an enthusiastic and extremely well informed site manager, teach pupils the skills of football. All pupils bring their own kit and there is tremendous enthusiasm and teamsmanship.

39 There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils and those pupils with additional special educational needs are very well catered for. All pupils have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in respect of each subject. They are suitably detailed and appropriately developed from targets set out at the annual review of each pupils' statement of special educational need. These are very well maintained. Procedures pay due regard to the Code of Practice. Pupils are well prepared for the transition to secondary provision by Year 6. Very good support is provided to individual pupils through the good teamwork between all staff, including outreach staff.

40 The assessment of pupils' attainment is very good. There is an excellent policy for assessment, outlining very effective procedures, which is rigorously followed by all staff. There are individual assessments in all areas of the curriculum. Assessment is continuous and very good for the under fives who are assessed on entry to the centre; and at each subsequent key stage. All staff use the very well planned recording system most effectively to record pupils' progress. This also provides a firm foundation for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress. This information is used to adjust pupils' targets in their individual education plans (IEPs), and these in turn inform teachers' lesson planning. This high level of individual assessment is augmented in some cases by photographic evidence. Detailed information on each pupil is prepared for annual reviews and termly and annual reports to parents. Information in the pupils' Statement of Special Educational Needs is directly linked to the detail in each pupils IEP. These are adjusted half-termly to reflect new learning objectives for pupils and are used to inform teaching in all subjects. These were areas of concern in the previous report, which have all been very successfully addressed.

41 The centre is developing very good individual Records of Achievement for all subjects and activities. In Nursery and Reception two files of achievement are kept. This is to enable parents to receive their own copy of their child's achievements on leaving Reception. There is very good photographic evidence of various activities for which the pupils gain a variety of certificates, and these are greatly valued by the pupils. Good work and behaviour is recognised and celebrated through the merit system such as Literacy, Mathematics, Information Technology and Science awards, and the 'Good Sportsmanship at Sports Day' certificate.

Special Educational Needs

42 The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is excellent. There is very good diagnosis of pupils' additional difficulties and full support. Pupils make very good progress throughout the centre. They are encouraged to work alongside other pupils and work in groups or independently.

43 Many of the youngest children who enter the centre with speech difficulties make very good progress. They receive regular speech therapy and their progress is well monitored. The targets set match their needs. Some of the additional work is undertaken in class and at other times children are withdrawn from the class. There is a well organised timetable which is different each week, so that pupils do not miss the same lesson frequently. As far as possible, speech therapy takes place during the literacy hour. By the time pupils reach Year 3 the number of pupils needing additional

help with their speech is much reduced and by the end of Key Stage 2 none of the pupils currently need this additional help.

44 The centre makes very good use of the pupils' individual education plans. They are used to inform planning and to set individual targets to raise attainment. The high level of care helps a significant number of pupils to make appropriate progress in all subject areas and in particular, excellent progress in personal and social development. Some pupils with additional special educational needs have difficulties with writing but they communicate well and listen to others appropriately.

45 Those pupils with additional behavioural difficulties respond very well to the excellent ethos of the centre. Staff are supportive and there are very effective behaviour plans. Pupils learn to take responsibility for the consequences of their behaviour. The system for awarding points for behaviour that meets the targets set, is negotiated between the pupil and the teacher in a very sensitive way. This is very successful and pupils receive a small reward for achieving and maintaining acceptable behaviour.

46 Pupils with additional learning difficulties have appropriate plans provided for them. For example, some have regular support from the physiotherapist and for those with epilepsy there are well-trained support staff. Some other pupils have a member of the support staff assigned to them to ensure that they can join in fully in class activities.

47 Everyone is clear, through regular staff meetings, which pupils are in need of additional care during the day or throughout the week. As a result of this careful monitoring and the very supportive attitude of the staff, the pupils are well integrated within their classes. Those with extreme behaviour are well managed and over time their behaviour is modified to an acceptable level.

48 The additional special educational needs co-ordinator keeps a well maintained and up to date register and has very good knowledge about the progress of each individual pupil.

Integration

49 Integration programmes and procedures with local mainstream primary schools are very good. There is close liaison between the centre and receiving schools, resulting in joint planning and monitoring systems.

50 Pupils involved in the integration programme are socially and intellectually integrated into the mainstream school. They fully participate in all areas of the curriculum, one with some additional support. The pupils join in with extra curricular activities at the mainstream school.

51 Review meetings are held regularly. These include parents, representatives of the Local Education Authority, the educational psychology service and other professional involved with the pupil in addition to the staff from both schools. They meet to evaluate progress and programmes and to plan for the future. In the case of pupils observed during the inspection, it is expected that they will be fully integrated into mainstream schools.

• Pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

52 The centre's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Parents strongly agree that the values and attitudes which are promoted, have a positive effect on pupils personal and social development and this was confirmed during the inspection. Provision for this is excellent throughout the centre.

53 Provision for spiritual development is very good despite some acts of collective worship being extremely short and only meeting minimum requirements. However, pupils are given many other opportunities for spiritual development. They write prayers, which are used during acts of collective worship, both in class and together as a whole centre. Some pupils show initiative and write prayers for homework. The 'thought for the week' is used throughout each day, pupils are reminded of this during their lessons. They recall previous thoughts and use them in their discussions. The centre has worked hard to promote the pupils' spiritual development. This is now greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm of the staff and the excitement of the content of lessons, and is much improved since the last inspection.

54 The centre provides excellent opportunities for pupils' moral development. Religious education plays a significant part in this. Moral issues are discussed across the curriculum, such as the assembly theme, 'the soul bird' being used in the development of speaking and listening in circle time. Pupils express and discuss their feelings and think of ways of making others happy. The code of conduct is a very good example of how moral development is made relevant for the pupils. It is consistently and continuously applied. Pupils know this well and respond to it straight away when teachers refer to it. Some pupils have written about 'the right thing to do' and have described this in the context of their own lives. They are very clear about the difference about right and wrong. Adults provide good role models which pupils respect. Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and successfully use a range of incentives, such as the achievement assembly, which encourages pupils to give of their best. The corporate values and beliefs of the centre create positive and responsible attitudes within the pupils. At the last inspection, the centre was judged to be providing insufficient opportunities for pupils to explore moral dilemmas and to make choices relevant to their everyday lives. These aspects are now fully included in the life of the centre.

55 Provision for social education is excellent. Pupils have personal and social education targets, which help them to develop their individual skills and build their confidence, and self esteem. The consistent and constant way the centre provides for this ensures that all pupils have many positive experiences during each day. There are many opportunities in the classroom, through discussion work and the more formal work, where pupils practise their developing social skills. There are opportunities for pupils to extend learning beyond the classroom and they develop socially through lunchtime clubs which include making things, the 'eco' club, computer club, dance club and keep fit club. Pupils attend these clubs consistently and some are prepared to take the responsibility to find their friends and ensure they keep attending. Pupils go out on visits, and visitors come into school, all of which contributes to their developing social skills. The practice of pupils leading class assemblies is effective in increasing their confidence and self esteem as is taking part in dramatic and musical performances. Records show that good use was made of a seaside visit, which was developed in music for composing and performing. The celebration of festivals such as the Harvest Festival gives pupils further opportunities to develop their social skills through singing, reading, poetry and dance. Pupils are given tasks, which increase their sense of responsibility. They help in the library, some are prefects and design their own badges, and others read the menu to everyone at lunchtime. A high priority is given to helping others less fortunate than themselves such as the centre's involvement in supporting the shoe box appeal for Romanian children. Opportunities for pupils to show self-discipline are greatly enhanced since the last inspection

56 Provision for cultural education is very good. Evidence from the centre's year book shows that there has been a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop culturally. An author visited during the annual book week, the centre has celebrated books, poems, dance and drama. Pupils have visited places of interest, some of which included China Town in Liverpool, Ordsall Hall and Prescott Museum for a history project, the Blue Planet aquarium where pupils could see and handle sea creatures and the Freshfield Red Squirrel Reserve. There have also been visitors to centre from the community such as the police and the fire service, a puppet theatre, a brass quartet, a string ensemble and a resident theatre group came to the school for a week. During their time in centre, pupils are given insights into the multi-cultural nature of Britain today. Through the library books and some of the reading books, history, geography and religious education as well as the very good displays in classrooms and around the centre, opportunities are taken to consider the variety of beliefs and customs held by peoples of different cultural backgrounds. All of these experiences for the pupils enrich and extend their curriculum, and are far broader than the opportunities available at the last inspection.

