

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hoylake

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105063

Headteacher: Mr I Thomson

Reporting inspector: Mr P Snelling  
3624

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 212497

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Market Street  
Hoylake  
Wirral  
Merseyside

Postcode: CH47 3BH

Telephone number: 0151 632 4153

Fax number: 0151 632 0886

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs F Wynne

Date of previous inspection: April 1999

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3624	Mr Phil Snelling	Registered inspector	Science Music	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management Key issues for action
8988	Dr Joan Cross	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
1492	Mr David Twist	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
30724	Mrs Delia Hiscock	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
24039	Mrs Lesley Traves	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Geography History	Teaching and learning

The inspection contractor was:

Primary Associates Limited  
West Lancs Technology Management Centre  
Moss Lane View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE



## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>6</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>21</b>



## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School is about the same size as most schools of this type, with 210 pupils on roll aged between four and eleven. There is an almost equal number of boys and girls though there are variations in individual classes. The school is situated in the centre of Hoylake on a compact site set back from the main road. Pupils come from a wide area and a variety of different backgrounds. There are more children entitled to free school meals than in most schools (about a quarter) but a similar number identified as having special educational needs. The school population is predominantly white with few children from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils speaking English as an additional language is about the same as in most schools though none at present need extra support. Pupils' attainment on entry to reception is usually below average, though it fluctuates from year to year. The current reception intake is close to average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Holy Trinity is now an effective school, which is better than it was when last inspected. Although attainment is below average in English, mathematics and science in the present Year 6, standards are rising and most pupils are achieving more than they were two years ago. Younger pupils are on course to reach higher standards in the future. There is more very good and good teaching than when the school was last inspected but there is still some unsatisfactory teaching to be improved. The school offers high standards of care for its pupils and has strengthened its partnership with parents and the community. The headteacher, new since the previous inspection, is giving a good lead and with the support of staff and governors, is moving the school forward. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils' achievement is better than two years ago and still improving.
- The school has a strong commitment to becoming better through evaluating its own performance, the effective leadership of the headteacher and the efforts of staff and governors.
- Personal, social and emotional development is strong in the Foundation Stage.
- The school is now very effective at managing and promoting the good behaviour of its pupils and relationships are very good.
- The school values its children and has significantly improved their learning environment.

#### **What could be improved**

- Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science, when they leave, could be higher.
- Some of the teaching is still not as good as it should be.
- The school could make better use of the data it collects on pupils' performance.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good improvement under its new headteacher since its previous inspection in April 1999, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Effective procedures for managing pupils' behaviour have been implemented and lessons are no longer disrupted by the poor behaviour of a few boys. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are now in line with those found nationally and pupils' writing is better. There is more support provided for pupils with



special needs in Key Stage 2 classes and their achievement is now good. There have been some improvements in the way the school monitors and checks its own work and in the way teachers assess their pupils' progress and use the findings. However, there is more to be done in both these areas. Standards are steadily rising, and teaching and learning are becoming better. The school has eliminated its serious weaknesses and is well placed to continue to get better.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	E	B	A	well above average A above average B
mathematics	D	E	D	C	average C below average D
science	E	D	D	C	well below average E

These test results for last year's Year 6 indicate that standards at 11 are now higher in English than in mathematics or science. This reflects the findings of the inspection in that pupils' achievement in English is stronger than in mathematics. However, when the test results for the current Year 6 are published, their scores are likely to be lower than those for 2000. This is because of the larger number of pupils in this year's group who find learning difficult. Although their attainment is below average, compared to their performance in their tests in Year 2, they have made good progress through Key Stage 2. Pupils attain in line with or better than those in schools with a similar intake. Pupils reach average standards in information and communication technology. In other subjects, work seen during the inspection showed pupils reaching standards similar to those in most schools.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage (reception class) make steady progress and reach the levels they should at six. They reach better than average levels in developing their personal, social and emotional skills because of high quality teaching in this area. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, being stronger in Year 2 where they receive the best teaching. By 7, they reach the standards expected. Because of weaker teaching, their achievement is not as good at the start of Key Stage 2. However, the strength of the teaching later is sufficient to ensure good progress overall.

Standards are rising and pupils are learning at a faster pace than two years ago. The school has worked successfully to tackle underachievement in English and information and communication technology. Achievement in both mathematics and science is getting better. Pupils with special needs make good progress in most subjects and high achievers make satisfactory progress. The school uses 'catch up' programmes well to help low achievers. Targets set by the school for pupils at 11 are appropriate to their previous levels of attainment.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are proud of their school and keen to please. They listen well and mostly work hard in lessons, especially when teaching is lively and challenging. Reception children work especially well together for their age.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in class and in the playground is good. They are polite and considerate to each other. Now and again pupils lose concentration when teaching does not grab their attention but they still behave well.
Personal development and relationships	This is good. Pupils are tolerant of each other and show respect. They respond well when given responsibilities. They work well together when asked.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are better than at the time of the last inspection and slightly above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 6 years	aged 6-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	satisfactory	satisfactory

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

Teaching overall is satisfactory. Of the lessons seen, 11 per cent were very good, 46 per cent good, 34 per cent satisfactory and 9 per cent unsatisfactory. This is better than at the time of the last inspection in that there is more very good and good teaching, though there remains some unsatisfactory teaching still to be improved. The best teaching was seen at the top of both key stages. In these lessons teachers built well on the work pupils had done before, asked questions which made them think hard and gave them opportunities to explain their learning. Where unsatisfactory teaching was seen, in Year 3 and early in the week in Year 1, lessons were not well organised. Pupils were given too little support to help them in their work or the activities they were given were not the right ones to reinforce what the teacher wanted the children to learn. The pupils' rate of learning was thus too slow.

Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively in most classes. However, the pace of learning dips at the beginning of both key stages. One reason for this in Year 1 is that the teachers who share the class do not pass on enough information to each other about pupils' progress. In Year 3, the school's agreed ways for teaching literacy are not fully carried through. Teaching of ICT has improved and is now satisfactory. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, though at times more thought needs to be given to stretching higher attainers. Overall, teachers manage the pupils well and often find interesting ways to approach their lessons. Pupils respond by working hard and at a good pace.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; all subjects receive enough attention. The locality is used well to extend learning. A good range of out of school clubs and events are run. There is a good programme for personal, social and cultural education. There is not yet enough use of computers to support work in all subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; pupils' learning needs are identified early. Their good progress owes much to the help they receive from classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good in moral and social areas; spiritual and cultural provision are sound. Teachers provide discussion time (circle time) for pupils to talk through their worries and listen to others. Good attention is now given to teaching pupils about the diversity of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; the school is a very caring community. It now promotes good behaviour and attendance really well. More use could be made of the information which teachers gather when they assess or test pupils' attainment.

In the Foundation Stage, the opportunities created for pupils in personal, social and emotional development are very good, although there are too few opportunities for them to develop physical skills outside. The school has a much improved partnership with its parents, which is now good. They have confidence and trust in the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides effective and thoughtful leadership giving clear direction to improving the school. The deputy headteacher provides strong support and staff take their share of responsibility to improve standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. A group very committed to making the school better. They are closely involved in discussing the school's performance and in making decisions about its future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school accurately identifies the broad areas where improvements are needed. More use could be made of the information collected on pupils' performance to set targets and make changes to teaching and the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Strong in information and communication technology. The school uses national 'catch up' programmes well to boost progress of particular groups.

The school has an adequate number of staff, is well resourced and accommodation is good. The school site is becoming much more attractive but the outdoor play area for pupils under six is presently inadequate. The school takes care to get best value in all its work, for example by consulting parents on major changes.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They feel the school is welcoming and approachable</li><li>• The school is well led and managed</li><li>• The school helps their children grow up and become mature</li><li>• Children enjoy coming to school</li><li>• Children are expected to work hard</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A few still have concerns about pupils' behaviour and their rate of progress.</li><li>• The amount of homework.</li></ul>

Parents are supportive of the school and most appreciate the improvements that have been made over the past two years. The inspection findings support this view. The level of homework set is similar to that found in most primary schools and the number of parents unhappy about the amount has fallen by half since the last inspection. Some parents feel there is too much, others too little. Pupils' behaviour and rate of progress are now good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The school's test results over the last year or two do not give a clear and consistent picture of pupils' attainment, rather one of fluctuation. At the age of 7, pupils' writing results have got better whilst reading has been up and down. Last year (2000) pupils' writing results were especially good when compared to those of pupils in schools with a similar intake whilst their reading results were in line. However, pupils' mathematics results have been consistently very low for four years.
2. At the age of 11, science and mathematics have been below the national average for the past three years. However, last year pupils' performance was in line with that of pupils in similar schools. In English, pupils' scores rose last year to above the national average. This compared very favourably to the performance of pupils in similar schools.
3. The underlying trend in results is one of improvement, largely because of better teaching and support for pupils learning. For example, in English teachers are plugging gaps in their knowledge and skills as they benefit from training and adapt the literacy hour to good effect. In mathematics, teachers in the infant classes are now teaching number skills well whilst at the top of Key Stage 2 teachers are good at identifying and moving pupils on in small steps. In science, pupils are benefiting from the greater number of investigations they now undertake. Such improvements in teaching need to be taken further to ensure the trend continues. Although the targets set for pupils to achieve in English and mathematics this year are low compared to national levels, they are appropriate for the group.
4. Attainment in English in the present Year 6 is below average and this is likely to be confirmed by the results of the recently taken national tests. This is not as good as last year when pupils achieved above average standards against the national average and very high against similar schools. This is because the current Year 6 class has more low attaining pupils and few will reach the higher level 5. This group has achieved well when compared to their very low base in Year 2. Pupils in other year groups also make good progress though it is not as fast in Year 3 as in other classes because the teaching is not as good.
5. Standards in English at Key Stage 1 are close to the national average. Achievement is not as good in Year 1 as in Year 2 because there is some weaker teaching in the early part of the week. Another factor that slows pupils' progress is that the teachers who share the Year 1 class do not pass enough information to each other as to where pupils are up to in their work. This leads to some overlap and reduced challenge. Although this has the greatest effect on mathematics it is a factor in English as well. On the other hand, the

reception teachers who share a class plan together and communicate effectively so that learning for these children is seamless.

