

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KNOTTY ASH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104550

Headteacher: Mrs A Bennett

Reporting inspector: Mr F. Carruthers  
21285

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 March 2003

Inspection number: 246385

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Thomas Lane  
Knotty Ash  
Liverpool

Postcode: L14 5NX

Telephone number: 0151 228 4222

Fax number: 0151 230 0401

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Bradley

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21285	Mr F. Carruthers	Registered inspector	English Modern Foreign Languages	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9652	Mr C Herbert	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12900	Mrs L Short	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music The Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
22881	Mr G Halliday	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education	
22545	Mrs V Hobson	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Educational inclusion	
29188	Mrs G Ulyatt	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	
18819	Mr J Atkinson	Team inspector	Special educational Needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Quality in Focus Limited  
Thresher House  
Lea Hall Park  
Demage Lane  
Lea-By-Backford  
Chester  
CH1 6LP

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This community primary school has 231 pupils on roll, which is about the average for primary schools nationally. Fifty children attend part-time in the Nursery and there is a designated unit for up to 32 profoundly deaf pupils. At the time of the inspection, there were 25 on roll in this unit. These pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need and are taught sometimes in small groups in the deaf resource base, which has rooms in the Nursery, infant and junior sections of the building, and at other times in mainstream classes. All staff and pupils are taught to use sign language to aid communication. Four pupils in the main school have Statements of Special Educational Need. In all, 67 pupils have some degree of special educational need, which include deafness, specific learning difficulties and physical difficulties. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Levels of social deprivation among the pupils' families are above the national average, as measured by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The range of attainment of the children on entry to the Nursery is wide and overall is below the average expected for their age. The school is a Centre of Excellence for German and has achieved several awards: a Government *Chartermark*, *Basic Skills*, *Healthy Schools* and *Sport Active* awards. The school is part of a local Education Action Zone, called *Excite*, which includes the local high school and several primary schools.

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

The school provides an excellent education for its pupils and has many outstanding features, for instance the quality of leadership and management, teaching, the curriculum and provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils achieve well during their time in school and deaf pupils achieve very well. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- The teaching is very good and this results in pupils learning very well and achieving well in several subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- The school promotes excellent attitudes to learning and very good behaviour through its excellent provision for pupils' personal development.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including deaf pupils, receive very good support from staff and make very good progress.
- The range and quality of the curriculum, including subjects and activities outside lessons, are excellent. All pupils have opportunities to take a full part in the life and work of the school.
- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and the overall management of the school by senior staff and governors is excellent.

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

- No significant shortcomings emerged from the inspection.

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

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

The school was last inspected in November 1997. Since then it has made very good improvements. All aspects found to be of good quality at the last inspection have been maintained or improved. Standards have risen, the quality of teaching has improved, provision in the deaf resource base has improved and the curriculum is now much better planned so that deaf pupils can take a full part in it. German and sign language have been added to the skills taught and there is a better range of extra-curricular activities. There has been good improvement in the minor issues identified at the last inspection. For example, there has been very good improvement in provision for children in the Foundation Stage, that is the Nursery and the Reception class, the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils is better and there has

been satisfactory improvement in encouraging the pupils' skills of critical thinking. Significant improvements have been made to the buildings and the school grounds.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	B	D	B	A	well above average A above average B
mathematics	E	C	C	A	average C below average D
science	E	E	B	A	well below average E

Pupils achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above those found in schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. Last year they were well above average. Standards of literacy and numeracy are good. The school's focus on promoting skills of communicating, for example through sign language, has a big impact on how well all pupils achieve, including deaf pupils, those with other special educational needs and the very few whose home language is not English. Results in National Curriculum tests have risen since the time of the last inspection in line with the national trend upward. The school sets challenging targets and is successful in achieving them. It is not just in English, mathematics and science that pupils achieve well. Attainment in German, as well as in sign language, which all pupils learn, is good. Attainment in art and design, some games lessons, swimming and singing is above average. Attainment in all other subjects by the end of Year 6 is average. Children in the Foundation Stage do well and this progress continues in infant classes. In the current Year 2, standards are average overall in reading, mathematics and science and below average in writing.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and join in as many activities that the school offers as possible.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. In classrooms and around school, pupils are very polite and behave very well. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils show respect and are keen to help one another, especially those with special educational needs. Levels of independence and responsibility are very good.
Attendance	Last year, attendance rates were below the national average for primary schools. In the current year, the rates are above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

*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.*

The quality of teaching across all age groups is very good. A very high proportion of the teaching is good or better and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. There is strength in depth, and the teaching of the skills of communication, through English, sign language and German, is very good. Teachers in the deaf resource base make a very good contribution to the learning of all pupils in this respect. As a result, the teaching of literacy is very good and links between using speaking, listening, reading and writing and other subjects are well established. The teaching of numeracy is good. The teaching of deaf pupils and others with special educational needs is very good. Pupils receive very good help from teachers in the deaf resource base, from learning support assistants and from teachers in mainstream classes. As a result of the high quality of teaching, pupils work very hard and take great pride in their achievements. The pace of lessons is very good and the pupils develop a very good awareness of what they need to do to do well. Higher attaining pupils are given very good opportunities to achieve well and to pursue their specific talents.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. The curriculum is enriched by the learning of German and sign language. There is a good range of visits out of school and special events in school, and an excellent range of activities outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils who are deaf and for those who have other special educational needs is very good. Pupils' individual education plans are detailed and have clear targets, and all pupils receive very good levels of assistance from staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are very few such pupils but the school caters for them very well, making sure that they are fully involved in all subjects of the curriculum. Specialist support from the local education authority is available when required.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. There is a consistent approach by all staff to the pupils' personal development and excellent outcomes are clearly evident in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's provision for the emotional and physical needs of pupils is excellent. There are very good procedures to check the pupils' academic and personal development.

Partnerships with parents are very good and parents make a good contribution to their children's learning by supporting the school policy on homework. They also contribute through the active Parent/Teacher Association.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher has outstanding qualities of leadership and has developed a highly effective senior management team. Teamwork, engendered by the example at senior level, is excellent throughout the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors have a very clear grasp of the school's strengths and take a close interest in all aspects of school life.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school not only analyses information about pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests and compares itself with other schools, but evaluates how well practice in school matches its aims and objectives. Staff are constantly striving to make provision even better. Senior staff compare costs very effectively in order to achieve best value.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. All grants are used very well and staff are deployed very efficiently to give the most support for pupils.

Staffing levels are very good and benefit all pupils, whatever their ability. The quality of the accommodation is good overall and is enhanced by the high quality of areas outside, including gardens, fields and play areas. Resources for learning are good in quality and quantity.