· **Support, guidance and pupils welfare**
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57 This is a very caring centre. Staff encourage pupils to think and act positively about themselves. Teachers are totally committed and strive to bring out the best in all pupils. Pupils respond very positively to high teacher expectations. The warm, family atmosphere and positive environment within the centre make learning pleasurable. Teachers know and understand pupils' learning difficulties and this leads to very good support and guidance. The manner in which the centre has developed their "*Centre of Excellence*" approach has led to a noticeable improvement in support and guidance since the last inspection. The willingness to share their expertise with local schools demonstrates the centre's support and guidance philosophy.

58 The centre has very good procedures to monitor progress and personal development. Individual Educational Plans are drawn up for each child with set objectives and targets. These are regularly reviewed. Teachers make very good use of defined targets reminding pupils of their commitments when they misbehave. Teachers systematically record pupils' progress and personal development. These records are incorporated into review reports enabling parents and outside specialists to fully understand pupils' progress. With pupils starting at the centre, including the under fives, detailed baseline assessments help staff to plan appropriately. Knowledge of progress for those pupils returning to mainstream primary schools and for those transferring to secondary schools is readily available. The centre works very closely with local schools on support issues and receives regular feedback.

59 There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. Pupils receive award stickers, stars and certificates for good behaviour. Class rules are proudly displayed in every classroom and in the hall. Pupils understand these rules. Behaviour in and around the centre is normally of a very high standard. Pupils with identified behavioural difficulties have individual Behaviour Support Plans with clearly defined expectations. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss difficulties and follow agreed plans. All initiatives used for promoting discipline and behaviour allow teachers to fully develop the learning capabilities of pupils.

60 The poor attendance of a very small minority of pupils across three year groups impacts

directly on the recorded attendance levels. Despite this, the ethos of the centre and the excitement of the day encourage most pupils to attend very well. In addition, the centre has good formal procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. The weekly attendance for each class is displayed in chart form at the entrance of the hall and certificates are awarded to the classes achieving high attendance.

1 There are now excellent procedures for child protection and for promoting pupils' well being. All staff are trained in child protection and for identifying signs of child abuse, and this has been a focus for development since the last inspection. Health and safety is a very high priority in the centre's activities. A sufficient number of the support staff has now been trained in first aid. Some support staff have specific knowledge of asthma and epilepsy. The procedure for dealing with the restraint of pupils is very clearly defined with illustrative diagrams showing how to implement ways of handling pupils. Detailed records are kept on accidents, incidents, vehicle inspections, fire drills, Control of Substances Hazardous(COSHH) and risk assessments. Statutory requirements are being met. The contracted taxi services used to transport pupils to and from the centre are very closely monitored. Some contractors were appropriately approached by the centre not to allow their cabs to be used by smokers prior to coming to the centre because of the risk to pupils with asthma. Since the last inspection, there is now no issue over cleanliness of the food technology room and the governors of the centre are evaluating the efficiency and costs of a number of options to control overheating in the building.

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61 **Partnership with parents and the community**

62 The partnerships with parents and the community are very good. These partnerships make very significant contributions to the quality of pupils' progress. The home-school agreement, issued in September 1999, improves upon existing good practice. The centre's mission statement, 'we provide an atmosphere of mutual respect and support' clearly works in practice in its relationships with parents and the community.

63 Information sent to parents is of a very good quality; it is detailed and relevant. Parents appreciate the efforts made by the centre to keep them fully informed about the life of the centre. Review reports are thorough. They form a very good basis for parents and teachers to discuss pupils' progress and include information from pupils IEPs. The trust and understanding between staff and parents allows personal letters to be written to parents on matters of concern. Parents come willingly to the centre to discuss problems. The Centre Prospectus and Governors Annual Reports are well written. There are some very minor omissions within these documents, which the centre is addressing;

64 Although not many parents or family members help regularly at the centre, they are always willing to help in specific lessons, on visits and to raise funds. In a history lesson during the inspection, two grandparents spoke about playing with their own toys during their childhood. This high quality of input allowed the teacher to portray life realistically covering a period of about eighty years. The pupils related extremely well to the timescales and made good progress with their learning. Opportunities for the pupils to handle very old toys enable them to appreciate the differences between old and new in terms of materials of construction and appearance. Several parents accompany nursery children to the swimming baths and take part in the lessons. The centre

is actively involved in holding parent workshops on a range of subjects. These courses are held in conjunction with the 'Learning in Neighbourhood Centres' (L.I.N.C.) initiative. Programmes are supported by the European Social Fund. The course on computers is very popular with parents. The centre makes good resources readily available for these courses. Staff are planning to utilise this trained expertise to help pupils with information technology at the centre.

65 Links with the community stimulate pupils' learning. The centre is involved with the Community Police; Huyton Library; visiting performing arts teams, such as the Merseyside Young People's Theatre; and a cluster of seventeen other schools. The centre is very environmentally aware and has recently been awarded funds for an environmental garden. Careful planning is in progress to start this project. A forward looking approach by the staff is that the community is the "*classroom outside the main building*". There are lots of initiatives being raised by the ECO club members to save energy and water. The idea of turning off lights when rooms are not in use has benefited the centre in reducing energy costs. There is a genuine interest to learn about what goes on in the outside world and the centre takes every opportunity to develop the pupils' awareness. For example, a wider community link for all initiative entitled "*we all need to take care of our world*" was displayed on one of the noticeboards. Since the last inspection, there has been a very marked improvement in the breadth and quality of the relationships with both parents and the community.

61 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

61 Leadership and management

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66 The leadership and management of the centre are excellent. The headteacher, governing body, senior management team, subject co-ordinators and administrator share a common and extremely clear vision about how the centre should move forward. The centre has recently been awarded 'beacon status' as part of an initiative to further develop itself as a 'centre of excellence' and to extend its service to mainstream schools

67 All aspects of management have improved significantly in the last three years. The headteacher is energetic and promotes the interests of the centre vigorously; she is an extremely strong leader and operates a very successful corporate approach. All staff have delegated responsibilities including the co-ordination of all National Curriculum subjects; they are very clear about their roles. The demands of managing the centre and the outreach service are great but the clear and complementary roles of the administrator and the senior management team contribute very well to the overall success of the service.

68 The centre's response to addressing the issues from the last inspection was highly effective across a broad range of issues. This included areas such as development planning, co-ordination and monitoring of the curriculum, opportunities for pupils to develop greater initiative and spiritual awareness and areas of concern with the accommodation. Whilst the centre has improved the attainment of pupils in information technology, recurring technical problems with the centre's new network system are frustrating and have impeded the staff's professional development and the pupils' progress in this area of the curriculum. This is recognised by the centre's current leadership and management and they are perfectly placed to continue to improve the quality of education offered in the future.