6. Attainment in mathematics is now close to that expected at 7 though still below at 11. Pupils' achievement is improving throughout the school as changes are made to the way mathematics is taught. Some practical aspects of mathematics, such as measuring, have not been given enough attention in Key Stage 1 and pupils have been given few opportunities to apply their knowledge to solving problems. In Key Stage 2, some younger pupils struggle when given problems to solve because they are not sure how to go about it and are not given enough support. In most lessons, the mental number activities at the beginning are very successful but the work pupils are given to practise their skills is not always the right work at the right level of challenge.
7. Standards in science are average at 7 and below average at 11. This is similar to standards at the time of the last inspection though test results have improved at 11 in the last two years. However, as in English and mathematics, there are more pupils than usual in Year 6 this year who find learning difficult. It is likely, therefore, when they are published, that their results in the national tests this year will be lower. Pupils' progress and achievement is better than it was. They learn at a steady rate in Year 1 and in the lower junior classes, and a faster rate in Year 2 and the upper junior classes because the teaching is at its best there. Pupils are also getting a better grounding in practical investigations than they used to.
8. Standards in information and communication technology have improved significantly since the previous inspection and they are now average at both key stages. There are more computers available for pupils to use and the work they are given builds better on what has gone before. In all other subjects, pupils' standards are similar to those found in most primary schools.
9. Pupils with special needs achieve well because the school is now showing sustained commitment to raising standards in literacy and numeracy. Two important improvements are the earlier identification of pupils learning difficulties and an increase in the provision of support staff. Although there are presently no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, the school has historically given good support. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls.
10. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress though there are times when they could be stretched more in lessons. The tasks they are given are not always challenging enough and there is variation between classes. Teachers need to share their approaches more. The school is just putting together new procedures for identifying any pupils with special gifts or talents. There is already a good range of additional opportunities for those talented in music or sport.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. Since the last inspection there has been significant improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. As a result relationships between pupils and staff and pupils themselves are much better throughout the school. Parents are more certain now that their children like school and rightly so.
12. Attitudes and values are very good in the reception class as seen, for example, when a voluntary helper brought her cat to show to the children. During the visit the pupils were impeccably behaved and agog as they very politely asked the owner pertinent questions about the animal. They tried hard not to interrupt when others were speaking despite their eagerness and curiosity. They later demonstrated a high level of motivation and concentration when writing about the experience. Key to their confidence is the trust established with their teachers and all the adults who work with them. These children get on well together and are helpful to one another. They share the materials they work with sensibly and handle them carefully.
13. Elsewhere in the school pupils' attitudes to learning are good. There is some variation between classes, with attitudes usually best where there is the most engaging teaching. Pupils in these classes give their full attention, concentrate hard on their learning and are keen to please their teachers and the support staff. Their positive attitudes are helped significantly by very good relationships and a purposeful atmosphere within their classroom, which is conducive to productive work. For example, pupils in years 4-6 apply a great deal of thought to working out problems they are given by their teachers and persevere well to solve them. In years 1 and 3, however, pupils' attitudes to learning sometimes tail off and are not generally as good as in other year groups. This is because these pupils are not always suitably challenged and do not benefit from such well organised and purposeful lessons. As a result pupils understandably lose interest at times.
14. Pupils of all ages are well behaved now in lessons, around the school and in the playground. Although a very small number are occasionally still challenging in their behaviour there is no longer the disruption of lessons that used to impede pupils' progress. These findings agree with the views of parents who have noticed a big difference. The nature of the unacceptable behaviour in lessons is occasional silliness rather than aggression or malice. There is a pleasant atmosphere in the two playgrounds where pupils play happily in friendship groups. During the inspection no one appeared isolated and there was no anti-social or racist behaviour. There are no exclusions from the school.
15. Pupils' personal and social development is good throughout the school. In Year 2 reading sessions, for example, pupils easily become rapt in their work and share books in a very relaxed manner. Pupils show a high level of care and concern for one another and willingly support each other in both their work and personal affairs. They are proud of the changes for the better that they have influenced through their children's council, such as the outdoor environment and permission for girls to wear trousers in school. Those who are elected onto the council take their responsibilities very seriously and represent their classmates well.

16. The level of attendance has risen since the last inspection and is now slightly above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence has shown similar improvement over the last two years. Pupils are generally punctual in their arrival at school and lessons begin on time.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

17. Teaching overall is satisfactory, as it was judged to be at the last inspection, and there have been some improvements. There is now a higher proportion of good and very good teaching, and teaching in ICT is better. However the picture is not yet a consistent one; there are pockets of very good teaching and pockets where teaching is more ordinary and at times unsatisfactory.
18. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is effective in ensuring that children make a positive start in school. Good pupil management and high expectations results in high standards of behaviour in lessons. All adults working with the children set a good example, and relationships and teamwork are strong. Staff create interesting classroom surroundings, which support pupils' learning well. Early reading, writing and number skills are taught systematically and this, coupled with the strong encouragement from staff, helps pupils develop confidence in themselves as learners. Adult support is used well particularly to support lower achieving pupils and those with special needs. This helps them learn at a faster rate. This is largely true throughout the school, although in some classes support assistants are not always briefed well enough by the teachers before the lesson begins. However, even on these occasions, they still make a good contribution to pupils' learning by using their own initiative and skills.
19. Teachers manage pupils well in all classes and as a result they almost always behave well. All teachers make consistent use of the guidelines and strategies the school has put in place to encourage good behaviour. This helps pupils concentrate and make the most of the learning experiences on offer. Relationships are good between teachers and pupils and this encourages them to work hard and to do their best. Most lessons are characterised by a purposeful working atmosphere.
20. In the best lessons, teachers' plans are detailed and set out clearly what they want pupils to learn. This information is shared with pupils so that they know what they are doing and why they are doing it. For example, in a Year 5 geography lesson, the teacher clearly explained what she wanted children to achieve, as they used computers to compare the weather in different regions. The progress pupils made was rapid. In a Year 2 English lesson the teacher, as well as explaining what she wanted the pupils to have learned by the end, also checked very carefully what they had done before, so the starting point was right. However, at times teachers do not break learning down into small enough steps and are sometimes unclear themselves about what they want pupils to achieve. This is often because they are not secure in their own knowledge of the subject, particularly in literacy and numeracy. As a result, children become confused about what they are supposed to be doing and this



slows progress. An example of this was seen in a Year 3 mathematics lesson. Children made limited progress with money problems because they were unsure of how they should tackle them or record their work, and this was not explained to them by the teacher.

21. In the majority of lessons seen, resources are used well to help illustrate the concepts being taught; for example, when pupils were enthralled by the baguette and French cheese they were allowed to taste in a Year 2 geography lesson. This fired their imaginations and encouraged them to learn more about France. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils were highly motivated as they investigated the effects of friction through a challenge to move wooden blocks using string and weights. Their learning could be seen to develop as they came to understand how varying the length of string, amount of weights and type of block all made a difference.
22. In most lessons, tasks of varying difficulty are offered to pupils of different levels of previous achievement. Where these are matched well to pupils' needs it prevents them from becoming bored with their work because it is too easy, or frustrated because it is too hard. They are challenged to think deeply. In the more ordinary and the unsatisfactory lessons, however, work is not always matched well. For example, in a Year 1 lesson early in the week, higher attaining pupils were completing simple patterns. They finished the patterns rapidly and spent too much time colouring them in. Their pace of learning was too slow. Throughout the school, standards of presentation are not as high as they might be. Teachers expect too little of pupils in this area and sometimes accept work which is not the best they can do. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, with some teachers giving good guidance to pupils and some simply ticking the work.
23. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively in most classes. Teachers of younger children help them to see the links between how they read and write words. The skills that help pupils to read new and unfamiliar words are taught well. Most teachers are successful at promoting the use of basic number skills through mental and oral maths sessions. All teachers concentrate on introducing the pupils to correct vocabulary so they become good at recognising and using the right words in their own work. In some there are very effective methods employed. For example, in one infant class, children take on the role of teacher to describe literacy terms to the rest of the class. This is a very effective way of reinforcing pupils understanding.
24. The teaching of ICT is now satisfactory and teachers' confidence has grown since the previous inspection. Teachers are better at teaching children the skills they need to use computers for a range of purposes. However, not enough use is yet made of ICT in teaching of other subjects.
25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Increasing the number of support staff in Key Stage 2 has made a big difference. Clear targets are set for these pupils and their progress is regularly checked against them. Their work is matched well to their needs and teachers pay good

attention to them; for example by giving them more time to answer questions. This boosts their confidence as learners.