## 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>• Parents hold the school in very high esteem.</li> <li>• Children enjoy school and make very good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is very good and children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and they feel comfortable approaching school with a problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents expressed concern at the amount of homework given to pupils as they get older. Sometimes there is a lot to complete in a short space of time.</li> </ul>

Inspectors fully support the very positive views of parents. Senior staff have noted the parents' concerns about homework and have agreed to monitor provision.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils achieve well over time in this school. This is because the quality of its provision, including the teaching, the curriculum and procedures to help the pupils' personal development, are of a high standard. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are very keen to do well and to take part in as much as possible of what the school offers.

2. Deaf pupils and those with different special educational needs achieve very well. They make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans, especially in the skills of listening, language, literacy and numeracy and in personal development. This is because of the high quality of provision which the school has developed since the deaf resource base was established. Through flexible teaching arrangements, so that staff in the resource base sometimes take small groups of deaf pupils and at other times team teach with colleagues in mainstream classes including the deaf pupils, every encouragement is given to them to achieve their potential. All pupils take all subjects of the National Curriculum. Because all pupils in the school are taught sign language, levels of communication are very good and deaf pupils make an effective oral contribution to discussions, drama and role-play in all subjects. There are very few pupils whose home language is other than English and none is at the early stages of learning English. They make very good progress because of the school's focus on language and communication generally.

3. Standards in English, mathematics and science in National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 have risen since the time of the last inspection in line with the national trend upwards. The school achieves standards above those found in similar schools (that is, schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals). Last year, it achieved its best ever results, being well above the average found in similar schools in all three subjects. When the results were analysed to see how well pupils had progressed from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6, progress was also found to be good. Girls generally achieved better than boys in English and boys did better in mathematics and science. This is similar to the achievement of boys and girls nationally in Year 6. Higher attaining and talented pupils achieve well and this is evident in the good proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. Test results vary from year to year, however, according to variations in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In the current Year 6, for instance, standards are slightly lower than those achieved last year. Nevertheless, they are similar to those found nationally and above the average found in similar schools. The school sets challenging targets for pupils to achieve in English and mathematics and last year, exceeded them. Targets are slightly lower this year because of the nature of the year group and the school is likely to achieve them too.

4. Standards of literacy are good. Pupils have good attitudes to reading and most are fluent, independent readers by the time they reach Years 5 and 6. Standards of writing are good by the end of Year 6. This has been because of a concerted effort by staff to provide pupils with opportunities to write at length and to write reports, accounts and narratives in other subjects such as geography, history and science. Standards of presentation, handwriting, spelling and punctuation are generally good. Standards of numeracy are good and pupils develop good skills in calculating numbers. However, using skills of numeracy in other subjects is less well developed. Pupils achieve well in science, especially in their

understanding of scientific concepts. There are some minor weaknesses in their investigational skills however, for example in drawing conclusions from results.

5. What is impressive in this school is that the pupils achieve well not only in National Curriculum subjects, but they do very well in subjects not normally taught in primary schools, a modern foreign language (German) and sign language. Success in learning two recognised languages has a significant impact on pupils' self-esteem as well as on their speaking and listening skills. Standards in art and design, in some games lessons and in swimming are above average and standards of singing are good. Deaf pupils are part of this success even in music, because the staff use sign language to help them to achieve, and the *Signing Choir* has performed outside school in prestigious events. Attainment in all other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT), matches that found in schools nationally.

6. Children receive a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage because of the very good provision. As a result, they achieve above expected levels in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception year and they achieve expected levels in the five other areas of learning. Progress for all pupils continues at a good rate in Years 1 and 2. In the current Year 2, standards in reading, mathematics and science are average and standards in writing are below average. Deaf pupils make good gains through using signing in their learning but their skills in reading and writing lag behind those of most pupils at this stage of their development. In recent years, National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 have been well below the national average and below those found in similar schools. This was partly caused by the performance of deaf pupils in reading and writing and also by staffing difficulties in the Reception and infant classes in recent years, which have now been resolved.

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

7. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and to their learning and they are very well behaved in and around school. The relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are also excellent. All those parents who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting with inspectors have very positive views on the behaviour of their children. There has been an improvement in all these aspects of school life since the last inspection.

8. From the moment that they arrive in the morning, pupils are enthusiastic about their activities in school. For example, pupils involved in the Judo Club for an hour before school worked hard to improve their skills. In the playground or on coming into school, pupils of all ages are happy to talk to visitors and they have a smile on their faces. This enthusiasm extends into the classroom. For example, in a lesson in Year 5 on personal, social, health education and citizenship, pupils were excited and very interested in the trading game that they were playing. They all worked very hard to produce resources, which they sold to the *world banker*. Those pupils who were involved in the gardening club at lunchtime were carefully preparing the ground and busily watering newly planted shrubs.

9. The pupils' behaviour is very good. In the classroom, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils were good or better in almost all lessons and very good or better in two thirds of lessons. This is well above the average found in most schools. Standards of behaviour in the playground, in the dining hall at lunchtime or in assembly are also very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils were polite and well mannered towards visitors as they moved around school or when they had dinner with them in the hall. These aspects of school life are closely linked with the excellent provision of both moral and social development provided by

the school. There was no indication of any racist behaviour whatsoever during the inspection. There have been no exclusions.

10. Relationships between all members of the school community are excellent. All pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of right and wrong and show respect towards each other and all members of the school community. For example, in almost all the activities that were observed in school, pupils were helping each other and particularly those less able than themselves. Throughout school, all teachers and other adults value the contributions of their pupils and this has a very positive impact on raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence. There was no evidence of graffiti or vandalism in or around school and pupils take very good care of the accommodation and show concern for it. The very high quality of these relationships has a very positive impact on pupils' learning, as all pupils are fully included in all school activities.

11. The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and demonstrate initiative in school are very good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking responsibility, for instance leading the weekly *Celebrations* assembly and presenting the awards, and setting up and working the overhead projector prior to assemblies. Other pupils help to hand out resources for use in class and take the registers to the school office. Additionally, the opportunity to participate in the school council gives pupils an excellent opportunity to discuss and take ownership of aspects of school life, such as their wish for an art club or playground games. Other pupils take on responsibilities of head boy or girl and house captains. Pupils are also aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and make generous donations each year to a variety of charities. They also enjoy singing carols at Christmas in a local residential home for senior citizens. These opportunities have an excellent impact on the personal development of pupils.