69 The governing body plays a full and effective role in the life of the centre. Responsibilities are clearly delegated to appropriate committees and individual governors are in place with particular responsibility for areas such as literacy, numeracy and target setting. The governing body actively seeks information against which to evaluate the standards of the centre and this generally works very well. A current initiative links the centre's target setting in a broad range of curricular areas with those in two other similar centres in the Local Education Authority. This is an exciting and very worthwhile exercise. Comparative data between the centres has started to be collected but the monitoring of the accuracy of this is not yet sufficiently in place for the use of the data to be fully effective. The centre complies with statutory requirements except for very minor omissions from the centre's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. The prospectus does not yet include details of alternate provision available for pupils whose parents withdraw them from religious education and collective worship. The governor's annual report to parents omits details of facilities to assist access to the centre by pupils with disabilities. Also, the centre does not yet have a charging policy although this is scheduled for next year.

70 The School Development Plan is fully effective. The targets are wide-ranging and appropriate, clear programmes of action are fully resourced including staff time and all aspects are monitored and evaluated. The chair of the governing body takes a close interest in the day to day running of the centre and monitors developments as a matter of course during weekly visits. He is an effective 'critical friend'. One of the main reasons for the centre's significant improvement in the last three years is the headteacher's success in achieving 'the corporate vision'. Everyone is valued equally and is fully committed to appraisal, staff development, and the monitoring of teaching, the curriculum and all pupils' progress. Great attention is paid to the planning and monitoring of very effective individual education plans(IEPs) which help to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. All of this allows the centre to build on its strengths and overcome any weaknesses.

71 The obvious and constant drive of everyone, including parents, to raise standards, the excellent relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff, the extensive opportunities for pupils to gain in independence and personal development all contribute towards an excellent ethos and an exciting environment in which very high standards are achieved. The current management team is excellently placed to improve the centre even further.

61 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

72 The centre has a satisfactory number of very well qualified and experienced teaching and support staff. Together they possess a wide range of expertise necessary to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Those members with additional qualifications and expertise are used appropriately. Support staff make a significant contribution to the standard and quality of education provided. The teaching and support staff work closely together to provide very good quality educational and behavioural support for all pupils. They are in turn supported by all members of staff at the centre to create a good quality learning environment. The staff have clearly defined responsibilities and they work very hard to teach an exciting and full curriculum to the pupils. Visiting specialists support the staff very well, including the educational psychologist, school doctor and speech therapist.

73 The arrangements for professional development of all staff are very good.

The Administrator has recently gained qualifications in accountancy and class based staff have had additional training in literacy, numeracy and art. Training in areas such as child protection and how to cope with asthma attacks provides very good support for all pupils. There is a well managed system of appraisal which is linked to the professional development plan and identifies areas of training in which all staff can further add to their strengths. The induction programme for all new staff enables them to function quickly and effectively as a new member of the centre's team. This whole aspect of professional development is much broader than at the time of the last inspection and now supports all staff very well. This is integral to the work of the centre towards seeking the Investor In People Award.

74 Accommodation is now very good and has improved greatly since the last inspection. The centre has recently undergone a planned programme of refurbishment and re-decoration to a very high standard. This includes much work on the exterior cladding to the building which now complements other attractive features. Externally a security fence encloses the grounds which include a hard play area, grassed play area, attractive gardens which the pupils do much to maintain and a separate secure play area for the youngest children. This area has attractive, well-maintained large play equipment. The last report recommended that this classroom should have direct access to the external play area and additional windows, which has now been done. Other facilities have been added to create a bright, attractive and functional classroom. Classrooms are of adequate size. They are carpeted and pupils have ready access to water. The centre now has a separate food technology room, very impressive conference room, and a range of other facilities for parents' workshops and small group rooms are readily available for a variety of purposes. The multi-purpose hall is satisfactory in size for physical education and provides a light and attractive dining area. There is good storage both within the classrooms and around the centre. The school is not yet equipped for pupils or others who use wheel chairs. There are no ramps to allow access to all parts of the centre. The premises both internally and externally are very well maintained, extremely clean and well cared for. The site manager and his team do much to maintain this very attractive and stimulating learning environment.

75 Resources across the curriculum are very good in both quality and quantity. The centre has done much to ensure that pupils and staff generally have only the best resources and that they are readily available. This is another example of strategic planning appropriately financed producing a quality environment in which pupils and staff can thrive together. Whilst all classrooms have two computers and a printer, and a scanner, digital camera and microphone are available which work in conjunction with the computers, the centre is experiencing technical difficulties in using the new computer network and currently has a restricted range of software available to them. The recently created library is very attractive with bright, attractive furniture and contains a balanced and wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. This meets the needs of all ages of pupils and is used very well. Additional facilities include a listening area complete with cassette recorder and headphones to enable children to listen to audiotapes. Similarly there are facilities to watch the videotapes stored in the library. Pupils also have access to many additional resources beyond the school including visits to local museums, the Tate Gallery and to parks, such as Croxteth Farm Park.

61 **The efficiency of the school**

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1 Management of the centre is very effective. Financial planning is very good. The head teacher, centre administrator, finance officer, senior management team and governors work

very well together. Spending of funds has been allocated over a three-year period on a term-by-term basis and gives a clear picture when funds need to be available. The last two years show planned budget underspending to pay for long-term teacher sickness and for developing the reception area and adjoining office.

77 Plans are continuously reviewed and updated such as delaying the introduction of electric fans to keep the centre cool during hot summer periods in order to evaluate another approach. Governors are actively involved in all financial decisions. They use their expertise to negotiate better financial packages for major purchases. Governors evaluate the effectiveness of their decision making. The centre is fortunate in having such a proactive and experienced governing body. Through their interest and skills, the efficiency of the centre has clearly improved since the last inspection.

78 Use of teaching and support staff is very good, especially the deployment of support staff attached to those classes requiring specialised assistance such as for epilepsy or asthma. The centre makes effective financial decisions in employing the number of staff and support staff they have on roll. A quote from their mission statement of “*through the work of our staff we aim to develop appropriate, exciting and motivating learning experiences for our children ...*” indicates this intention.

79 Overall the use of learning resources is very good. Throughout the centre staff and pupils easily access resources. However an exception to this is with the new computer network. The technical difficulties, which have yet to be resolved, are restricting the use of certain software programs and access to the Internet. It is also restricting use of the scanner and digital camera. Timetabling arrangements did not allow the inspection team to assess music lessons and use of the range of musical instruments.

80 There is excellent use of the accommodation. Every room in the building has its specific purpose. Careful thought and consideration was given when reorganising the internal structure of the building. Every available space has been utilised. For example, the staff make good use of the conference room for meetings at review time. It is also used as a television room for pupils such as at lunchtimes when it is raining or for parent workshops. Staff make maximum use of the centre’s ample storage space.

81 Overall the financial control and centre administration are very efficient. Financial control is good but has some minor deficiencies in the computer software. The software does not easily allow the administrator to monitor the budget costs separately for in-centre and outreach work. The financial audit report confirms the good practice on financial control and the two minor points identified have been addressed. School administration is excellent. The administrative staff ensure that the centre operates very efficiently at all times.

82 Taking into account the characteristics of the centre’s catchment area, the level of attainment of pupils on entry and the high quality of teaching, the very high costs per pupil are justified by the very good progress they make whilst at the centre and this means that the centre gives very good value for money.

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76 **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

76 **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

83 Overall progress for the children under five in the Nursery and Reception class is at least good in all areas of learning and very good in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal and social development. Also they make very good progress in the swimming aspect of physical development; it was not possible to see enough work in other aspects to make a judgement.

84 Personal and social development is very well promoted and much improved since the last inspection. There is a very successful programme ensuring that appropriate behaviour is encouraged. The children make very good progress. Children settle into centre well and adapt to the pattern of the school day. They have many opportunities to share toys and equipment and learn to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with sensitively by adults who work hard to maintain the good relationships built up with the children. Most children learn that they must sometimes wait their turn for the attention of the adults and they can work in groups for an appropriate length of time. Some can concentrate on their tasks and complete them, others can do this with support. Very good use is made of incidental teaching, for example during snack times when children take initiatives setting the tables with the plates and the flowers. They can say grace and sit together co-operatively. Very good use of praise encourages pupils' self esteem and confidence. Children enjoy cleaning their teeth at lunchtime and they have learned clear routines and most are independent in personal hygiene with the younger children needing some support in this area.