26. Satisfactory use is made of homework; pupils particularly enjoy and benefit from the extended projects they are asked to complete.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

27. The school has made significant improvements in the planning of the curriculum since the previous inspection. Then, the time spent in lessons was below that recommended for Key Stage 2. The school has increased this to ensure balance and breadth in provision.
28. The curriculum for children in the reception class (the Foundation Stage) is planned appropriately. Children progress smoothly through the six 'areas of learning' of the Foundation curriculum and they are well prepared for the National Curriculum. The opportunities for children to develop their personal and social skills are strength of the provision. This continues throughout school. However, the lack of outdoor play facilities prevents children from developing their physical skills to full potential.
29. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The last report indicated that pupils received too little time to develop their skills in ICT. There has been much hard work by staff and governors to develop provision in this subject and it is much improved. However, more still needs to be done to ensure computers are used fully to support pupils' work across the other subjects. The school has improved the writing curriculum since the previous inspection and as a result, pupils' achievement has risen. Pupils now have planned opportunities to write in a range of subjects including history and science.
30. Provision for teaching literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Most lessons are planned according to the national guidelines. The school has addressed the need to help pupils improve their listening skills by enriching the range of opportunities for pupils to listen. In numeracy, the mental arithmetic introduction to lessons has been established well in most classes. This is a direct result of good training. Whilst the mathematics curriculum is satisfactory, it is stronger at Key Stage 2 because it has more practical activities and a broader range. However in Year 3 and at times in Year 1, the agreed guidelines for literacy and numeracy are not implemented tightly enough and as a result, learning is weaker. For example, some planned literacy activities do not have a clear enough purpose identified. Some tasks given to pupils in numeracy are not the best ones to reinforce what the teacher wants the pupils to learn.
31. The curriculum for other subjects is appropriately covered. The use of the local environment in geography is a particular strength. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and the school prepares its pupils well to cope with the problems they will encounter as young adults.

32. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are identified early and effective extra support is in place in Year 1. The school makes good use of catch-up literacy programmes in years 3 and 5, where extra numeracy support is also added. Additional support staff have been appointed since the previous inspection and their contribution is effective. As a result, children's individual learning plans are implemented over a clearly set time and pupils make better progress.
33. Teachers make a conscious effort to ensure that all children are given equal access to learning in lessons. For example, if a pupil misses part of a class lesson for music tuition, the class teacher ensures that what has been missed is caught up and explained. A policy for the identification and provision for gifted or talented pupils is not yet in place but staff training has started as a result of the school's initiative. Talented pupils are given additional opportunities in sport and music. There are occasions when higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in lessons so they mark time rather than forge ahead. There are currently no pupils for whom English is a second language in need of additional support.
34. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which include drama, music, homework clubs and a variety of sports. Many older pupils participate in these. The school provides a range of trips; for example it makes good use of museums and makes an annual excursion to the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.
35. Significant improvements have been made to the school's provision for promoting pupils' moral and cultural development. Multicultural provision was weak at the time of the last inspection but now pupils' awareness of world faiths and different cultural traditions is raised as well as in most schools.
36. Spiritual development is fostered effectively through assemblies that are well planned and organised so as to be relevant to the children whatever their age. The pupils are usually suitably encouraged to reflect upon the messages and relate them to their own lives and experiences. Pupils' musical contributions often feature strongly. Religious education and personal and social education lessons also provide good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. However, there are not enough planned opportunities in other areas such as science, art and literature to heighten the spiritual dimension in all classes.
37. Each autumn all pupils are actively involved in discussing expectations regarding their behaviour and the principles that distinguish right from wrong. Following these discussions they help to devise a suitable code of conduct for their class. This process significantly aids pupils' moral development by helping them to understand how they should behave, the impact of their actions upon others and the need for rules in society. A reward system that boosts pupils' self-esteem effectively and makes them feel special successfully reinforces the codes.
38. Staff very actively promote positive relationships, care and concern for others and social courtesies through the good examples they themselves set for the

pupils. Charitable fundraising is a strong element of the care and consideration shown for the wider community, both local and further afield. Older pupils debate moral issues such as caring for the environment through, for example, taking part in the locally organised children's parliament.

39. The children's council gives pupils from late Year 1 upwards a very good opportunity to take responsibility for making a difference in their school and teaches them effectively about democracy and citizenship. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, dramatic productions, educational visits and a residential stay actively encourage pupils to get on well together at work and at play. Circle time, when pupils all sit around quietly and talk to partners or in turn about a topic, is planned in every class and helps pupils to listen and value other people's opinions.
40. Pupils' own cultural heritage is promoted well through lessons that are enlivened by many educational visits and by visiting performers such as musicians and actors. In relation to other cultural traditions much more is done now to raise pupils' awareness of the diverse nature of British society than two years ago, particularly through learning about world faiths. In addition, puppeteers and artists have worked with the pupils on multi-cultural themes. Sikh visitors, for example, have dressed the pupils in Asian clothing and undertaken Indian pattern work with them in art lessons. Although there are specific displays around the school which reflect ethnic minority cultures, more could still be done to reflect ethnic minorities in a natural way in other displays. A very good example was seen in the reception classroom where careful attention has been paid to including high quality images of different races and cultures in the display corners.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

41. Parents are rightly impressed with the good care that is taken of their children. Care and consideration for others is central to the Christian values upon which the school is firmly based. All staff demonstrate these qualities in their dealings with the pupils and the children reflect this in the way they support one another. Child protection procedures and arrangements to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety are all good.
42. At the time of the last inspection the school had insufficient support staff to provide adequate help for junior pupils with special educational needs. Significant improvements have been made and the quality of educational and personal support and guidance for pupils of all abilities throughout the school is now typical of most schools.
43. Considerable time and effort has rightly been invested by the headteacher in producing a behaviour management policy that is consistently applied and works effectively. This has brought about significant improvement in behaviour in lessons and parents are appreciative of this. Pupils can now concentrate on their learning without the distractions of the past that impeded their progress. Key to the success of this very good policy is the consultation process that

involved all sections of the school community. It clearly set the school's expectations, not just for the pupils but for staff, parents and governors also.

44. The policy has at its heart a very good system of rewarding positive behaviour that is easy for the staff to administer without unduly interrupting the flow of lessons. The rewards are attainable by all pupils, including those whose behaviour is more challenging, so that everyone has an incentive to behave well. Unacceptable behaviour is suitably and calmly checked and pupils who moderate their actions can still gain the daily and weekly treats. At lunchtime the midday staff, very well led by their senior supervisor, successfully operate the same system. This ensures that expectations regarding conduct remain high when teachers are not directly supervising the pupils. Bullying and racism are tackled sensitively and very effectively through the policy and do not cause the parents concern. Suitable records are kept of incidents. The very few pupils who fail to respond to the behaviour management policy are dealt with firmly and fairly by the headteacher. Their parents are involved appropriately and special rewards are given for improvements.
45. Regular attendance is promoted satisfactorily through monitoring the registers of attendance twice weekly for lateness, patterns of absence and unexplained absence. Such close scrutiny and follow up of concerns is fairly recent. There are no rewards for good attendance. Since the pupils enjoy achieving incentives for good behaviour they may also respond positively to rewards for improved attendance at a class or individual level. Pupils are marked late if they arrive after the official start time. This effectively promotes punctual arrival and ensures that lessons begin on time.
46. The school has suitable procedures for gathering evidence on pupils' attainment and academic progress. Their achievements are analysed on a regular basis and shared with the staff. This represents a good level of improvement since the last inspection because staff now have a clearer picture of the progress of individuals. Those needing extra support with their learning can now be targeted earlier. As yet the information gathered is not used as well as it might be by teachers when they plan future learning for their class or for individuals. A good start has been made in the upper junior classes, particularly in relation to improving pupils' performance in writing, but it is too early for significant impact to have resulted.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

47. The headteacher is highly committed to building parents' confidence in the school and raising its profile in the wider community. He has been very open with the parents about the serious weaknesses that existed at the time of the last inspection and has established better channels of communication with them. The school's plan of action to raise standards was particularly well explained to parents and they are suitably kept up to date about the progress being made. Improved trust in the school and its management has resulted, and the school's partnership with parents has strengthened considerably over the past eighteen months.