12. The attendance of pupils has improved since the start of the school year and rates are now above the national average. Last year attendance rates were below the national average and there has been a good improvement since the last inspection. The school has a very good understanding of the reasons for the higher than usual authorised absence rate and is taking positive steps to reduce it. The rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. Punctuality to school is good.

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

13. The quality of teaching is very good across the whole school. Over 90 per cent of the teaching is good or better and this is well above the average found in most schools. Almost a half of the teaching is very good or excellent. This constitutes good improvement since the time of the last inspection. There is strength in depth and the teaching of language and communication skills, including sign language and German, is of a very high standard. As a result, pupils' learning is very good. Pupils concentrate very well and put a lot of effort into their work. They are enthusiastic and proud of their finished pieces of work. They are made aware of what they need to do to improve in English and mathematics and they talk about it in good detail.

14. Excellent features of the teaching include how well the teachers manage and cater for the needs of all pupils, including those who are deaf, and the quality of teamwork, which gives rise to very well planned lessons and team-teaching by mainstream teachers and teachers of the deaf. For instance, in physical education, the very good use of support staff means that pupils with physical difficulties and those who are deaf are fully involved in all activities and learn well. In geography, opportunities for team teaching, when staff use sign language, make for interesting, varied lessons. Very good features of the teaching include teachers' expertise and planning, which is never done in isolation but always with contributions from

subject managers, other teachers and support staff. Staff are continually reviewing and improving their own understanding of subjects, such as ICT, German, sign language teaching and citizenship, and as a result, they have become very astute at seeing the links between subjects and where they can be effectively made. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. The staff have excellent awareness of the range of activities that they should use to promote the children's development and, led by the expertise of the co-ordinator, they have developed a high-quality environment for learning. The focus on promoting skills of communication is as emphatic here as in other parts of the school with all children learning sign language and German. For example, children as young as three were overheard discussing what the German word for *spider* is.

16. The teaching of literacy is very good. This judgement reflects the excellent way in which the skills of speaking are promoted through discussion in lessons and through regular, planned opportunities to use drama. The skills of literacy improve also through very effective links with geography, history and science. The teaching of numeracy is good but there are missed opportunities to use mathematical skills in other subjects and to carry out investigations. In science, the teaching is good but is more successful in teaching facts and concepts rather than skills of investigation. Teaching is excellent in German and it is good in art and design, geography, history, ICT, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in religious education. No judgement was possible in design and technology. However, the quality of learning indicated by samples of pupils' work is satisfactory. Teachers mark pupils' work in English and mathematics with a clear emphasis on the positive and what the next target should be. This good practice is not as evident in geography, history and religious education, however. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. It is varied and teachers value and mark it well. However, some parents find there is a lot to complete in a short space of time.

17. The quality of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Strengths of the teaching include the quality of teachers' planning, which makes close reference to the individual needs of pupils with learning difficulties, and the effective way that the learning support assistants are deployed. Support staff are well trained and have a high level of expertise for their work. Teachers of the deaf pupils use *Sign supported English* to help the pupils to become accustomed to communicating with adults when they first start in the deaf resource base. As a result, progress is rapid and these pupils move on to using sign language effectively.

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

18. The curriculum provided by the school is excellent. It is broadly based and well balanced and meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum including religious education. The curriculum provides for all aspects of pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development, including health education, sex and relationships education and education about the misuse of drugs. A key feature in the excellent quality and range of learning opportunities throughout the school is the inclusion of signing and German for pupils from Nursery through to Year 6. This constitutes very good improvement since the last report.

19. At the time of the last inspection, planning for curriculum of the Foundation Stage was found to be adequate in all areas of learning, although planning for outdoor activities required further development. The school has made very good progress in these respects and now

provides an excellent curriculum for all areas of learning, including planning to make best use of the exciting and safe outdoor area.

20. The overall quality of curricular planning is very good. It extends over the whole year, and sets out clearly what will be taught and when. The school is continually thinking about the curriculum and how it might be improved. For example, the staff have created more opportunities for links between subjects, as in the study of *The Diary of Ann Frank*, which involves English, history and personal and social education issues such as racism at the same time. Planning for the teaching of the national strategy for literacy is excellent and for numeracy is good. Both strategies have had a positive impact on standards since the last inspection. However, the time allocated for religious education means that lessons are often short and restricts the progress pupils are able to make.

21. The school is excellent at catering for everyone's needs because outstanding teamwork supports all pupils, whatever their ability or special educational need. All staff answered questionnaires on their ideas about the topic of inclusion and took part in whole-school training. Although there are very few pupils for whom English is not their home language, the school takes care to ensure that they have access to the same provision as every other pupil. For example, using interpreters, the school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to have home / school books so that parents can take part in their children's education. In all lessons, pupils from the deaf resource base have excellent access to the broad curriculum because all teachers and pupils develop some signing skills. The pupils learn English and mathematics in small groups, geared to cater for their attainment. They join mainstream classes for registration and all other lessons. These arrangements are very successful in catering for their needs. Pupils with physical disabilities take part fully in all activities including physical education. In the playground, all pupils enjoy communicating, sharing and playing together. Many of the phrases that the youngest children learn in sign language develop their social interaction with the deaf pupils, for instance, *Can I share your toy?* and *Can I help you?* Pupils who are gifted and talented have very good assistance to do well, particularly in English and mathematics in which assessment is very effective and identifies their needs. The local high school provides good opportunities for these pupils to attend on Saturdays and take part in extension activities such as problem-solving, and drama.

22. The school's policy for special educational needs embraces the principles and practices of the Code of Practice very well. Provision is a combination of withdrawal for individual and group support by learning support assistants and specialist teachers, and well planned work by class teachers in lessons. The strengths of the provision include the detailed administrative arrangements and the commitment of teaching staff to meeting the individual needs of pupils. These strengths are reflected in the positive attitudes and collaborative approaches of all pupils and the quality of individual education plans, which are detailed, set clear targets and are effectively monitored by class teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs. The individual plans are effectively implemented and pupils' work is carefully assessed. As a result, these pupils make good progress throughout their time in the school.

23. The curriculum is further enriched by the excellent provision of extra activities, before and after school, during breaks and lunch times. These include lace making, cheerleading, choir, signing choir, drama, yoga, healthy food, line dancing, recorders, writing club, football, gardening and recorders. There are opportunities for pupils who have an aptitude to learn to play clarinet and flute. Parents contribute towards providing judo and keyboard lessons. Within this range of activities, the school is successful in providing opportunities for younger pupils as well as for older ones.