85 The provision for language and literacy in the Nursery and Reception class is good with some very good work seen. Progress is good. The use of the National Literacy Strategy provides good opportunities for children's learning. Speaking and listening is very well promoted and in this aspect of language and literacy, progress is very good. Everything that is done is focused around language and the extension of children's vocabulary and the understanding of instructions. The children who have speech difficulties are helped by the very good and regular speech therapy, which is directed towards their individual needs. Children enjoy stories and most can listen attentively for an appropriate length of time. They join in with familiar songs and rhymes, gradually learning the words. Children are interested in the books and take them from the class library to look at the pictures. They have favourite books. Most can talk about the pictures and identify objects. Writing shows development from uncontrolled mark making to children beginning to copy over the teacher's letters. Some can write their names. Writing activities are well supervised.

86 Very good progress is made in mathematics by the children. They begin to identify shapes, draw a circle in the air and know about size, small, big and very big. Some match shapes, and others complete a worksheet matching shapes and colour. Good reinforcement takes place when the children make sandwiches in circular and triangular shapes. Children are beginning to join in with number games. Some children can count to 8 and a few to 10. Younger children are beginning to count with support. Class discussions frequently provide a good focus for developing mathematical language.

87 Children make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. Many enter the centre with limited experiences and snack time is used to encourage talking

about their experiences. Children are learning to use scissors, paste and some can stick items in place others achieve this with support. Some are confident using paintbrushes and they are learning to use pencils with more control. They make use of the listening centres and, with support, they use the computer, learning to use the mouse to drag items across the screen. One child can do this independently. Very good use is made of visits to widen the children's experiences, for example, on a recent visit to the Blue Planet Aquarium children learned about fish and made clay models of fish.

88 Only a limited amount of work was seen in physical development. Due to inclement weather, children could not use the outdoor climbing frame and equipment. There is a very good outdoor area for them and records show children making good use of this along with using the large wheeled toys confidently. Children go swimming each week and develop their confidence and increase their co-ordination and control. They make very good progress in swimming. They enjoy playing and are developing early swimming skills and confidence in the water. Children join in ring games, some keep in rhythm whilst others have poor co-ordination and are not able to do this yet.

89 Children make good progress in creative development. Through their paintings and collage the children have opportunities to work with different textures of paper and use different types of textiles, all of which link to speaking and listening and developing the sense of touch and learning the vocabulary of colour. Their free paintings show the enjoyment of colour and bold pictures. Some children, with support, paint a Father Christmas carefully and others do this without help. They rehearse their nativity play for the assembly and enjoy taking part. They are learning to sing songs and try hard to join in. They make a good effort to follow the actions.

90 The quality of teaching is good in all areas of learning with some very good teaching seen in language and literacy. Good teaching occurs for example, when children are well managed and are encouraged to join in and there are consistent references to personal development. Good support is given and pupils are gainfully active during the lessons. Very good teaching was observed when there was very good dialogue between the adults, which also involves the children. At all times teachers and support staff work well as a team. Members of staff are well qualified and provide good activities for the children. There are very good activity boxes for children to take home and use to help them develop their skills. Long term planning is very thorough and there is a smooth transition from the focus of the Desirable learning Outcomes to the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Members of the support staff are effectively used and make a significant contribution to the education of the children.

1 A baseline assessment is in place and there are regular systematic and comprehensive assessments to monitor and record children's progress. These assessments are used to develop the individual education plans. Children's targets are included as appropriate. The assessments are well used in subsequent planning to provide challenges for children across the curriculum. There are records of achievement including photographs and for encouragement there are certificates awarded to children for their achievement.

2 The last inspection judged accommodation to be cramped with poor ventilation and lighting; the provision of large play equipment and direct access to outdoor areas were unsatisfactory. This is now very much improved. There is now access to a secure outside area with attractive, well-maintained large play equipment. Additional windows and other facilities have been added to create a bright, attractive and functional classroom.

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ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

93 In English pupils make very good progress. This is equally good in speaking and listening, reading and writing across both Key Stages 1 and 2. This shows significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' use of literacy skills, particularly reading, and in speaking and listening is very good and helps their research skills and evaluation of work in a broad range of other subjects. At both key stages pupils who experience specific speaking and listening difficulties also make very good progress.

94 At Key Stage 1, pupils are enthusiastic and confident about answering questions. They listen very attentively, seldom interrupt their friends, relate what they know and occasionally predict what will happen. By the end of Key Stage 2 most children have extended their vocabulary and are able to use such words as 'acrostic' in the appropriate context. They can express their ideas in complete sentences, most recall and recount events accurately and fluently, and the most able ask appropriate questions as a way of formulating their ideas.

95 In reading at Key Stage 1, pupils understand that text is used for reading. Some pupils read simple sentences but often forget the story once it has been read; others still guess at the text and have little to say about the pictures due to difficulties with expressing language development. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils show very good progress in reading. Most pupils develop a range of strategies to help them read. Many can use simple phonics by covering a part of the word with their finger and build up the syllables. Others use illustrations, especially in 'big books'. They recognise letter combinations such as '-igh' and identify them in words such as 'tight' or 'bright'. A minority of pupils are almost fluent readers although a few pupils continue to have difficulty with phonics and reading simple text. At Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils follow a structured home-school reading programme. Library books selected by the children supplement this. They also have additional activities to provide opportunities for them to practise their learning at home such as high frequency words to learn at their own level. There is a book to record their reading and for parents and teachers to write their comments in.

96 At Key Stage 1 writing skills develop so that most children can write their name unaided. Several children can copy given phrases or sentences and a minority are attempting to write independently. Many of the children need a high level of support when required to write. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have experienced a wide range of writing for different purposes such as lists, poems, letters, diary accounts in addition to story writing. By the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils can write independently. Some pupils in Key Stage 1 can spell three letter words with a short vowel sound and some short, high frequency words such as dad, as, if. At the end of Key Stage 2 several children can write accurately using an extensive vocabulary of more complex high frequency words. Similarly handwriting skills develop from simple letter formation often traced or copied in Key Stage 1 until by the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils can write using a clear form of cursive handwriting.

97 Pupils' attitude to English is good. They listen carefully and follow instructions. Most pupils participate fully, many write on the white boards or flip charts and read aloud in guided reading sessions. The centre has adopted and adapted the National Literacy Strategy across both key stages. This is a strength of the centre and provides all pupils with opportunities to improve their listening and speaking skills and make progress in reading, comprehension and writing. This enables pupils to consolidate and extend their learning. Pupils enjoy the structure and pace of the lessons. They

concentrate well, show a positive response and actively participate in the activities. They enjoy the variety of activities within the lesson structure. Pupils share an obvious enjoyment of books particularly younger children sharing stories, such as 'Georgie Grub'. Pupils enjoy discussing their work and how it might be improved. They also enjoy celebrating their success. This contributes very well to pupils' social development.

98 Overall teaching of English is very good at both key stages. Teachers use their voices effectively and imaginatively to encourage, involve and motivate their pupils. Behaviour is managed with subtlety and very well such as on one occasion when a child became restless and was asked to read his/her target as a reminder of expected behaviour. When he/she had done this, he/she quietly resumed learning. Lessons are paced to match the needs of the children so that they can sustain interest and achieve success. Work is appropriately differentiated so that all pupils have access to the curriculum. Teachers use questioning effectively and provide good models to enable pupils to improve the quality of their oral replies. The strategies of the Literacy Hour have been introduced very well and have had a marked effect on teaching across the curriculum. Computers are available in every class but due to technical problems and a restricted range of available programmes, they are not currently used to their full potential.