48. The headteacher seeks and values the opinions of parents and involves them in shaping improvements. For example, he invited their comments on draft proposals for the behaviour management policy and successfully enlisted their support through signed agreements between home and school. The parents are very comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns now and have much more positive views of it than at the time of the last inspection. In particular they are rightly much happier about pupils' behaviour and homework. The highest level of dissatisfaction is still homework, with some parents thinking there is too much and others too little, but far fewer in number than two years ago. Parents are usually supportive of pupils' homework and ensure that the work is completed and returned.
49. Parents are better informed now about forthcoming work and how to help their child at home. Information about the progress that their children make is in line with most schools. The annual written reports about children's progress are fairly typical but do not always tell parents how well their children are doing in relation to national standards. Neither do they always sufficiently identify areas for development. However, there is discussion of pupils' targets at the consultation evenings which are usually well attended. Communication with parents of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The prospectus contains more information about the subjects that are taught than is commonly seen in such documents but lacks explanation about the six areas of learning for pupils in the reception year.
50. The school welcomes and appreciates voluntary assistance from parents and other adults and their response is similar to that in most schools. A reasonable number work alongside teachers on a regular basis, many of who are training in the Successful Reading Partnership scheme so that they can be even more effective in their role. This training is very well led by a support assistant. The parent and teacher association is active in organising social and fundraising events that generate substantial income and successfully raise the profile of the school in the community. For example, parents' generosity of time and money has enabled the pupils to benefit from additional equipment to stage their annual productions. Parents have made story sacks of very high quality for teachers to bring alive books for younger pupils and these are very effective.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

51. The school is led and managed effectively by the headteacher, governors and key staff. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher, appointed since the previous inspection, is leading the school well. With the staff and governors he has tackled the serious weaknesses found two years ago and brought about improvements in these areas and others. Not all the changes have yet had their full impact but there is sufficient evidence of improving standards and pupil achievement. Under his thoughtful leadership the school has clear direction and a strong commitment to continuing its improvement, which has been good so far.

52. The headteacher has had a particular impact in raising teachers' expectations and improving the school environment and community. More is demanded of the children both in their work and their behaviour than before. The school site has been improved by further developing a pond study area, landscaping and playground furniture. Pupils take pride in this and feel valued by it. Staff are working together better as a team and taking more responsibility for promoting higher standards in the subjects they lead. Parents have a far higher level of trust and confidence in the school than before, particularly because of the openness with which the school now communicates with them.
53. Subject leadership is satisfactory. All teachers with subject responsibilities support and advise their colleagues though only a few are directly involved in checking on the standards of teaching and learning. They now check and evaluate teachers planning and in some cases, pupils work. Through such activities they are beginning to have more influence over the development of their subjects but there is still some way to go. Leadership is strong in literacy and this has led directly to significant improvements; for example in the way teachers assess pupils' work in English. The mathematics coordinator is new to the school but has already formed a clear view of what needs to be done. There are promising improvements in science, and information and communication technology. For example, there is more investigative science going on in classes and as part of much improved provision, a new computer suite is up and running.
54. The management of special needs provision is satisfactory. The coordinator has a clear overview of pupils' progress and targets, and has established a consistent administrative approach across the school. This ensures that individual pupils' progress is regularly checked against planned provision. Greater levels of support staff are now provided in Key Stage 2 and they work effectively with the children. Procedures are in place to identify as early as possible pupils who may need additional support.
55. Procedures are currently being developed to identify gifted and talented pupils, and provide for them. An important improvement in management generally is the way in which procedures have been implemented across the school in a number of areas. For example, the introduction of clear procedures for managing pupils' behaviour has led to consistency in the way staff respond and better behaviour and learning by the children.
56. Systems have been established for comparing the school's performance against schools nationally and those with a similar pupil intake. The school is beginning to use this information well to question its own performance and set targets. It has accurately identified for itself the main areas it needs most to develop and these are tackled systematically through the school development plan. More detailed work needs to be done on analysing the data available, drawing conclusions from it and setting a range of improvement targets. For example, whilst targets are set for individual pupils, the school is not yet fully using the information to set group or curriculum targets across all year groups.

57. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. The headteacher ensures that governors receive full information to enable them to understand how well the school is doing and what needs to be improved. Over the past two years, stronger links have been established with staff, creating opportunities for governors to build up their knowledge of day-to-day life in school. They are very committed to the school and its continued improvement. The responsibilities they as individuals hold reflect closely the particular skills and expertise they bring. The budget is managed well, including funding for specific purposes. The school seeks to obtain best value in its work. For example it consults with parents about significant changes such as those to homework and checks it is getting best value for the money it spends.
58. There is a sufficient number of staff. The school has implemented a performance management system through which objectives have been set for teachers which link to the school's priorities for development. Management of the job share in Year 1 needs to be improved to ensure that the passing of information about pupils between the teachers is better. Present weaknesses slow progress in this class.
59. Whilst the accommodation is good and well-maintained overall, there is a weakness in the lack of outdoor play space for pupils in the Foundation Stage. This restricts the pupils in some aspects of their physical development. This deficiency is being addressed as part of the site developments now in hand. Teachers in Key Stage 1 could make better use of the space available to them to minimise the noise from one group interfering with another. The school has a satisfactory level of resources. The new ICT suite provides a good level of resource, which is contributing to pupils improved standards in the subject.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The headteacher, staff and governing body should:

### **Further improve the quality of teaching by:**

- making sure the right activities are chosen to develop what it is the teacher wants the pupils to learn;
- more consistently challenging high attainers;
- spreading existing good practice more effectively across all classes;
- raising the level of subject expertise in English, mathematics and science;
- ensuring good communication between all teachers who share classes;
- making more consistent use of marking to show pupils what they need to do to improve.

(Paragraphs: 3, 4, 5, 10, 17 – 26, 30, 33, 58, 80, 82, 91, 87, 88, 95, 106, 107, 108, 118)

### **Further improve standards in English, mathematics and science by:**

#### *English*

- ensuring that all lesson planning for the literacy hour has specific outcomes for learning based on pupils previous achievement;
- extending pupils drafting skills in writing.

(Paragraphs: 30, 80-91)

#### *Mathematics*

- giving pupils in Key Stage 1 more opportunities to carry out their own investigations, solve practical problems and record their own work;
- giving pupils in both key stages more opportunities to develop their data handling and measuring skills.

(Paragraphs: 6, 30, 92 -102)

#### *Science*

- giving more attention to drawing conclusions, and reinforcing the knowledge and understanding to be learned in practical investigative work;
- stretching higher achievers by giving them less teacher direction and more opportunities to design, carry out and choose how to record their own investigations.

(Paragraphs: 10, 33, 103 -109)

### **Make better use of the assessment information available on pupils by:**

- ensuring all teachers use this information effectively to decide what pupils should do next;
- ensuring best use is made of pupils test results to identify particular strengths and weaknesses, then using the information to set targets for pupil groups and improve teaching and the curriculum.

(Paragraphs: 22, 46, 56, 97, 108, 109, 137)

In addition to the key issues, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the plan. These are indicated in paragraphs 22, 85 (improving presentation of work), 28, 59, 76, 106, 120 (improving provision for

physical development in the foundation stage) and 24, 100, 127-132 (making more use of ICT across all subjects)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	46	34	9	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	210
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	56
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	40
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	17	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	15
	Girls	15	16	12
	Total	29	30	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (74)	79 (89)	71 (74)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	15	12	15
	Total	29	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (85)	71 (78)	79 (85)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	17	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	14
	Girls	16	11	15
	Total	30	23	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (58)	68 (46)	85 (71)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	14
	Girls	16	11	15
	Total	29	23	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (63)	68 (63)	85 (75)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0.5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0.5
White	97.8
Any other minority ethnic group	1.1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Average class size	30

#### **Education support staff: Y[ ] – Y[ ]**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	126

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	398886
Total expenditure	402683
Expenditure per pupil	1900
Balance brought forward from previous year	3102
Balance carried forward to next year	- 695

*To*

*be*

*completed*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	209
Number of questionnaires returned	96

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	57	29	10	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	51	10	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	35	23	2	2
The teaching is good.	49	46	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	42	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	31	5	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	56	40	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	27	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	43	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	27	11	2	11

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

61. Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. The majority of children admitted have attended a pre-school group on the school site, with which the school has developed very good links. This helps pupils become familiar with the school and as staff from the playgroup and school plan together, ensures that children's learning is continuous.
62. The reception class provides a sound foundation for children's learning. Assessments carried out in the first weeks after starting school show that the majority of the current children have skills that are close to those of most other children of the same age. Inspection findings indicate that children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. This is a strength of the school. It is a direct result of the high quality teaching in this area. The environment staff create is happy, secure and purposeful. A lot is expected of children in their work and behaviour and children rise to the challenge. Consequently they develop good attitudes to school life. In all other areas of learning pupils make steady progress.
63. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is planned to ensure all six areas of learning are covered appropriately. It is practical, in the main, and gives an appropriate balance between activities directed by the teacher and those children choose for themselves. The more formal work of literacy and numeracy is introduced gradually, which ensures that children develop with confidence in these areas. Relationships between all staff and pupils are very good. Teamwork between staff is also good. This is particularly important as two teachers share the class.
64. Teaching overall is satisfactory, although some examples of good teaching were observed. This is not quite as strong a picture, apart from personal, social and emotional development, as the last inspection when it was judged to be good overall.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

65. Children make good progress and by the time they leave the reception class, they are likely to exceed the early learning goals (national standards for pupils 5 at years old) in this area. All pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to school. They are happy and willing to learn and concentrate well. They are confident in sharing their ideas and their news with adults and other children. All have learned the routines of lining up and putting hands up to speak. Most become engrossed in their work and play; for example, when sharing books together or when painting a picture. They are developing good levels of independence and willingly carry out tasks such as taking physical education equipment to and from the hall. During a lesson on 'friends', almost all children could think of a way another class member had helped them or someone they had helped.

66. Teaching in this area is good. Staff take every opportunity to encourage co-operation and good behaviour, through praise and rewards. They manage pupils very well and set a good example to the children themselves. These factors enable children to feel secure and motivate them to do their best.