24. Very effective visits to such places as Chinatown, theatres and a city farm are made to extend the curriculum. Pupils also have opportunities to meet with a diverse range of visitors, from Liverpool Football Club to *The Children's Company*, who recorded an episode of the children's TV programme, *Ripley and Scuff*, at the school. The school encourages links with visiting artists, such as poets, authors, the Red Rose Band and Police Band, as well as the Scottish Opera, who work directly with pupils. The curriculum is further enriched by opportunities to participate in events, such as the painting by pupils in Year 6 of Liverpool's waterfront skyline for a *World in One City* display in Liverpool's Albert Dock. The school choir represented Liverpool schools at the Welcoming Ceremony of The Commonwealth Games. The curriculum is also enriched by a residential visit to North Wales. All of these opportunities make a significant contribution to widening pupils' academic, social and cultural education.

25. The community provides a very good contribution to pupils' learning and there has been an improvement in this aspect of school life since the last inspection. Pupils have visited the *Well Teddy Clinic* at Alder Hey Children's Hospital and explored the immediate locality, where they carry out surveys of the local shops or traffic movement. Very effective support is also provided by local businesses. The school also sees itself as a member of the international community and it has developed links with Sweden, Germany, Italy, Greece, Ireland, Argentina and America. Additionally, the adoption of a young boy from Indonesia provides an opportunity to study the life styles of children from the other side of the world. The school links all these activities very clearly into the curriculum and they have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and development. A good link has been developed with the local secondary and high schools and this allows a smooth and effective transition into Year 7.

26. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved in all aspects and is now excellent overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. This is because teachers provide good opportunities in lessons and assemblies for pupils to reflect on issues important to them and to think about their feelings. In lessons, teachers encourage pupils to discuss their response to art, literature, music, culture and religion. In assemblies teachers set the right atmosphere for prayer and reflection.

27. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. Staff work very hard to teach pupils the difference between right and wrong and place great emphasis on maintaining very high standards of behaviour. Their consistent approach makes a vital contribution to pupils' attitudes and the progress they make in lessons. Staff show that they care for pupils and take time to reason with the few who step out of line. Pupils appreciate this caring attitude and, as a result, relationships between staff and pupils, as well as among pupils themselves, are excellent. Staff teach pupils the benefits of values such as honesty, fairness and justice. They use assemblies very well to promote positive moral attitudes and reward pupils with recognition for their work, attitudes and behaviour.

28. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. This is because of the effectiveness of a string of new initiatives such as the development of pupils' skills in citizenship. Teachers place great emphasis on sharing ownership of the school with pupils, and pupils respond with great maturity in the way they take on responsibilities. Teachers consult with members of the school council to improve their knowledge of pupils' views of the school. They encourage all pupils to take responsibility, for instance, as class monitors, and give them more responsibilities as they get older. Consequently, younger pupils know they can rely on older pupils, especially those in Year 6, for help, advice and comfort.

29. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. This is mainly because of the much better provision for pupils' awareness of cultures in other lands. This includes learning German from German assistants and extends to staff visiting schools abroad and visitors from abroad to school. Pupils gain a great deal from these initiatives and enjoy using ICT to develop links forged by teachers. Multi-cultural elements have been built into the curriculum, for example in stories in which relationships are explored. Assembly themes cover multi-cultural issues. Teachers ensure that pupils learn about their own background and heritage well, through trips to museums and art galleries and through visitors such as musicians, theatre groups and artists. However, pupils do not benefit well enough from links with local religious leaders or visits to places of worship.

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

30. The school continues to provide the highest level of care for the emotional and physical needs of its pupils. There are also very good procedures in place for the promotion and monitoring of attendance and excellent procedures to promote and monitor behaviour. At the meeting with inspectors, all parents expressed the view that their children were well cared for by the school.

31. The school maintains appropriate records for first aid, fire drills, accidents and the emergency contact of family and friends in case of an emergency. The procedures for child protection are very effective and the designated teacher ensures that all members of staff have an appropriate understanding of it. The school looks after pupils very well at dinnertime and in the playground and the midday supervisors are a very effective and important part of the school community. It is very apparent that pupils take very good care of each other and this reflects the happy, caring ethos of the school. Pupils are also very aware of the care and support that the staff provide for them. One pupil in Year 5 wrote during a Literacy lesson that *Adults in school help you if you are struggling in school or carrying heavy loads*. The governing body takes its responsibility for health and safety very seriously. It works closely with a health and safety consultant to ensure that risk assessments are carried out for visits and that all procedures are in place.

32. The school promotes and monitors attendance very well. The impact of this is that rates have improved and are above the national average this year. Additionally, the school promotes and monitors behaviour in an excellent way through the excellent code of conduct and the provision for moral development and the way that it is implemented. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are also excellent.

33. The monitoring of pupils' academic and personal performance is very good overall, particularly in English and mathematics, with minor weaknesses in other subjects. The school has made very good improvement to procedures to assess children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Teachers keep detailed records of children's achievements in all the areas of learning and use the information very effectively to plan appropriate activities.

34. There are very good arrangements for the early identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs. There are very good links with local agencies and support services to help these pupils to make progress. There is an excellent match between provision and requirements in the Statements of Special Educational Need that pupils have.

35. The school keeps excellent records of pupils' achievements. Teachers encourage all pupils to keep their own personal record which is made into a book in their final year, signed by all teachers, and given at a *graduation ceremony* before the pupils leave the school. This is an excellent record containing photographs, certificates and awards, and pieces of work

chosen by the pupil. The school also records pupils' attendance at school clubs and activities and their involvement in school council meetings. The close monitoring of pupils' achievements shows how highly every pupil is valued for themselves and their contribution to the school community. Procedures for assessing English and mathematics are very good. The school analyses the results thoroughly from optional yearly tests and additional reading and spelling tests, to gain an overview of the effectiveness of the curriculum. Staff use this knowledge very effectively to make the necessary changes to ensure that all pupils can achieve well. The assessment manager also uses the results very effectively to track pupils' progress from Years 2 to 6, checking that pupils make the expected progress each year. From the analysis of individual pupils' performance, the teachers help pupils to set their own targets for improvement. The pupils review these regularly and, as a result, have a very good knowledge of their own learning. Occasionally the younger pupils set targets that are difficult to measure such as *To get better at mathematics*; more help is required to help them to choose appropriately.

36. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in science are satisfactory. Insufficient use is made of optional tests and the reviewing of pupils' work to ensure that pupils achieve well, however. Procedures for assessing pupils in other subjects are generally good but have some minor shortcomings. The teachers identify pupils' attainment against National Curriculum levels giving them a broad overview of pupils' attainment in every subject. Teachers also set targets for their classes to achieve in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education, and religious education. These targets have limited reference to the skills which individual pupils need to develop and often do not show sufficient progress in the curriculum. For instance, a Year 6 target showed that pupils must *appreciate varying textures in music*, while in Year 2 the target set was *to understand something of musical texture*. Although all teachers should set targets, this is not consistently carried out in all classes. These are minor points for improvement. The assessment manager has worked hard to develop a manageable system of assessment and monitoring, and is still developing procedures to meet the school's needs.