99 Assessment of pupil's progress is very good. A comprehensive approach to assessing a range of indicators such as key words, phonic levels, reading ages and National Curriculum levels is undertaken consistently and recorded in each class assessment folder. This provides valuable evidence for substantiating pupils' progress. Effective use is made of Individual Educational Plans, which are appropriately used to support pupils' development and against which progress can be judged. These are regularly reviewed to ensure progress is maintained. Since the last inspection, the centre has developed very good individual Records of Achievement for pupils in all subjects and activities, and English is a very important part of this. The centre correctly reports National Curriculum assessment levels to parents both individually and for the school as a whole. The trend in recent years shows an increasing number of pupils gaining Level 2 and at levels which are higher than other similar schools.

100 The recently created library is a very good addition to the centre's accommodation since the last inspection. It is very attractive with bright, attractive furniture and contains a balanced and wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. This meets the needs of all ages of pupils and is used very well. Additional facilities include a listening area complete with cassette recorder and headphones to enable children to listen to audiotapes. Similarly there are facilities to watch the videotapes stored in the library

101 All staff have taken part in the training for the National Literacy Strategy, including the governor for literacy and support staff. English is extremely well led and co-ordinated. English plays a very positive part in other subjects such as drama and role play in history, and in the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development such as in 'circle time' when pupils are able to express their feelings and opinions so effectively.

92 **Mathematics**

102 Progress in mathematics is very good at Key Stages 1 and 2 and has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to range between satisfactory to good. At Key Stage 1, pupils recognise and count up to 20. They understand the concept of more than and less than. They build up number stories to 10 and have a firm understanding of forwards, backwards and middle. They use these words competently over a range of activities. When making comparison between the weight of two toys they say that one is light and the other heavy, and make very good progress using the balance scales to check their findings. In food technology, with support, the pupils weigh the ingredients for making gingerbread men. They use the correct vocabulary when describing the activity of weighing and balancing.

103 At the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to mentally add and subtract numbers within 5, count to 30 and in 10s to 100. When set problems involving shopping with up to 10 pence, higher achievers, in response to the class teachers questions, use the correct vocabulary associated with money: for example, change, exact and total. In Year 4 pupils chant rhythmically in 2s to 20, and in 5s and 10s to a hundred. They look at the clock face and associate counting in 5s to 60, to the minutes in an hour. They begin to relate fractions to time when they talk about half past and quarter past the hour. They conduct an individual survey of 'favourite meals', and from their tally charts produce very good pictographs. Other pupils, with support from the class teacher, use spreadsheets to input their information from their table. By the end of the key stage, pupils understand that to add two numbers together they must hold the largest number in their head. They demonstrate this by adding 90 and 3 together and explain how they achieved their answer. Most have a firm grasp of numbers to 100. They are able to explain how they successfully achieve the answer mentally to 64-59, such as "count back from 64". Some pupils explain how to check an answer by adding 5 on to 59. Other pupils use number lines and number squares to aid them in these activities. When using fractions pupils know and understand that fractions are equal portions and comment that otherwise it wouldn't be fair if they weren't. Pupils use games to consolidate their understanding. They recognise and use fractions to describe and compare portions of a whole. Pupils use their numeracy skills very well across the curriculum such as working on angles in science, shapes and measurement in design and technology and counting accurately in a range of other subjects, particularly physical education.

104 Pupils enjoy mathematics. They listen intently, take a full part in discussions and are always very well behaved. They know to put their hands up and to wait their turn before answering a question. They listen to each other's contribution, show respect and are interested. They become totally involved in their activities and there is sheer delight when they achieve correct answers in the mental sessions. When working in groups they try very hard to complete their work and support each other when necessary. They are competitive and enjoy being set a target to complete tasks. Across the centre there are a good number of computers in each classroom to support mathematics. Most pupils have good skills in the control of mouse and in icon selection. They enjoy the repetition and reinforcement of known skills that the computer software provides, but too often this work is unsupervised and the pupils stray from the task in hand.

105 Teaching overall is very good with some excellent teaching both at Key Stages 1 and 2. Where teaching is excellent the pupils' understanding is constantly being assessed. Areas identified as not fully understood by some pupils are noted and arrangements made to revisit these during the 'booster' activities'. There is exceptionally good teamwork between teachers and staff and very good use is made of the excellent wall displays to aid teaching. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and set clear objectives to their lessons. There is excellent management of pupils; the work is very well matched to meet the needs of all the pupils and there is usually a

very good pace to lessons. On rare occasions in the introductory part of the lesson, too much time is spent by the teacher in leading the discussion and too little opportunity for the pupils to contribute and show their level of understanding. Teaching is very enthusiastic, positive and infectious which makes the pupils want to learn and helps them to make very good progress.

106 The National Numeracy Programme has been successfully incorporated into lesson plans and staff follow the agreed framework during daily mathematics lessons. Assessment of pupils' progress is now much clearer and more manageable since the last inspection. Leadership of the subject now has a very strong impact on the very good progress made by pupils. The co-ordinator has worked very hard monitoring the subject and this has provided staff with the confidence, which is apparent in the teaching. This very good teaching is responsible for the enthusiasm seen in pupils when completing their work. The organised activities such as the 'Maths Obstacle Race' all promote partnership with parents and enhance the pupils learning. Very good cross curricular activities take place within the centre such as the links with design and technology and art in preparing for the various mathematical fund raising activities in the recent 'maths trail'. Here pupils were sponsored to complete tasks with the aid of adult helpers.

92 Science

107 Pupils make very good progress at both Key Stages 1 and 2 and on occasions in Years 2 and 3, some of the work of the more able pupils is very close to national expectations. At Key Stage 1, pupils name and discuss very well different sources of light such as the sun, stars, fires and lamps. They tentatively describe the difference between light and dark, begin to understand the concepts involved and know they need to have their eyes open to 'see' light. They remember the information well from one lesson to the next. They work together with the teacher on recording their work on 'charts' using their magnetic white board. They choose sources of light and answer questions about 'where, when and how' such as, Where would we find a candle? Answer: in a church; When would we use it? Answer: when it's dark or when we are praying; How could we light it? Answer: with a lighter or a match. They investigate and use different ways of recording their knowledge with adult help and relate their work well to everyday situations such as traffic lights.

108 At the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils know that sounds 'end up in your ear' for them to be heard. They know this involves vibrations and use alternative descriptions such as 'shakes'. They investigate vibrations using drums and tuning forks, and know how to test for vibrations when they cannot easily be seen. They begin to understand the difference between high and low pitch, and how pitch can be altered. In Year 4, pupils extend the work and begin to understand a little more of the physiology of the ear. They make their own simple musical instruments to investigate high and low pitch, and evaluate and improve their work at times with each other's support. Year 5 pupils know much about the parts and the needs of plants. They name various parts such as stem, stalk, petal, sepal and stamen, at times with adult help. They carry out practical investigations to help them understand absorption. At Year 6, pupils have a simple understanding of the angle of reflection and develop an awareness that the angle between two mirrors affects the number of reflections observed. At both key stages, pupils use their skills in literacy and numeracy to great effect in helping them to progress.

109 The response of all pupils to lessons is very good. They settle quickly to their work, which is often exciting and maintains their interest and concentration. They are often respectful of each other and of other.s work, are extremely curious to test out ideas and confident enough to express

their thoughts without feeling awkward. The very good teaching builds up a supportive atmosphere in which pupils feel at ease and are therefore willing to try and try again with their work. They rise to meet the high expectations of the centre.