## **Communication, language and literacy**

67. Children make satisfactory progress in this area and are on course to reach the standard expected nationally by the time they leave the reception class. Staff ensure they are taught the basic skills of reading and writing systematically. A good start is made in teaching children letter sounds and names. They are given good opportunities to listen to stories and to share books. They love stories and listen open-mouthed as the teacher reads 'The Good Samaritan' or 'The Hungry Caterpillar', joining in appropriately. Group reading sessions are taught competently and these ensure that steady progress is made in reading and that children receive the help they need. Most are competent in recognising familiar words and reading simple stories and the highest achievers are already reading independently, with good expression.
68. Children talk confidently about events in their own lives, such as places they have visited and birthday parties. Most listen attentively and wait for their turn to speak. Teachers encourage children to pose questions to help their learning. A good example of this was seen when a neighbour brought in her cat. The children were spellbound and asked interesting questions such as, 'Does he have claws?' This first hand experience motivated them and even the more reluctant pupils joined in.
69. Handwriting skills are developed through regular practice of handwriting patterns and letter formation. Adults give good support to all children, but particularly those experiencing difficulty, in a positive and encouraging way. Most have developed good pencil control and are starting to write their own stories. They are aware that their writing can be read by others.
70. Teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall. A strong feature is the clear understanding teachers have of the way in which young children learn to read. Occasionally however, too long is spent in literacy lessons learning letter sounds. The pace slows and progress is not as sharp.

## **Mathematical development**

71. Children make satisfactory progress and are on course to reach the early learning goals by the time they leave reception. Staff encourage pupils to become confident with number through well structured teaching and a thorough grounding in the basic skills. Children enjoy counting and many can count and recognise numbers to 20 with ease. Higher achieving pupils can count to 50 and beyond. They are beginning to understand basic addition and subtraction and can do simple examples mentally. Children are learning to order numbers and teachers devise enjoyable games to help their understanding; for example, the meaning of first, second, third fourth and fifth.
72. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The introductions to lessons are effective, supported by the good relationships between teachers and pupils. Children try hard to please. Teachers use resources well to captivate children's attention; for example when attractive laminated cards were used on the 'magic carpet'

to help pupils order numbers. However there are occasions when the activities chosen do not help children learn mathematics sufficiently well. An example of this was when a group of higher achieving pupils were working on an activity that involved them mainly in cutting and pasting. The activity did not challenge them mathematically. There are also times when an over-use of prepared sheets limits children's independence in recording their own work.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

73. The majority of children are on course to meet the early learning goals and make satisfactory progress. This is because teachers capture their enthusiasm with a range of interesting, practical and relevant experiences. For example, they have undertaken a survey of traffic in the streets around the school and listened to the caretaker telling them about life when he was a boy. Teachers build steadily on the knowledge children bring with them from home and encourage them to explore; for example, through the wide range of musical instruments on display and the sounds they make. In a lesson on sound, pupils' learning was effectively extended through activities that required them to listen carefully to different sounds and identify them.
74. Teaching is good with lessons being well planned and resourced. Adults use questions well to find out what children already know and develop their learning further. On occasions, the planned activities are not linked closely enough to the concepts teachers want children to learn. In the lesson on sound for example, the planned task did not extend children's scientific knowledge about how we hear, which was the main aim of the lesson.

### **Physical development**

75. Children are likely to meet the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and make satisfactory overall progress.
76. Within the classroom, children are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop their manipulative skills. They cut carefully around shapes and make towers and structures from different size blocks. They achieve well in developing their computer skills. For example, most are able to use a mouse confidently to select and move objects on the screen and are beginning to use the keyboard to type captions for their work. In gymnastics, high expectations are set and this motivates children to do their best. They are developing satisfactory control over their movements, as they run, skip and jump. However, achievement in physical development is limited because children do not have access to large wheeled toys or suitable climbing equipment outdoors.
77. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with ICT teaching good. In this area, the teacher was seen to give good explanations and demonstrations to help children understand their tasks. In gymnastics however, opportunities were missed to challenge children to improve their skills.

### **Creative development**

78. Children's creative development is on course to meet the expected level by the end of reception and they make satisfactory progress. Pupils are given good opportunities to paint, print, draw, cut and stick, and to explore texture and shape. They choose colours and materials successfully; for example when making 'Baby Owl' collages. Children are encouraged to explore materials such as sand and water. However, fewer opportunities were observed for children to construct three-dimensional models out of chosen materials.
79. A good range of musical instruments is made available for children to choose independently. They use these with great enthusiasm. Children work well together as they take on different roles in an area of the classroom set up as a vet's surgery, to develop children's imaginative play. No direct teaching was observed in this area of learning during the inspection.

## **ENGLISH**

80. Pupils' progress in English is improving. This was reflected in improved test scores last year though they are unlikely to be sustained this year because the current Year 6 has more pupils who find learning difficult. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory whilst in Key Stage 2, achievement is good. This improvement is a direct result of a more systematic approach to teaching the basic skills of reading and writing. However achievement is not yet consistent across the key stages because there are still inconsistencies in the teaching. Achievement in Year 1 for example is not as good as in Year 2. This is because teaching in lessons at the beginning of the week is not as good and there is insufficient information passed between the teachers who share the class to ensure a fast pace of learning is maintained. In Year 2 pupils have made rapid progress with their new teacher since January. Overall the picture is stronger than at the time of the last inspection.
81. When children start school, their attainment in literacy is generally below average. The previous inspection judged that speaking and listening skills were unsatisfactory. The school has made significant improvements in this area. There are now better planned opportunities to develop listening skills and expectations are high. For example, children are expected to take turns in speaking as they take part in discussions. They are also expected to listen attentively to their teachers and to their classmates at times such as shared sessions in literacy lessons. For example, Year 2 pupils read word pairs such as 'jolly giraffe' and the circle of children listened carefully as they took turns. Listening skills are also developed well in other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils listened well as they were being taught to compose a dramatic musical score. Occasionally, however, teachers talk for too long in lessons and pupils' attention begins to wane. This inhibits learning because pupils are not participating sufficiently in the lesson. However, overall the standard of listening has improved and is now close to the average. This is a direct result of much work on the part of staff.

82. Children in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in both reading and writing, with the better progress in Year 2. Work in the Year 1 class is not always matched closely enough to the pupils' previous achievement. This affects higher achieving pupils the most. When there is extra adult support in the classroom, however, the groups they work with make good progress. By the age of 7, the majority of pupils read simple texts confidently and with growing fluency. They can identify words which rhyme and different letter sounds and patterns. Generally, they tackle new words well and their spelling strategies are sound. Most understand what a sentence is and can explain why an author has written in a particular way. They can write their own stories and poems with the needs of the audience in mind. For example, in Year 2 pupils have written sensitive letters to Greenpeace.
83. The school has improved writing at Key Stage 1 by better teaching of key skills and this has benefited all pupils, including those with special needs. Although handwriting is taught well, the higher achieving pupils are not stretched through being taught the beginnings of a joined style, which they are capable of. There is now a wide range of purposeful opportunities planned in both key stages for pupils to write. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school's better planned approach to the teaching of basic skills to all children has particularly helped lower attainers in Key Stage 1.
84. At Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and good progress in writing. By the time they leave the school most pupils are competent readers. Higher attaining readers can discuss major themes of books and talk about the characters. By 11, children are developing an appropriate written style for different purposes and use their writing skills well in other subjects, such as history. Achievement is good in Year 4 where, for example, pupils write from the viewpoint of a gull watching over the scene of a well known story (the Iron Man). They compose thoughts and with empathy, as they imagine the scene. This is because the shared teaching of reading and writing, where good, effectively engages the pupils and ensures that children know how to use literary devices in their writing. They enjoy using dialogue to create feeling and readily use a dictionary and thesaurus to choose fitting vocabulary. For example, after much thought, one child wrote from the gull's view: 'I feel remorseful, ashamed, guilty....' at the way the Iron Man was being treated. The school has developed writing approaches to teach pupils how to improve their own writing. Each child has a drafting book in which they write for different subjects. In this, pupils explore and compose ideas in a range of formats for different reasons. Whilst this teaches some authoring skills, it does not produce the best possible achievement because presentation is poor and children struggle to edit their own work successfully.
85. By the end of Year 4, most pupils are using pen and beginning to use a cursive style. This is the impact of systematic teaching of handwriting in Key Stage 1. Handwriting overall is satisfactory, apart from the inconsistencies in standards of presentation throughout the school.
86. Standards of spelling are average by the end of Key Stage 1 and in early Key Stage 2. However, in the older junior classes, spelling is below average

because these pupils have not been taught systematically in the past. This has been improved, however by the emphasis teachers now place on teaching pupils how to spell words that they may be unfamiliar with.

87. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is bringing about improvements in reading and writing throughout the school. However, its implementation is not totally consistent in all classes because there are variations in the effectiveness with which teachers organise their lessons. Where organisation is weaker, for example in Year 3, progress is slower. Here, the activities given to some pupils do not match their needs closely enough.
88. Most of the English teaching is effective though some observed during the inspection was unsatisfactory. Most teachers check with the children at the end of the lesson that the intended learning has taken place. This information is then used to plan the next lesson. Where lessons are less successful, teachers do not plan clearly enough in advance what they intend pupils to learn. This results in confusion and loss of pace in the learning, with little achievement for some groups of pupils. In the best lessons, teachers match work well to the ability levels of their pupils and the tasks they choose help children learn new knowledge and skills quickly. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, particular words were identified for different groups of pupils to learn. The difficulty of the words pupils were given reflected their previous attainment and the different tasks stretched them to the limits of their learning. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Classroom relationships are good. Pupils' attitudes to each other and to their learning are mostly good.
89. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is because their needs are identified early and individual work programmes and extra adult support is provided for them. The quality of this support is often very good. As a direct result; the pace of children's learning is much improved. The extra adult support in Key Stage 2 is an improvement since the previous inspection.
90. The management of English is good. The coordinator has worked particularly hard to improve writing across the school and to help teachers to improve their teaching methods. She has begun using carefully analysed assessment data to improve teaching and learning in the older junior classes. She has improved the reading and writing links in most other subjects, although Information Communication Technology is not yet used enough to support English. Drama is a strong dimension to the English curriculum and much work takes place in extra- curricular time. This makes a good contribution to the development of speaking skills.
91. The effort the school has made to tackle underachievement in English is significant. This has been done by identifying gaps in basic skills and taking action, particularly in Key Stage 1. The effective use of the national catch-up programme in Years 3 - Additional Literacy Support- has helped to lift the achievement of a significant group of pupils, particularly in reading. The

school is also making good use of these materials for lower attaining pupils in other classes. However, to sustain and raise standards further, the sharing of good teaching is needed in both key stages.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are below those expected for their age in mathematics. Their attainment was well below average when they started in school and although they have progressed well, particularly in the upper junior classes, their attainment is still below average. The Year 2000 test results painted a similar picture of standards though also showed that standards were as good as in similar schools. Standards have fluctuated since 1997 but last year they improved faster than the trend nationally. Early indications suggest that this year a smaller proportion of pupils will reach the expected level in the national tests for 11-year-olds.
93. Pupils in Year 2 currently attain standards close to those expected for their age. This is better than shown by the Year 2000 national test results, when standards were well below average for 7 year olds. Initial (but unvalidated) test data for this year indicates that standards will be above average. This is partly because the attainment of the current Year 2 pupils was above average on entry to school. Their progress overall has been satisfactory, but it has been better in reception and Year 2 than in Year 1. Pupils in Year 2 have made particularly rapid progress since January because teaching has improved and work is more closely matched to pupils' abilities. However, attainment is average overall because pupils are less secure with applying their knowledge to problems and have had too few opportunities to carry out practical work, such as measuring or working with graphs and charts. This helps to explain why test results have been very low for several years at 7.
94. Achievement is inconsistent across the school and pupils do not always make sufficient progress. This is because teaching varies in its effectiveness and pupils do not study some areas of mathematics in sufficient depth. There are no marked differences between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Their progress is best when they receive adult support in lessons.
95. By the age of 7 years, pupils have a sound knowledge of numbers to 100 and can count in twos, fives and tens. They can carry out addition and subtraction mentally, explaining the strategies they have used. The more able are secure with simple multiplication and division. They know the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes well and are developing their skills with money. However, they are less secure at applying their knowledge to problems and they lack confidence in this area. This is because they have had too few opportunities in Key Stage 1 to work on practical, problem-solving tasks, which would benefit all pupils, but the low attainers, particularly. Pupils also experience difficulty in recording their work independently because much of their work, until recently, has simply required them to complete prepared sheets from a commercial scheme. This has limited the progress of the higher attainers in particular. However, evidence suggests that standards overall are

now rising as a direct result of the good teaching in Year 2. The new Year 2 teacher is also the mathematics coordinator and is already influencing teaching in Key Stage 1 by her example.

96. By age 11, pupils are secure with place value to 1000, they understand fractions and can multiply and divide by whole numbers, by 10 and by 100. Higher achievers can calculate fractions as percentages, and add and subtract decimals securely to two places. All pupils have a good understanding of the properties of shape, including symmetry and the more able can construct triangles accurately. However, pupils have too few opportunities to use and interpret a range of charts and diagrams and there is little evidence of work with negative numbers, or practical measuring tasks. This limits progress in these areas.
97. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory overall, it could be better in some classes. Lessons seen in the oldest infant and older junior classes were good. However, unsatisfactory teaching was seen early in the week in the younger infant and junior classes resulting in weak learning. In these lessons the pace of learning was slower because the teachers have a less secure grasp of the subject. This leads them to plan activities that are not linked closely enough to pupils' abilities or which do not relate well enough to what children should be learning. An example of this was in a Year 1 lesson, where higher attaining children were finding the properties of shapes which they already knew well. Average ability pupils were following instructions on drawing a 'shape castle', which were much too hard for them. Progress was unsatisfactory for both groups. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were given tasks to do which they did not have the strategies to tackle because the teacher had failed to give a clear explanation of the work.
98. In contrast, in the best lessons seen, pupils were set challenges that made them think hard and were expected to work hard and with sustained concentration. A good example of this was in a Year 6 lesson, in which children were constructing repeating shape patterns, using co-ordinates. Work was set at appropriate levels of challenge for all groups of pupils, and engaged every child in applying their knowledge of mathematics in a practical way. In a successful Year 2 lesson, pupils were solving money problems, by having to 'buy' items from the supermarket to total a given amount, with the amounts changed to match the abilities of different groups.
99. Where teaching is satisfactory or better, teachers are familiar and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy and apply it effectively. The lesson structure is soundly established and very good use is made of the mental / oral session at the start of the lesson. These sessions are delivered enthusiastically and are enabling children to develop good mental skills. However, the main teaching activities, in which children practise their skills, need improvement in some classes to ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately.
100. In all areas of the school, pupils' ability to use ICT to support their work in mathematics is at an early stage. More opportunities are starting to be provided but its potential is not yet fully exploited. Satisfactory use is made of

mathematics to help learning in other subjects. For example, spreadsheets are used in geography in Year 5 to work out comparisons in rainfall for different regions. Throughout the school, pupils need to be given more opportunities to work out problems and record answers in their own way.

101. The school has made improvements in some areas of mathematics since the last inspection. In Key Stage 1 pupils now attain close to average standards. The behaviour of pupils is now good and lessons are no longer disrupted. Mathematics resources are plentiful. However, there are still occasions when work is not sufficiently closely matched to the needs of all pupils.
102. The coordinator is new to managing the subject. Nevertheless, she already has a very good grasp of standards and of priorities for the future.

## **SCIENCE**

103. Although standards reached are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection, pupils' achievement is better than it was. This follows a number of improvements during the past two years, a significant one being that pupils' behaviour in lessons is much better. For example, children observed during a lesson in Year 2 listened very well to their teacher's interesting and accurate explanation of how a caterpillar changes into a butterfly. Pupils in Year 6 worked very well together and keenly on a practical test, moving wooden blocks across tables to investigate the effects of friction. They showed great interest in their learning through the way they responded to questions raised by the teacher. There is now no difference in the performance of boys and girls. More time is given to teaching science than previously, including some lessons in the mornings when pupils are fresh. Pupils are given more opportunities to develop their investigative skills and pupils with special needs are given good support, either through the attention of additional adult help or through modified work.
104. Although pupils now undertake more practical investigations than they used to, there are still weaknesses in the way they draw conclusions from what they have done. Class teachers give a great deal of attention to ensuring that pupils learn about and keep their tests fair. Pupils make good progress in their understanding of fair tests. However in concentrating so heavily on the test procedures, not enough attention is given to drawing out the scientific knowledge from the results. This was seen in a lesson on forces in Year 4 where pupils were guided well towards setting up a fair test to measure how far a wind up toy would travel but less as to how the spring would provide the necessary force to make it travel. In writing up their investigations, the 'conclusions'/ 'scientific reasons' sections of worksheets completed by the older junior pupils are often not filled in. Where they are, they do not always display good understanding of why outcomes are as they are.
105. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. After a slow start in Year 1, where there is little recorded work and there are instances of incorrect explanations marked right, pupils produce far more towards the end of Year 2. This work reflects a strong emphasis on practical activity though recording



does not always reflect sufficient pursuit of correct scientific understanding and knowledge. For example 'the car went furthest on the highest ramp because the big ramp gave the car a bit of oomph' needs a little more teasing out to ensure full understanding. However, at other times, some pupils show a very good understanding of living things; for example, one child's thoughts on plant habitats, which read 'maybe the dandelion liked the shade and sun or maybe the soil had the same food'.