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

37. The school promotes itself very well to its parents and it is very clear that those who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting have very positive views about many aspects of school life. Parents hold the school in very high esteem. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. There has been improvement in this aspect of school life since the last inspection. Some parents expressed concern at the amount of homework given to pupils as they get older. Sometimes there is a lot to complete in a short space of time. Inspectors judge that homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. However, the school has agreed to monitor the setting of homework to ensure consistency and balance.

38. The contribution of parents to school life is good. A small number of parents help out in school on a regular basis and many more provide effective support for visits into the community. The school values this help. Several courses have been arranged for parents and attendance at them has been good. The school benefits from a very active Parent / Teacher Association. Parents are very supportive of the variety of activities that are planned, for example a summer fair, discos and the Easter Bonnet parade. Each year the association raises over £1000 for the school and this money is used well to subsidise school visits.

39. The information for parents provided by the school is very good. All documentation has been attractively designed and is easy to read. Annual reports on pupils' progress are also very informative and include appropriate targets to enable pupils to make further progress. The school strives hard to ensure that parents of pupils with special educational

needs are kept very well informed of their children's progress. The school values all the support given by its parents and it has a good impact on pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. Leadership and management of the school are excellent. All the key strengths evident at the time of the last inspection remain, for example, the headteacher's *vision of excellence* and *the true spirit of partnership* between headteacher, governing body and senior management team. The difference is that now this vision is shared by all staff, and the teamwork amongst all teaching, support, administrative, caretaking and ancillary staff is outstanding. As a result, the school has developed into a vibrant learning environment for all pupils, where pupils and staff communicate in three languages, English, sign language and German, where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to achieve his or her potential, and where the best is still not considered good enough. It is a school that has received considerable recognition for the quality of its work in recent years, such as the *Basic Skills Award*. It has become an exemplar of good practice in including pupils whatever their ability in the life of the school, is one of three *Centres of Excellence* for Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and yet is still seeking to improve.

41. It is the quality of the leadership of the headteacher that has brought the school to this position of excellence. During a religious education lesson in Year 1 on the story of Moses and the theme of leadership, the teacher asked the pupils what makes a good leader. One pupil replied, *Mrs Bennett, because she gives teachers good ideas*. She provides not only an excellent role model for staff and pupils but gives them the scope and self-belief to try out new initiatives. Examples include: everyone learning to use sign language, team teaching between mainstream teachers and teachers of the deaf, and improvements to the grounds so that the site manager uses his many skills to best effect. Somewhat selflessly, she describes the many improvements that have taken place since the last inspection as serendipitous, but this underestimates her own impact on the work of others.

42. Forward planning, through the school development plan, is excellent and actions taken to overcome shortcomings are clear and successful. For instance, when the focus was directed towards improving provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship, the school sought specialist expertise from an outside consultant and this led to the formation of a school council and, more recently, the beginning of peer counselling. All plans are underpinned by clear financial arrangements. The school's budget is very carefully monitored by senior staff, the governors' finance committee, administrative staff and an external agency, whose services are bought in. A recent audit of finances found systems to be excellent. All specific funding is used to very good effect, for instance in supporting pupils with special educational needs. The school's involvement in a local *Education Action Zone* has been used effectively to promote staff development, for instance by employing a drama specialist, and learning support staff as well as a part-time ICT technician. The fabric of the school is in much better shape than at the time of the last inspection as a result of considerable building and renovation work, and levels of learning resources, for instance in the Foundation Stage, are now much better. Improvements to the outdoor provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes, which was a minor issue in the last inspection report, have been excellent. The high carry-forward in the budget is reducing this year to the average levels found in most primary schools. The school analyses data about its performance very well and compares costs between service providers, applying principles of best value very effectively.

43. Governors make an excellent contribution to the work of the school. Many are directly involved in the life of the school on a daily basis and through a successful system of committees, have a very clear grasp of the school's strengths and plans for improvement.

There have been recent improvements in how the governing body approaches the training needs of individual members, by electing a link governor to co-ordinate opportunities.

44. Management by the leadership group is excellent. The two other members of the senior management team make an excellent contribution to management: the deputy headteacher, who oversees the curriculum and assessment procedures amongst other aspects, and the senior teacher, who manages English and co-ordinates staff development, the Foundation Stage and the work of the infant class teachers. All procedures to check the quality of teachers' work and support their professional development are excellent. Subject managers have annual interviews with senior staff to review developments and draw up action plans for the next stage of the school development plan. The professional needs of newly appointed staff are attended to very well and support staff are also given many opportunities to train and so improve their skills. The school has begun the process of achieving the status of *An Investor in People*.

45. Leadership and management by subject managers and the two co-ordinators of provision for special educational needs in school are very good. A few subject managers are new to their roles and have so far made a good start to their work. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching have been very effective in focusing attention on points to improve in English, mathematics and provision in the Foundation Stage. There has been less monitoring in a number of foundation subjects and so fewer improvements have been achieved in them.

46. There is a very good match of qualified teaching and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. After a period of high staff turnover in recent years, which had an adverse impact on the learning of pupils in some reception and infant classes, the situation has now stabilised. The adequacy of accommodation is good overall, particularly when consideration is given to all the outside areas where gardens and play areas have been developed. The site manager and his staff are very effective members of the school community and they ensure that the school is well looked after. In particular, it is the enthusiasm of the site manager that has led to the creation of the garden club, which is very popular with the pupils. Learning resources are also good overall. The school makes good use of a schools' library service to provide additional books of fiction and non-fiction.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

47. There are no key issues for improvement. However, there are three minor issues that the school should consider for inclusion in its school development plan:

- (1) Improve investigative skills and problem-solving in mathematics and science (paragraphs 81, 83, 88)
- (2) Improve procedures for assessing pupils' progress in science and some foundation subjects (Paragraph 36)
- (3) Review the time allocated to teaching religious education (Paragraphs 20, 127).