110 The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is excellent at Key Stage 1 and ranges from satisfactory to excellent at Key Stage 2. Teachers plan lessons very well within a two yearly cycle, which is set out in their Long Term Planning (Storylines). Very good and more detailed medium term plans supported by very efficiently organised resource packages leave teachers time to concentrate on delivering their teaching and planning for the different ability groups within the classes. This they do with energy, enthusiasm and good humour. Subject knowledge is secure and they make very good use of discussions and questioning to probe the ideas and understanding of the pupils. This allows work to be consistently pitched at the right level so that pupils are stretched and progress is made. All teachers use a style of lesson which incorporates initial discussion, recaps, introduction or development of lesson objectives, investigation, independent discussion, recording if appropriate and evaluation, with time at the end of the lesson to review progress. The difference between the satisfactory and excellent teaching seen was in getting the right balance between the different parts of the lesson, ensuring that all pupils had equal opportunity to take part in the discussions and that all pupils were purposefully occupied during the investigative parts of the lesson. On very rare occasions teaching does not get the right balance between pupils' independent work and work directed by the teacher. However, overall, the subject makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development.

111 The subject is extremely well co-ordinated. Planning and teaching is monitored and evaluated, and pupils' work is assessed and evaluated for progress. The subject has a clear sense of direction and the subject development plan is fed directly into the School Development Plan. The National Curriculum assessment results at Key Stage 2 as published to parents for the last three years, are substantially higher than other similar schools.

112 The centre has made a very good response to the issues raised in the last inspection. The subject is now timetabled for sufficient time, resources and the efficiency of their organisation are very good, pupils have appropriate opportunities for independent work and the subject is very well monitored by the co-ordinator. However, although the use of information technology has improved in the subject, technical problems with the new network, and some staff uncertainty with new hardware and software still leads to its under-use at times. Assessment is now secure and the centre is in the process of evaluating a more manageable approach. An extremely imaginative joint science-ECO club initiative is planned to further develop the centre's grounds to enable the pupils to access the gardens for environmental and investigative work.

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92 113 Progress in art in good both at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2. Owing to timetabling and the half-termly rota with design and technology, few lessons were observed. Judgements have been substantiated with evidence of pupils' work on display and from teacher's records and planning.

114 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils cut, glue given shapes and make observational drawings from artefacts for which they need a high level of adult support. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils can work independently. Their manipulative skills have developed so that they cut, paint, sew using a basic stitch and stick various materials together with a greater degree of accuracy. They also show a developing understanding of the effects of mixing colours and of design and colour contrasts when making mosaic patterns. They produce paintings in the style of Monet, Van Gogh and Kandinsky and in so doing study the effects of colour and differing paint techniques. On occasions pupils make good use of the computer program 'Paint' as an alternative medium.

115 The response of all pupils is good. They are well motivated and are able to sustain concentration. They discuss the effects that can be created by mixing coloured dyes such as the effect of darker dyes when mixing with lighter tones and tints. Pupils work well together. They share equipment when necessary and show respect for resources and for the adults who help them. A particular strength is their ability to discuss and constructively criticise their own work and, when invited, the work of others. They also share in the praise of good work.

116 The quality of teaching is generally good at both key stages. Teachers and support staff manage the pupils well, have good relationships with them and enthuse about the work and pupils' progress. This encourages the pupils to think more deeply about their work and enhances their spiritual development greatly. The use of resources is well planned and accessible to the children. For pupils with additional needs resources and techniques are suitably modified. Very good cross-curricular and cultural links are evident in work displayed in the classrooms and in the corridors such as work about Ancient Egypt in history, constructing and decorating 'working' lighthouses in design and technology, and links to show the influence of African design. Teacher's knowledge and understanding is generally good. Recent staff development has enabled them to widen their experience of different materials and techniques, which in turn has increased their confidence.

117 There is an effective policy and recording system. Pupil's progress is monitored and evaluated at the end of each unit of work. The results of this assessment are used to inform future planning. A good photographic record of pupils' work supplements these records.

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118 The breadth of resources has improved since the last inspection. There is now a good range, which are easily accessible. This is much improved since the last inspection. Materials for specific techniques are stored in individual boxes so that all of the equipment needed is immediately available. It is of good quality. Protective clothing such as disposable rubber gloves are available for children when using dyes. All pupils have access to and use a range of different materials such as salt dough, textiles, dyes and a range of different paints and papers. The centre is planning to register with the 'Northern Artists Schools Agency' in preparation for inviting an artist into the centre. It is hoped that this will be linked to the opening of the new garden. Many pupils participate in art competitions, which helps to increase interest and motivation, and to boost their confidence

and raise their self-esteem.

92 Design and technology

119 Design and technology is timetabled in classes on a half-termly rota with art. Because of this, during the inspection, only two classes at Key Stage 2 were timetabled for design and technology. Teacher's records have only been introduced recently and offer little firm evidence of progress over time. However, strong photographic, display and pupils' written design evidence, although not always sufficiently annotated, gives evidence of projects covered and comparative evidence between year groups. Based upon the limited observations and other evidence, progress at both Key Stages 1 and 2 is very good.

120 At Key Stage 1, pupils design vehicles and discuss these with others. They label their designs and make their models with much adult help. Subsequently, the efficiency of the vehicles is tested and evaluated by rolling them down a slope. Pupils use different materials such as card, cloth and balsa wood and employ a range of techniques and fixing methods. At the start of Key Stage 2, pupils design and make winding mechanisms for models representing nursery rhymes. They cut, glue, fix, decorate and test their models, and evaluate effectiveness with adult help. By the end of the key stage, pupils are much more independent and make decisions. They plan their lesson with the teacher and decide the order in which they need to progress. They know the order of a design project; consider the issues, make and label a plan, list the resources, test out and evaluate any difficult parts any make decisions on decoration. This approach contributes excellently to pupils' personal development. Computer aided design is used appropriately in support of a lighthouse project incorporating a simple electrical circuit; some pupils extend this to include a 'built-in' switch.

121 Pupils' response at Key Stage 2 is very good and at times, excellent. They are generally very well behaved and the majority responds constructively to their exciting practical lessons. Pupils enjoy their work and are pleased to talk to visitors about their ideas and designs; they are proud, rightly so, of their efforts. The more able work independently and bring ideas to their own designs. Others consider options and make choices with appropriate adult help. All the pupils are generally supportive of each other, which creates a very good atmosphere for learning.

122 Teaching is very good at Key Stage 2. Lessons are very well prepared and link well to a very good scheme of work. Very efficiently organised resource packages are usually ready and placed appropriately to encourage pupils to make choices and decisions about what to use. A very calm and supportive team approach between teachers and non-teaching assistants generally maintains pupils' concentration and an excellent working environment in which pupils are at ease to discuss their ideas and make progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and very good use is made of discussions and questioning to assess the ideas and understanding of the pupils. Everyone pays due attention to the hygiene and health and safety aspects of the subject.

123 The subject is extremely well co-ordinated. Planning and teaching is monitored and evaluated, and included in the subject development plan. Pupils' work is assessed and evaluated for progress. The subject has a clear sense of direction and the subject development plan is fed directly into the School Development Plan. Planning, displays and photographic evidence shows broad and appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum, including textiles.

124 The centre has made a very good response to the issues raised in the last inspection. Pupils now have appropriate opportunities for independent work and the more investigative aspects of designing. Accommodation for food technology is now separate, appropriately organised and hygienic. However, although the use of information technology has improved in the subject, technical problems with the new network, and some staff uncertainty with new hardware and software still leads to its under-use at times. A recently introduced recording system is appropriate and will help the centre to monitor more easily the progress of pupils over time. In response to the appropriate introduction of more literacy and numeracy into the curriculum, design and technology is now planned on a half-termly rota with art which reduces the time available to the subject to a level below the national average for the subject. However, the centre is looking closely at building elements of design and technology more into other subjects, which is a good response to the dilemma.