106. After a similarly slow start, pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 improves as they move through the classes. Although teaching in the subject is satisfactory throughout, not enough is demanded of the youngest junior pupils. For example, their written work is usually the same regardless of their previous achievement and marking comments rarely address the quality of their work, help them draw correct conclusions or show them how they might improve. Poor presentation is not sufficiently challenged. As they move through years 4 to 6, more is demanded of them. Planning sheets are introduced to support pupils in their practical work, sometimes at different levels of difficulty based on what particular children have shown they can do. Pupils in Year 4 show they can observe, measure, make predictions and record outcomes from their tests in a variety of ways, such as tables or fact files. They begin to make scientific explanations, though on occasions their misunderstandings are not corrected. Work becomes harder as pupils move into the upper key stage and they undertake some challenging investigations, particularly about plants and animals. In this work they show greater understanding and are more successful at providing explanations than they are in their work on materials or physical science.
107. By Year 6 pupils show good skills in recording and presenting their work but their level of knowledge and understanding, particularly about physical science, is not as high as it should be. For example, in their work on evaporation, they show good skills in measuring but limited understanding of reasons. Higher attaining pupils who no longer need to be closely directed in their investigations by the teacher or by worksheets need to be given opportunities to design their own from scratch, thus raising the level of challenge for them.
108. In the lesson seen in Key Stage 1 the teaching was good. The teacher's initial explanation to the pupils about the life cycle of a butterfly was backed by very good use of cocoons in a jar, which captured their interest. Literacy skills were developed as the teacher asked probing questions and insisted on correctly expressed answers from pupils using the right vocabulary. By the end of the lesson the pupils showed a very good understanding of the life cycle of a butterfly. In the lessons seen in Key Stage 2, teaching was satisfactory in half the lessons and good in the other half. Teachers shared the objectives with the pupils at the start. This worked best where they explained these objectives as 'this is what we are going to learn' in language that the pupils could easily understand. They recalled what pupils had learned in the previous lesson to make sure they were ready to move on. Good questioning was also seen. Sometimes teachers' questions helped pupils to predict what would happen, at other times to think about what they were seeing or hearing. Resources such

as musical instruments, toys, alarm clocks wood blocks and weights were used well to capture pupils' interests. Most were stretched by the activities but not always higher attaining pupils. In Year 3 the pace of the lesson was too slow for them and in years 4 to 6 their learning was constrained by more teacher direction than they needed, either in the activity or in recording the outcomes. Marking varies in its depth and the outcomes of assessment are not used sufficiently well in all classes to ensure those capable of higher attainment are fully stretched.

109. There is effective leadership of the subject. The coordinator has begun to build up an overview of standards by looking at teachers planning and the pupils' work across the school. She has not yet observed science lessons but this is planned for the future. Information from these activities, along with rigorous analysis of pupils' performances in tests should be more fully used to target particular groups of under performing pupils or weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

110. Standards in art, at both key stages, are similar to those found in most schools and achievement is satisfactory. This is the same as at the last inspection. The best learning is found in Key Stage 1 because pupils are given a broader range of experiences in the infant classes than they are in the junior classes. This is a change since the last inspection, when the picture was more consistent.
111. In Key Stage 1, pupils build steadily on the firm foundations laid in the reception class. They are given many good opportunities to work with a range of media, such as paint, crayon and pencil, and learn different techniques, such as collage, printing and colour mixing. Their ability to mix colours and their appreciation of colour, shape and form is well developed, as was seen in the paintings in the style of Monet, and tonal 'whale' paintings in Years 1 and 2. Good use is made of the computer art program 'Dazzle' to produce some excellent pictures, also in the style of Monet. Throughout the school, skills in three-dimensional work are underdeveloped and the children have too few opportunities to work on large projects in groups.
112. In Key Stage 2, pupils are given more limited opportunities to work with different media and develop different techniques. However, they build well on their early experiences with colour and shape and by the end of Year 6, pupils are able to produce good quality patterns in the style of William Morris, enlarging shapes and working from black and white to colour. In Year 4, pupils have produced some interesting Indian Mendhi patterns, showing good attention to detail. There are good examples of Buddhist patterns in Year 3. A strength at Key Stage 2 is the way in which art is linked to topics in history, geography and religious education.
113. In the one lesson seen in Year 5, teaching was good and pupils made good progress, because the sketching task was explained well. The teacher gave

an appropriate level of support to ensure that pupils observed closely and were careful in their representations of the local landscape.

114. The school has recently implemented a nationally recommended programme of work for art, but as yet it has had limited impact. The coordinator has only recently taken over management of the subject. However, she has sound plans for what needs to be done in the near future to ensure colleagues are supported and a greater level of consistency is achieved.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. Standards in design and technology in both key stages are typical of those seen in most schools. From the range of pupils' work seen, achievement is judged to be good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. This includes achievement for children with special educational needs who are supported well in developing literacy skills through this subject. For example children in Year 3 made books with a selection of good quality materials to match the characters in the stories they were studying. By the time they are 11, pupils are able to design, modify, make and evaluate the effectiveness of their design. This design process is clearly explained by pupils who can use criteria to make judgements about different materials in relation to their use. For example, Year 4 pupils designed a range of new cool drinks for the market place. They subsequently designed marketing posters using graphics and text to match their target audience.
116. No judgement is made on the quality of teaching as no lessons were observed during the period of inspection. Leadership in design and technology is satisfactory. The school has implemented the national programme for skill development and has a good range of resources that are evident in the displays. For example, Year 2 children have undertaken paper weaving whilst Year 1 food technology is displayed, and pupils can explain which foods are good for the body. This is linked to Healthy Eating work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. Standards in geography at both key stages are similar to those found in most schools, as they were at the last inspection. The pupils' knowledge of their own local area is strength, as is pupils' understanding of the weather at Key Stage 2. However, at this key stage, pupils' knowledge of other localities and their mapping skills are not as strong as they should be.
118. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of Hoylake. This is due to good teaching and a practical approach to studying the local area, which begins in the reception class. In Year 2, pupils' knowledge is extended and their skills developed as they describe the positive and negative of their own locality and learn facts about France. Again they achieve well in these areas, because the work they undertake is practical and exciting. For example, in a lesson about France, Year 2 pupils tasted French cheese and bread. This provoked great excitement and fired their enthusiasm. However, despite good teaching in these areas of geography, achievement overall at Key Stage 1 is

only satisfactory. This is because some work is not matched well enough to the abilities of the pupils which slows the progress of higher attaining pupils.

119. Achievement is also satisfactory at Key Stage 2 , speeding up after a slow start in Year 3. Pupils in Year 5 make the best progress because they study topics in more depth, and present their projects in a wide variety of styles. For example, they have made presentations to their classmates on different world environments, such as mountainous countries. The charts and overhead projector transparencies they produced were of very high quality. These show good research skills and a good understanding of how geographical facts can be recorded in an informative, yet eye-catching way. Year 6 pupils have undertaken a successful local study, based on Hoylake and the surrounding area. They have designed and carried out their own local surveys and displayed the results effectively in graphs, charts and reports. Pupils in both Years 5 and 6 have undertaken work on the weather, both locally and in other countries, using information from newspapers and the Internet to make comparisons and to draw conclusions. In these aspects of geography and in these classes, pupils achieve well as a result of the enjoyable, practical activities teachers prepare for them. Pupil's achievement in Key Stage 2, overall, however is limited by inconsistencies in the amount of work pupils undertake in different classes and the depth to which their knowledge is developed. This results in Year 6 pupils having a limited knowledge of people's lives in other parts of the world.
120. Teaching in geography is satisfactory though good teaching was seen in two lessons. In these teachers showed a good understanding of the subject and introduced topics in an exciting and lively way. This caught the pupils' interests and enthusiasm and they learned well as a result. The resources teachers prepared both for pupils to use during lessons and for demonstration purposes were of good quality and supported the learning well. Effective support was given to pupils with special educational needs to help them take a full part in the lessons, and they achieved well because of this. However, in some classes, there are examples of teachers expecting too little of pupils in terms of presentation of their work and not matching work well enough to their abilities.
121. The coordinator has been in post since Easter. As yet, she has had no opportunity to have an impact on improving the consistency of teaching and provision. However she has a satisfactory grasp of what needs to be done to move the subject forward.

## **HISTORY**

122. Standards in history are similar to those found in most schools, as they were judged to be at the last inspection. However, there have been improvements in the way pupils with special educational needs are supported in lessons and they now make satisfactory progress. At both key stages, pupils have a better knowledge of important people and events in history than they have of when

events are located in time. No lessons were seen during the inspection, as history was not being taught at this particular time.

123. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can describe events such as the Great Fire of London, and talk about the lives of people such as Florence Nightingale and Samuel Pepys. They can distinguish between aspects of life in the past and life now, when studying topics such as 'Seaside Holidays'. They achieve well in these areas because the work teachers provide for them is interesting and linked, wherever possible, to their own lives. In Key Stage 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of the key events of the Victorian period and can describe the work of famous Victorians such as Lord Shaftesbury. Pupils in Year 4 however, make the best progress. This is because the work planned for them is more varied and interesting than in the other classes. For example, on a topic on the Egyptians, pupils had made an Egyptian card game and translated some hieroglyphics. In this class, pupils are encouraged to interpret the past through asking questions and finding out the answers for themselves.
124. In contrast, throughout the school, pupils' understanding of how key historical events relate to each other in time is weak. This is largely because pupils have few opportunities to learn this in Key Stage 2. Teaching in this area is inconsistent. As a result, Year 6 pupils were unable to place the Roman invasion of Britain in a time frame, even though they recalled key facts about the Roman army.
125. A strength of provision in history is the way in which pupils are encouraged to record their work in different ways. For example, pupils in Year 2 have written diary entries and postcards, and Year 6 pupils have used graphs, charts and letters. Good use is also made of visits to places such as Liverpool Museum, to enrich learning.
126. There is satisfactory management of the subject. The coordinator is currently helping her colleagues to introduce a new programme of work in all classes. However, as yet she has had little opportunity to check on teaching and the quality of pupils' work, in order to promote higher standards.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