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

### *The Deaf Resource Base*

48. In addition to the mainstream provision for pupils with special educational needs, there is provision for deaf pupils, most of whom hold a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school adopts a *total communication* approach so that everyone uses sign language to assist with communicating. Provision for these pupils is very good and has some excellent features. The base's provision has continued to improve since the last inspection. Firstly, the links with the high school are now very good and this has enabled the very good start that pupils have at the school to be built on and developed. Secondly, the quality of teaching, aided by the professional expertise of learning support assistants, is very good. Thirdly, the liaison between the base and class teachers is very good and has led to all teachers having the expertise to meet pupils' needs in mainstream classes. All pupils are fully included in mainstream classes for a substantial part of the school curriculum. Mainstream teachers and subject managers have taken a lead in developing the whole curriculum for deaf pupils, so that team-teaching is now happening in the foundation subjects. The pupils spend an appropriate proportion of their time in the specialist base classrooms, focusing mainly on literacy and numeracy. The base is well resourced, staffed and managed.

49. The attainment of these pupils overall is below national expectations in English, mathematics and science. They receive very good levels of support from the teachers of the deaf, specialist learning support assistants and other external support services. Consequently, they make very good progress towards the specific learning targets set out in their individual education plans. This is particularly so in the pupils' improvement in their skills of listening, language, literacy and numeracy and in their personal development.

50. The school has established an excellent ethos for the inclusion of deaf pupils in its activities. The curriculum is taught through a combination of spoken language and signing. All pupils and staff have very positive attitudes towards deaf people and willingly undertake further training in the use of sign language. This helps to promote respect and understanding of differences between groups of pupils. The specialist support assistants are good role models for pupils and use their talents and skills to nurture pupils' maturity and involvement in discussions and in the general life of the school.

51. The quality of the specialist teaching of deaf pupils is very good. There are very thorough procedures for joint planning between class teachers, teachers of the deaf and support staff. This leads to lessons with challenging activities that are accurately matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, apply themselves conscientiously and persevere with tasks. They have high levels of self-esteem and their confidence in communicating with others is impressive. Teachers of the deaf pupils use *Sign supported English* to help the pupils when they first start in the deaf resource base and as a result, progress is rapid. The provision is an excellent example of the benefits of the school's policy on including all pupils. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge, they question pupils skilfully and provide many opportunities for them to be actively involved in lessons. In very good lessons, a range of strategies is used to capture pupils' interests and build upon the very good relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils. In these lessons, teachers transmit their enthusiasm for the topic being taught, give supportive feedback and set targets for pupils to help them to make progress. Pupils are able to work independently and co-operatively in groups, they are always engrossed in the activities and have a real enjoyment of learning. The teaching is considerably enhanced by the high level of expertise and hard work of the learning support assistants.

52. The curricular provision is very good. Pupils have full access to the subjects of the National Curriculum and are making very good progress in all subjects. They are fully included in every aspect of school life and are valued members of the school community. For example, deaf pupils are prefects and members of the school council. Pupils' progress is systematically assessed, monitored and evaluated. The school is rightly proud of its provision and has the active support of the whole school community. The overwhelming impact of the provision is to create a school where all pupils are fully prepared as thoughtful, sensitive, bilingual citizens.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	8	24	38	6	0	0	0
Percentage	10	32	50	8	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	206
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	NA	70

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	27
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	65

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	18	18	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	16
	Girls	12	13	14
	Total	26	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (61)	72 (68)	83 (84)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	16	17
	Girls	13	14	15
	Total	26	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (74)	83 (84)	89 (84)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	13	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	18	20
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	29	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (63)	86 (63)	91 (84)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	22
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	30	31	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (66)	89 (69)	97 (88)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	198	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

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

### ***Financial information***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	19

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	565

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12.5
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

Financial year	2001 - 02
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	£
Total income	711 501
Total expenditure	708 706
Expenditure per pupil	2513
Balance brought forward from previous year	96009
Balance carried forward to next year	98804

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.25
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Number of questionnaires sent out	231
Number of questionnaires returned	96 (41.6%)

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	35	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	28	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	41	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	30	6	1	1
The teaching is good.	77	22	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	29	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	29	5	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	70	28	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	23	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	35	8	3	4

*Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100*

### Other issues raised by parents

Some parents expressed concern at the amount of homework given to pupils as they get older. Sometimes there is a lot to complete in a short space of time.

## **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**

53. Children enter the Nursery after their third birthday and are admitted to the Reception class in the September in the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, there were twenty-seven children attending the morning Nursery session and twenty-two attending the afternoon session. The children attending in the afternoon tend to be much younger, about half having started in January or February 2003. There were thirty children in the Reception class. There are deaf children in both the Nursery and the Reception class. Both classes are each staffed by a teacher and nursery nurse. The Foundation Stage teacher of the deaf and the nursery nurse responsible for assisting deaf pupils also make inputs. All staff provide a very good start to the children's education in a safe, secure, and exciting learning environment where children are happy to come to school. There is effective liaison between the Nursery and the Reception class, with some shared activities, which help to make the transition easy for children.

54. Although the range of attainment is very wide, many children enter the Nursery with skills below those expected for their age. Very good teaching enables all children to make good progress in their basic skills. By the time they leave the Reception class, the majority of children are attaining the expectations of the prescribed *Early Learning Goals* in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. In personal, social and emotional development their achievement is beyond that expected.

55. The Foundation Stage is much improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has done a lot of work to improve the quality of the curriculum provided and this is now outstanding. The school has an excellent and well-established range of activities in the Foundation Stage, in which all children learn simple signing and German. The co-ordinator provides excellent educational direction for the children, staff and parents. The planning system focuses clearly on what staff want children to learn and experience. The quality of teaching is very good. Procedures for assessing the children's progress are thorough and staff use lesson evaluations and observations of children's progress well to plan for the next step in children's learning. The monitoring of children's progress in the Nursery ensures that any child with special educational needs is identified early and action taken. The Nursery and Reception class are very well organised and provide an excellent range of activities for all six areas of learning. All staff work very effectively as a team to ensure this quality. They are all involved in planning the activities and show very good understanding of how young children learn. They prepare the children well for the next stage in their learning.

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

56. The teaching is very good in this area of learning and children make very good progress in both Nursery and the Reception class. The deliberate teaching about and constant reinforcement of classroom routines ensure that all children develop independence and become confident. Reception children know what to do on entering the classroom, and in the Nursery the children are able to select from the activities on offer and settle quickly to work. The staff have high expectations of behaviour and the children's ability to take care of themselves. The very good use of positive reinforcement promotes good behaviour, and the very good organisation of resources so that they are easily accessible to the children promotes their autonomy. Children's skills of independence are developed systematically through praise and encouragement, as well as the very good balance of teacher-directed

tasks and child-elected activities. The children move very confidently from directed tasks to their own chosen activities and are always purposefully engaged.