Geography

125 Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and this was at Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on this one lesson, samples of work, photographic evidence, lesson plans, schemes of work and discussion with the co-ordinator for the subject. Progress is very good at the end of Key Stage 1, where the curriculum successfully builds on a progression of understanding of topics that pupils can easily relate to. Initially the pupils study the centre and local community and then through a study of contrasting locations such as the seaside or a farming area. The pupils develop an awareness of the wider world through the use of the continuous theme 'where in the world is Barnaby Bear'.

126 The very good progress continues at Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 3, after a walk to their village, express the opinion that there is an urgent need for additional zebra crossings. They compose letters to their local authority pointing out the need for these crossings and other attractive and unattractive features of their surroundings. By Years 5 and 6 the pupils study rivers, water and a mountain environment. To support their learning there are very good arrangements for visits to places of interest. Records of these visits are very well presented photographically and in the centre's displays. A good example of this is the visit to Kinder reservoir where pupils go orienteering. Pupils with additional special educational needs make very good progress in both key stages.

127 Pupils enjoy geography. They listen carefully in lessons and make very good contributions to the discussion that takes place such as what they like and dislike about their village environment. They express the opinion that the library is lovely because it has lots of lovely books. They persevere and try very hard to produce pleasing work. They enjoy looking at each other's work and make positive comments showing understanding of the lesson objectives.

128 At Key Stage 2, teaching in the one lesson seen was very good. The teacher had very good knowledge of the subject. The lesson was very carefully planned as part of the overall scheme of work, using a topic approach and cross curricular links. Based upon records seen, all lesson plans give a range of activities to stimulate pupils' abilities and to develop a high level of knowledge, understanding and application. The evidence of pupils' previous work clearly shows the commitment of teachers to raising pupils' awareness of spiritual, moral and social issues as they affect their everyday lives. Very good use is made of classroom and corridor displays, which are of a very high standard.

129 The subject makes a very good contribution to spiritual, moral social and cultural development. The pupils enjoy the subject, particularly the many interesting trips such as to China Town. These make a very good contribution to the exciting and effective learning environment, which permeates the school and makes it successful in achieving its aim to 'develop appropriate exciting and motivated learning experiences for children'. The lunchtime Eco club is a good example of extra curricular activities supporting the main curriculum. Here pupils develop a sense of wonder of the world around them and begin to take responsibility for the earth and it's people.

130 The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator who has recently updated the scheme of work. Recording and assessment is very detailed and staff complete records meticulously. There are very good resources available to aid staff in delivering the curriculum, which are very well used.

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History

131 Few lessons were seen during the inspection and judgements are also based on evidence from teachers' planning and records, photographs and displays. Progress at the end of Key Stage 1 is very good. When listening to grandparents talking about the toys that they had as youngsters, pupils make comparisons between being a boy or a girl a long time ago. They understand the differences and similarities between toys of today and those of the past. They make very good progress grasping the concept of timescale going back a hundred years.

132 The very good progress is maintained throughout Key Stage 2. In role play at Year 4, pupils begin to understand the different roles and experiences of Roman and Celtic men and women travelling through Britain. They develop an understanding of the slave system. They come to the conclusion that the Roman roads were straight so that the soldiers would be able to travel to London more easily. In Year 5 pupils develop historical enquiry when studying Ancient Greeks. They enjoy remembering new words such as 'marathon' and 'Sparta'. Progress at both key stages has improved greatly from the last inspection when it was judged to be at least satisfactory.

133 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are keen and enthusiastic and respond to questions. When discussing the marathon they say that they would feel "made up" if they had won. They persist with their tasks, work very well with each other and in small groups. They enjoy challenge and in particular they enjoy and behave very sensibly in role-play. In learning about the Great Fire of London, pupils show real feeling when making comparisons with disasters of today.

134 The quality of teaching seen was very good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They have high expectations of the pupils and set searching questions to stretch the pupils' imagination and to make them think hard. Lessons are always very well prepared and teachers use materials that pupils can associate and relate well to. Lessons are well timed to make the best use of resources and activities. All staff work very closely together as a team using group activities that stimulate discussion and reaction from pupils. Very good use is made of artefacts and photographic evidence. Pupils with additional special educational needs are very well supported and they make very good progress. The use of role play, the content of the topics and the enthusiasm generated for history is much improved since the last inspection and adds greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

135 The curriculum is very well planned to ensure pupils make continuous progress across the key stages. Assessment procedures are linked very well to the lesson planning by using systematic recordings of pupils' achievement. Resources are very good and very good use is made of them as was seen in displays throughout the centre. Topics and cross-curricular activities are very well planned. A very good example of this is the whole week 'History Alive' project. Here pupils attended three different workshops held at Prescott Museum. Many exciting projects were planned and there is good photographic evidence of these kept in school. Pupils looked at transport through the ages, spoke to a real live Ex Wren and made their own dolly blue. Staff entered into the spirit of the week dressing appropriately for the historical age and wartime songs were sung, bringing the topic truly alive.

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Information technology

136 Progress in information technology(IT) is satisfactory overall and has improved from the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory. No lesson specifically devoted to teaching I.T. skills was observed. Across the centre pupils show satisfactory progress in basic computer skills. At Key Stage 1, pupils control the cursor on various programs, such as using a mouse to 'Dress Teddy'. By the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils use basic word processing skills to delete, space, and insert words. They use the cursor to draw using a 'Paint' program and access the internet. The majority of pupils need a high level of support and encouragement when using a computer and this is often from either their peers or support staff. Only a small number of lessons were seen when computers and printers were used to support other curriculum areas. In design and technology it was used to help design a lighthouse and in mathematics pupils used a block graph to record the findings of a survey of street furniture.

137 Pupils enjoy using computers and concentrate for prolonged periods. They show respect for the equipment and are prepared to help one another and to share or take turns.

138 Insufficient evidence was seen to judge the quality of teaching. Often use of the computer is planned but due to technical difficulties, it is omitted. The centre is experiencing considerable problems in accessing the new network which currently has a restricted range of software. Of the four computers available in the lunchtime IT club, one did not work, one had no sound and the internet was inaccessible on a third. Most teaching and support staff have sufficient knowledge, understanding and expertise to use the computers and printers but currently, because of the difficulties, levels of frustration and confidence vary. The centre has plans to link itself to an intranet and to develop the expertise, confidence and knowledge of all staff by further training.

139 The I.T. policy is good and the co-ordinator has devised a comprehensive assessment and recording document to record pupils competence in using computers, including the pupils own 'I can ' record.

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Music

140 Owing to timetabling and the length of the inspection, no music lessons were observed, and it is not possible to make an overall judgement about pupils' progress or the quality of the teaching. The school uses the services of the Local Education Authority music specialist. Whilst it is the aim

of the music co-ordinator to get the teaching of music back into the classrooms, there was no follow-up to the specialist teaching observed in lessons during the week of the inspection.

141 The centre has a recently updated long term plan for the whole school, and long term and medium term plans for each age group which sets out clearly the content to be covered. These plans meet the National Curriculum requirements. They include the elements of performing and composing, and listening and appraising. The subject policy is comprehensive and the scheme of work is good. Resources are now good with a far broader range since the last inspection. A well stocked music trolley with good quality tuned and untuned percussion instruments gives flexibility to where music can be taught. The centre also has a good range of books and tapes, compact disks and some examples of computer software. There have been new instruments recently purchased specifically for the early years and to develop the multicultural aspects of music.

142 From the evidence of Year Books, music is used well to promote dance and a range of music is used to support collective worship. There are opportunities for pupils to perform music, for example, at the Harvest Festival, Christmas and the leavers' assembly. There is also evidence that the performances of visiting music groups stimulate work in the classrooms following the visits. There are useful opportunities for pupils to meet professional musicians who visit the centre from time to time and to take part in music workshops with them. All of this broadens pupils' interests, encourages their keenness to learn and is an improvement on the previous inspection.