127. Standards are average at both key stages. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when the subject was considered to be one of the school's main weaknesses. There are several key reasons behind the improvement. The school has made a substantial investment in both computers and software, which enables more pupils to use computers regularly. The curriculum is now better organised so that pupils receive a wider range of experiences. Work for each year group is building upon what pupils have already covered. In addition, the expertise and confidence of staff is higher than it was as a result of training provided by both the subject coordinator and through a nationally funded initiative.
128. When they enter Key Stage 1, pupils have already built up a good level of confidence to tackle challenges on the computer, through being pushed to

explore a range of different programs in the Foundation Stage. In Year 1, they show that they are able to select from an on-screen menu of items as they produce illustrated labels for models of fruit and vegetables which they are making in design and technology. The pupils add simple text, and those who need support with this use prompts supplied by the teacher. All are able to print out their own work for later use. Pupils here make satisfactory progress through being given good opportunities to practise the clear instructions they have been given. The best progress is made by the oldest pupils in the key stage, whose learning is pushed along at a fast rate by high expectations and challenging teaching. They demonstrate good confidence in approaching their work and are not afraid to make mistakes and correct them; for example, as they undertake a finding out exercise using a CD ROM. Paired up so that better readers can support others, they find answers to a series of questions, working from key word cues, in good preparation for using the Internet. The teaching provides enough challenge to stretch even the highest attainers as there are more difficult 'bonus' questions built into the activity. Once the tasks are completed, those who are capable are invited to create a question of their own to challenge the teacher. This makes them think hard and further strengthens their understanding of how to navigate their way around the program. The quality of teaching in this key stage ranges from satisfactory in Year 1 to very good in Year 2.

129. In Key Stage 2, pupils are now achieving at a good overall rate. They are developing their familiarity with the keyboard functions well. Year 3 pupils, for example, draft letters to a pupil in India in preparation for sending an email. Year 5 pupils show that they can blend images and text together into a newspaper style presentation, and Year 6 pupils demonstrate that they have worked successfully on setting out text using columns, frames and appropriate font styles to incorporate titles and captions. The use of the thesaurus tool to find alternative words as they edit text and the presentation of letters, articles, posters and poems illustrates that they are working at a satisfactory level. Year 6 pupils have a good awareness of the advantages of new technology such as e-mail but are also able to explain that this is not always the best way to communicate.
130. Working with data and presenting information in a variety of ways is a strong area of the Key Stage 2 curriculum and shows some of the ways in which information technology is beginning to be used to enhance work in other subjects. In Year 5, for example, pupils produce a graph to illustrate the changing length of shadows as part of their science work and in Year 4 they construct a block graph of the percentage of waste occurring in the classroom and kitchen. In their geography work, Year 5 pupils have downloaded weather reports and temperatures from different parts of the world to help their understanding of the link between mountainous regions and the weather that occurs there.
131. The teaching seen in Key Stage 2 was satisfactory, as Year 6 pupils were taught to use a spreadsheet program to model different profit outcomes from a hackney cab's system of charges. Previous work was effectively recapped to check pupils' recall and the key skills involved in operating the cells of the

spread sheet were demonstrated so that they knew what was expected in their task. They could understand how a spreadsheet was effective in replicating real life situations. A less successful aspect of this work in the computer suite was that the teacher had to keep an eye on both the group working on the computers and those undertaking a design and technology activity on the other side of the area. This inevitably involved her spreading her time too thinly, with the result that some pupils had to wait for support and wandered of task until help arrived. This slowed their overall progress. In some but not all lessons, the use of support staff in the suite was very effective in supervising all groups. Best practice needs to be spread to all year groups to provide the most effective way of managing pupils in this area.

132. Although the subject has improved at a good rate, there is still work to do. The development of procedures to assess and record how well pupils are learning has not been fast enough. Some teachers have begun to use a skills checklist but this involves the recording of what pupils have covered rather than how well they have performed or whether they need more practice or support in any area. There is a need to introduce a school wide system to track pupils' attainment so that teachers can offer them the maximum challenge. The coordinator, who shows satisfactory leadership, has evaluated the current health of the subject and put together a rational development plan, which focuses on exactly the right areas. These include further extending the use of ICT into other subjects, continuing to build teachers' expertise and increasing the usefulness of the school's computers by networking to include class based machines. This will enable teachers to make more use of these computers to extend and practise skills taught in the computer suite. As at the time of the last inspection, these older machines are still under used, as teachers rely on their time in the suite to deliver their programme of work.

## **MUSIC**

133. Standards in music are similar to those found in most schools and are much the same as at the time of the last inspection. Extra curricular activities were highly praised at that time and these high levels of additional opportunities have been sustained.
134. Pupils receive a good grounding in the infant classes and achieve well. They show skills appropriate to their ages. In a Year 2 lesson seen pupils were encouraged to listen carefully and suggest instruments to reflect the content of a story. They made appropriate choices such as a drum for 'black thunderous clouds'. They responded well to signals such as a raised hand to stop playing instruments and showed good skills in playing their individual instruments on the right beat. Teaching in the lesson was good. The planning clearly set out what the teacher wanted the children to learn and the activities were suitable for this. Pupils responded well to the teacher's encouragement, praise and guidance so their performance improved as the lesson progressed. They were enthusiastic and keen to be involved.
135. Pupils' achievement in lessons continues at a steady rate in the junior key stage. Lessons seen in years 4 and 5 showed pupils to be achieving what you

would expect at these ages. In the Year 4 lesson the specialist expertise of the teacher made the introduction and summary very sharp. For example, there was an effective demonstration of how to achieve particular stresses on beats and record them. The pupils built up their understanding of how to compose and how to write down their compositions as graphic scores. At the end of the lesson the teacher cleverly drew together what some pupils had created and set this out well for others to see. However progress in the middle section of the lessons was slow for some groups because the activities were not organised well and some pupils drifted off task for too long. Pupils in Year 5 showed satisfactory skills in analysing the words from two contrasting pieces of music, from a social and cultural point of view. When all the pupils are together in the hall in assembly they sing their favourite hymns sensitively, in tune and with clear words.

136. A substantial number of boys and girls, including those with particular talents, benefit from the wide programme of additional musical activities which takes place in and out of school time. Some pupils accompany hymns on guitars in assembly and they reach a high standard. Older pupils are involved in an annual programme with a local professional orchestra during class lessons whilst some are taught to play brass, strings or woodwind by visiting teachers. A substantial number of pupils learn to play the guitar during lunchtime lessons with the music coordinator who also leads a choir of up to 40 boys and girls. The school continues each year to perform a musical production. These additional opportunities enhance pupils' performance skills and their confidence as well as promoting their social and cultural development.
137. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The coordinator has maintained the good provision and has a useful knowledge of the standards reached by pupils in Key Stage 2. Her knowledge of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is not as deep. Some promising assessment and recording of pupils progress has been undertaken by the coordinator but more could be done to spread this to all classes, and to bring together and record the outcomes of the class work pupils do.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

138. Standards are typical of those seen in most schools. Leadership in the subject is good and since the previous inspection, the school has improved its resources to include the national guidelines alongside its existing plan for physical education. This is to extend the skills development work for both key stages. Teachers have undertaken a variety of training to extend their skills and support new activities.
139. Good planning ensures that children have the opportunity to acquire skills and experience a wide range of sports, games, gymnastics and dance. Community resources are used well. Swimming provides appropriate water experience and skill accreditation and standards are good. Outdoor residential visits, for example to a North Wales Activity Centre, offer adventure and different experiences. A local tennis coach contributes to lessons in Key Stage 2. The school's wide range of extra-curricular sports activities offers children the



opportunity to explore their talents and develop specific skills further. There is a good selection of other games for junior pupils including netball, rounders, football, judo and rugby coaching. Hockey is developed well and pupils have access to very good resources. They reach good skill levels which they use in inter-school team games. Boys and girls are equally invited to participate.

140. Pupils' achievement across the school is satisfactory. In Year 2, pupils move confidently, can remember their previous work and build on this to modify their responses to music. Year 4 pupils develop typical ball skills and use the playground space well. They are used to teacher instructions and respond appropriately. They demonstrate co-ordination when working in small group teams. Year 6 pupils show a greater awareness of the use of space and of appropriate techniques when throwing and catching over short and longer distances. Most pupils are improving their own performance by measuring against benchmarks of time, accuracy and score. This is a direct outcome of well organised and managed lessons, especially as pupils move from one activity to another. Pupils in Year 4 were keen to improve their performance in dance, eagerly repeating their sequences to make them better. Year 6 pupils were more reluctant to engage in discussion about their own or a partner's performance because they are not used to working in that way.
141. Teachers make clear reference to health and safety during physical education lessons. The benefit of this can be seen in the way they use space and avoid objects. In Year 4, pupils are alerted to such issues when they practise fielding skills. In Year 2, where pupils share good techniques because the teacher leads them in reflecting on their performance, they begin to re-create and expect to model their improvements for others. They are considerate towards each other and readily enjoy the experiences.
142. Teaching in both key stages is mostly satisfactory. A particular strength of good lessons is the use of demonstration to show good technique and skills. A weaker feature of more ordinary lessons is that pupils are not given sufficient time to make judgements about their own work. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 work well with each other though the attitude of a few Year 6 pupils can be immature when a degree of independence is required. Most children are fully involved. Support staff are sensitive in finding unobtrusive ways to support children with special needs and intervene appropriately.