57. Relationships between adults and children are very good, which result in their very good response to learning in both the Nursery and the Reception class. The staff give the children opportunities to play in different social groups, in which they work and play easily in pairs and small groups, discussing what they are doing and showing good levels of co-operation and independence. For example, a child building with blocks in the Nursery commented to a passing child, *We'll build a castle*. The second child, interested in what the first was doing, suggested, *I'll help you. Do you want this?* as he offered a block. Staff also set good examples for children, always taking time to listen to their questions and suggestions. The children speak confidently to adults and respond openly to questions.

58. Children are given opportunities to take on responsibilities like tidying away the equipment they have used and distributing name cards on tables to show places for snack times. They do this confidently and effectively. The snack times are used well by teachers to develop children's social skills and the children talk quietly together as they eat their snack. During one snack time in the Nursery, a hearing child was busily signing with a deaf child and turned to a member of staff, explaining that the deaf child did not like bananas. A calm atmosphere is created in both the Nursery and Reception class through the use of music and other simple yet effective techniques. The children are given opportunities to discuss their own and others' feelings, using stories as starting points. Provision for this area of learning is excellent and as a result, most children are likely to achieve beyond what is expected by the end of the Reception year.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

59. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. They are now very good and children make very good progress. Many children start in the Nursery with below average linguistic skills, but as their learning is very good the majority are likely to attain the *Early Learning Goals* in this area by the end of the Reception year. The staff place strong emphasis on developing the children's speaking and listening skills in all aspects of work and play. Carefully planned activities and the support they receive extend the children's language skills. Staff use the role-play situations such as the *baby clinic* indoors and the *farm* outdoors to help the children to use appropriate language and to develop their understanding of how to use talk to imagine and recreate characters and experiences. The staff sit with children as they work and encourage discussions within the group. In the Nursery, the children are helped to take turns in a large group to speak by holding a small toy when it is their turn. They know that if they do not hold the toy then it is time for listening. As a result, children gain an increased understanding of the need to listen to others and how to initiate conversations. Staff encourage the lower attaining children and those with special educational needs to talk about their experiences in these situations and this helps them to gain self-confidence to speak in a larger group.

60. There is a good range of books both in book corners and around the classrooms. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers use stories and other resources well to develop children's speech. For example, in the Nursery, when looking at the book, *Monkey Puzzle*, the children closely observed the pictures and were able to answer *I can see the parrot in the trees*. In the Reception class during shared reading of *Baaboom*, a child suggested that the bull in the story *puffed because he needed to get his breath back, because it was hard blowing up the balloon*. The children enjoy listening to stories and join in with repeating phrases. They recognise that *grows* and *blows* sound the same. The nursery children tell stories when reading books, using the pictures and turning the pages carefully. Many children recognise their own and others' names and some can write their names. In the

Reception class, the children make good progress in reading. The careful organisation and planning and the opportunities children have to share with friends, help them to develop their interest in reading. Aspects of the National Literacy Strategy are introduced slowly and in a way that interests young children and extends their skills in reading and writing. Children are enthusiastic about reading a Big Book with the teacher. Teachers use these sessions effectively to raise children's understanding of stories as well as to apply their knowledge of letter sounds and frequently used words. As a result, most children in the Reception class can read the first books in the reading scheme and the highest attaining children can read a range of early reading books. The children in both Nursery and the Reception class take books home to share with an adult.

61. Children are provided with a variety of opportunities to write. The good teaching and support they receive help them to make good progress. Children in the Reception class write their names and simple words, using upper and lower case letters. The children are learning to hold a pencil correctly and are gaining confidence in the early stages of writing so that handwriting is beginning to be formed correctly. The help offered by the support staff is good. Staff provide good examples for the children. In the Reception class, they act as scribe to what children say in discussions and develop their interests in writing. Higher attaining children begin to write simple sentences independently. Standards in writing are in line with those expected nationally, and a few children achieve above this.

### **Mathematical development**

62. Teachers provide a very good range of activities to help children's mathematical development. Teaching and learning are very good and the balance of teacher-directed tasks and the range of mathematical activities, which are chosen by the children, result in good progress. In the Nursery, good use is made of nursery rhymes, action songs and games to make the learning fun. The children can order objects according to length and, when using wooden blocks, are able to select the shape of block they need. In the Reception class, most children can recognise and sequence numbers up to ten confidently. They are motivated when singing number rhymes about *five little men in a flying saucer* and other rhymes, which show their ability to count, add one on and take one away. They can count to more than forty and can tell the teacher what is one more than a given number. Children learn the language of mathematics such as *add*, *how many altogether*, and *count on*. Using mini-motors or other practical equipment, they are able to make sums and record them. Their numbers are formed correctly.

63. The children develop a good understanding of shapes, space and measurement. In the Nursery, the children learn to name simple flat shapes and make pictures using these shapes. Children in the Reception class are able to compare lengths saying which snakes are shorter than, longer than or about the same length as a marker pen. There are many incidental opportunities for the children to learn. For example, when playing in the water and sand, they learn about concepts of capacity and volume, and begin to understand what *full* and *empty* mean. Nearly all of the children are well on their way to attaining the expected level by the time they leave the Foundation Stage.

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

64. Children start the Foundation Stage with a reasonable understanding of the world around them. Staff in both Nursery and the Reception class build on this knowledge and extend it further through well-planned activities. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The children recreate situations in their role-play, as when playing at the *baby clinic*, and also in the *farm* area outdoors, which was set up following a visit to nearby city farm. Children in both Nursery and the Reception class plant seeds and observe these at different

times to see how they grow. The children know the life cycle of a chicken and were thrilled when one of the eggs they were incubating hatched. They listened carefully to the newly hatched chick cheeping and noticed that the chick had only one eye open and that another egg was cracking. Children in the Nursery are able to say that the chicks will need water and food, and Reception-aged children add *keep them warm* because on the farm they would be kept warm by their mother hen.

65. Children have many opportunities to build models using a good range of construction sets, and they cut and stick, using scissors and glue when making *collages*. Children have access to the computer and they know how to use the mouse to click and drag objects on the screen. The computer is also used to support literacy and numeracy in the Reception class. The children are involved in a balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Adults always give timely help in the children's own chosen activities to ensure that they are making progress. The resourcing of this area of learning has improved significantly since the last inspection and the range of construction kits and opportunities for extending play into the outdoor area are excellent. The teaching in this area of learning has also improved since the last inspection and is now very good. As a result, the majority of the children are on course to attain the levels expected of them by the time they leave the Foundation Stage.