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Physical Education

143 At Key Stage 1, pupils make very good progress in dance. They respond to instructions and listen carefully. They creep and skip around the room, change direction and stop to the beat of the tambourine. They develop control, co-ordination, balance and poise in the basic actions of travelling, skipping, hopping and stillness. They perform expressive movements to music and the story of the 'Teddy Bears Picnic'.

144 At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make very good progress in gymnastics and games. They understand the importance of warming up and the changes that happen to their body when they exercise. They are familiar with the vocabulary of gymnastics and can comment that a pupil is in 'control' when he holds his balance. They practice and improve their own performance, and repeat a performed sequence with increasing control. In games they participate in group games, four pupils attacking and four pupils defending. Most travel whilst bouncing a large ball, and keep it under control. Throughout the centre, the attainment of some pupils is close to that expected for pupils of their age.

145 A particular emphasis is put on swimming and all pupils make very good progress. Every class is timetabled for swimming for half of every term. Targets are set at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 with most pupils achieving the minimum. Certificates are awarded for achievement as early as the reception class, and these feature strongly in the centre's assemblies. Year 6 pupils attend Allerton Towers for outdoor pursuits. Here they develop teamwork. There is very good photographic evidence of the pupils captured having fun, and showing courage, strength and agility as they attempt the various activities. What is evident from the photographs is the great enjoyment pupil experience and the sense of achievement as they participate. There is equal opportunity and pupils with additional special educational needs make very good progress.

146 The pupils gain a great deal of pleasure from this subject. However, they also concentrate hard and listen carefully trying very hard to perfect movements in gymnastics and games. They show very good team spirit and make useful comments about each other's performance. They behave sensibly and observe safety rules when carrying equipment.

147 Teaching is very good at both key stages. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. There is always a very good pace to lessons to hold the pupils' attention, and realistic expectations of what pupils can and cannot do. There is usually very good teamwork between teachers and support assistants and this helps to ensure that every minute is used purposefully by all pupils. Success is always rewarded with suitable praise and encouragement. A very good learning environment is created by very good relationships all round. This is much improved since the last inspection and now includes clear planning across a broad curriculum with pupils constantly encouraged to offer their own views as to ways of improving their skills.

148 Of particular note is the after school football club. Some teaching staff and the site manager coach the 'squad', which is made up of a mixture of different aged pupils, both male and female. During the inspection due to the weather it was not possible to see the full squad in action, but just a small group in training. They show increasing skills in ball control; they dribble to a partner who stops the ball, turns and shoots at goal. Pupils show tremendous enthusiasm for this activity.

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92 **Religious Education**

149 Pupils' progress is very good at both key stages. During Key Stage 1, pupils recall accurately previous work they have undertaken in the current topic of 'God's gift to the world'. Pupils know clearly the sequence of the Nativity story and use a model of 'the stable' and figures well to demonstrate the events. Pupils describe when Christmas is and have some understanding of the difference between giving and receiving. Consolidation of the work is undertaken well through role-play and with costumes, when pupils behave like the characters they are portraying.

150 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils study Christianity alongside other religions and are aware of some aspects of other festivals such as Hanukkah, Divali and the importance of different foods. They understand how light is used as a means of celebration across different faiths. They know about Advent and the Advent wreath and what each candle means. Some pupils make candles to show light in festivals which help them to understand the meaning of light as a symbol of faith. Others pupils discuss the star as a way of celebrating Christmas and have a large illuminated star in the classroom, which they enjoy and which makes the lesson stimulating.

151 Pupils' response is very good at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 they are keen to respond to well structured questions which make them really think about issues. They are able to say how they feel about a new baby in the family, they suggest sentences, phrases and words which are relevant and to the point in supporting their pictures. Most maintain their attention very well throughout the lesson and benefit significantly from the good cross-curricular activities linking literacy and religious education.

152 At Key Stage 2 Pupils listen with increasing understanding and consolidate some of the work previously undertaken. They too are keen to answer questions and offer comments from their own experiences. They show very good concentration when a Bible story is read. They are very

interested in photographs that show how the Jews celebrate their festivals and the special foods that are prepared. They make clear links between this work and the continuing major central religious education display related to foods. They are interested in the topics taught and have opportunities to reflect on, for example, how they would feel making a journey and how this could be written as a newspaper article.

153 The quality of teaching is very good at both key stages. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and prepare well for the lessons. They have clear targets and learning objectives. The lesson outlines are succinct, encompassing the main points very well indeed, with the resources to be used also included. Teachers capture the interest of the pupils by their well organised lessons. Their knowledge shows through in their delivery of appropriate content presented in a relevant way with clear questioning and the good use of support staff who are well briefed and often take responsibility for working with a group. Classrooms are frequently calm during religious education lessons, such as using the candles as the only source of light when discussing the Advent wreath.

154 Pupils' work shows good continuity and progression throughout the centre with work closely following the topics. There is oral feedback to the pupils and positive comments written in their books which encourage them to work even harder.

155 The centre's religious education syllabus is based on the locally agreed syllabus from which the co-ordinator has developed the themes and topics. There is a very thorough and well ordered file with every aspect covered in full except how the subject is assessed. The Local Education Authority is currently developing this area. There is a good programme of monitoring supported by staff of the Local Education Authority. High quality displays and very good use of artefacts support the topics. Particularly good are the class prayer books to which pupils contribute their prayers and which they read out to all, at times of collective worship.

156 The subject is very well managed and shows considerable improvement since the last inspection. Teachers now have a good understanding of the syllabus. Pupils have many more opportunities to undertake independent learning and through good quality questioning are presented with problems to solve. The subject now makes a very good contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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92 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

92 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

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- * The inspection was undertaken by a team of five inspectors including a lay inspector;
- * During the week of the inspection, 56 lessons or part lessons were observed, and these included lessons away from the centre, such as swimming and integration sessions in mainstream schools;
- * The team also observed arrivals, departures, assemblies, collective worship, registrations, breaktimes, lunchtimes, lunchtime clubs and after-school football training;

- * Interviews were held with the headteacher and other members of the senior management team, with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, representatives of committees of the Governing Body, curriculum co-ordinators and other staff with specific responsibilities;
- * Informal conversations were held with the pupils and support staff, and with members of staff at two schools that have integration links with the centre;
- * Documentation was analysed both before and during the inspection. This included pupils' records, statements of special educational needs, reports to parents, individual education plans, school policies, curriculum and planning documents, minutes of meetings of the Governing Body and financial records;
- * Pupils' work was scrutinised and members of the team listened to pupils read from every class;
- * A meeting for parents was held before the inspection to hear the views of parents.

92 **DATA AND INDICATORS**

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92 **Pupil data**

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	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
N – Year 6	72	65	53
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92	Teachers and classes related to the pupils on roll at the centre		
92	Qualified teachers (N - Y6)		
	Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):		8
	Number of pupils per qualified teacher:		9
92	Education support staff (N – Y6)		
	Total number of education support staff:		6.2
	Total aggregate hours worked each week:		195
	Average teaching group size:	KS2	12.5
92	Financial data		
92			
	Financial year:		1998/99
			£
	Total Income		525,226
	Total Expenditure		511,119
	Expenditure per pupil		7301.70
	Balance brought forward from previous year		11,708
	Balance carried forward to next year		25,815
92	PARENTAL SURVEY		
92	159		

Number of questionnaires sent out: 72
 Number of questionnaires returned: 24

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	79	21	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	88	12	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	70	22	8	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	75	25	0	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	79	21	0	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	71	29	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	75	25	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	67	33	0	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	88	12	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	75	25	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) their school	88	12	0	0	0