### **Physical development**

66. Children are likely to achieve the expected levels of the *Early Learning Goals* by the time they leave the Reception classes. The provision is excellent and the teaching is very good in this area of learning. There has been remarkable improvement since the last inspection, when the outdoor area was inadequate for promoting the children's physical development. The resources and planning for the outdoor area are now excellent. Staff from both the Nursery and Reception class use the outdoor area creatively and offer children maximum opportunities to develop their physical skills. Children have daily opportunities to use climbing frames and large apparatus as well as sand, water, a garden area and a range of wheeled toys. The children play enthusiastically outdoors and have developed an understanding of how to use the space safely as they move around. Staff use physical development sessions very well to develop further children's understanding of positional vocabulary such as *under, over* and *along*. There are many opportunities to develop fine motor skills through the use of paintbrushes, pencils and scissors, as well as through joining together pieces when making jigsaws and models. The children are taught to hold a pencil correctly when writing.

## **Creative development**

67. The children make good progress in this area and are likely to attain the *Early Learning Goals* by the end of the Reception year. The teaching is very good and an excellent range of creative activities is planned to promote this area of learning. Children have many opportunities to express their imagination through painting, drawing and making *collages*, using different textures, colours and materials. Most children know a range of colours and can sort and match by colour and shape. The role-play area is well used by the children and they dress up in roles in their play. Timely help by the staff helps the children to move the role-play forward and to extend and consolidate their knowledge and skills in other areas of learning. This was seen when the children were playing in the *farm* area outdoors and the teacher developed their vocabulary by naming baby animals. The children play percussion instruments and learn a variety of songs and sing enthusiastically, knowing the words and tunes. Both Nursery and Reception children are also able to use signing as they sing, thus including the deaf children in the activity.

## **ENGLISH**

68. Standards match the national average at the end of Year 6. Pupils build on the very good start they receive in the Foundation Stage and achieve well over time. Deaf pupils and those with other special educational needs make very good progress. Standards of literacy in school are good overall and this judgement includes how well pupils use their skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in other subjects. Standards have risen well since the time of the last inspection and this is because of very good improvements in provision. The teaching of lessons of the National Literacy Strategy is never less than good, and very good and excellent lessons were seen in Years 2 and 5. The teaching of English to deaf pupils in small groups is similarly of a good standard and two very good lessons were seen involving pupils in these year groups. The subject is excellently led and managed by the subject manager. The monitoring of how well the school and pupils are doing is excellent and where any shortcomings have been identified, for example the need to promote skills of speaking, listening and writing further, then effective action is taken to improve. Challenging targets are set for pupils to achieve and the school is successful in achieving them. Last year, results exceeded the targets set.

69. Standards in the current Year 2 are below average overall, a judgement which reflects the fact that there are several deaf pupils in the year group, whose attainment in reading and writing is significantly behind their other skills of communication, including using signing. The impact of this is to lower the overall standards achieved by the school in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2. In general, the deaf pupils in school make greater gains in reading and writing in the junior years, as they grow ever more confident in communicating. In addition, staffing difficulties in the Reception year disrupted the progress of pupils in the current Year 2.

## **Speaking and listening**

70. Standards of speaking and listening are average overall and this judgement includes the standard achieved by deaf pupils. Many pupils have above average skills in these aspects. This is because the school has focused attention on them in recent school development plans in order to improve the attainment of all pupils, including deaf pupils and those with other special educational needs. All pupils have short weekly lessons in sign language and this has very great benefits not only for deaf pupils but for all pupils as they learn a second recognised language. The quality of communication in school is thereby enhanced, the self-esteem of deaf pupils is raised, and indeed all pupils have good attitudes to the importance of good communication and are proud of their newly learned skills. All

pupils, including some deaf pupils, learn German and the strong focus on speaking and listening in these fast moving and lively lessons has much benefit for pupils in making suggestions, answering in full sentences and listening to one another and their teacher. This year, pupils in Year 2 spend one week each half term working in a small group with a teacher, where the focus is on developing speaking and listening skills through all subjects of the curriculum. As a result, the opportunities for individual pupils to make oral contributions to lessons are significantly increased.

71. In addition, the school has introduced a twice yearly focus on drama for each year group, calling on the services of an outside specialist. For example, some outstanding teaching was seen when pupils in Year 2 re-enacted parts of *The Great Fire of London*. Pupils used phrases such as *angry*, *horrified* and *devastated* to describe their feelings. They became involved in looking for scapegoats to blame for starting the fire, just as representatives of authority at the time did. Pupils listened with increasing appreciation and responded well to the views of people caught up in the catastrophe. Pupils in Year 6 took part in a role-play set in World War II, when they found a German soldier who had parachuted from his crippled aircraft. They became engrossed in the question of whether he was a spy and the moral dilemma of what to do with him.

## Reading

72. Pupils' reading develops well over time through good teaching and access to a very good range of fiction and non-fiction in school. Pupils read regularly both in school to adults and at home with parents. There is a strong focus on enjoying reading from an early age, and parents have made an excellent contribution in helping staff to create *Story Sacks*, containing puppets, games and puzzles related to a book, which pupils take home. Through the regular focus on words, sentences and punctuation in lessons of the National Literacy Strategy, the pupils gain good awareness of the sounds that letters and letter combinations make. They know how to read unfamiliar words and what punctuation marks, such as speech marks, indicate. By the end of Year 2, standards are average overall and higher attaining pupils are reading fluently and with confidence and expression. Those with special educational needs enjoy reading simple texts and they recognise a good number of common words. They can correct themselves when they find the sense in what they have read is not right, for example when they initially confuse *was* with *saw*.

73. Good progress continues in the junior years. Pupils in Year 4 talk freely about plot and character as they discuss the books that they are currently reading. They have a good awareness of non-fiction and use successfully the contents, index and glossary to help them. There is a very good focus on children's writers in school and each age group, from Nursery onwards, studies one author in some depth each year. As a result, by Year 6, pupils refer to several favourite authors, they include poetry among their preferred choices and a good number of pupils visit the local library with their parents to select books for pleasure as well as for information. Standards are average overall, and this judgement includes the standards achieved by deaf pupils. A good number of pupils achieve higher than the expected level and both boys and girls have good attitudes to reading.

## Writing

74. Because of the recent drive to raise standards of writing, pupils throughout the school write well across a range of subjects, such as geography, history and science. Pupils in Year 1 write their address correctly on envelopes in work linked to the location of where they live, and those in Year 2 write an account of their visit to a museum of the Victorian period. Pupils in Year 3 write well about the myths of the Ancient Greeks. Teachers build into English lessons good opportunities to write extended pieces of written work. They do this by

covering the activity over a fortnight, so that, for example in narrative writing, pupils spend time looking separately at the beginning, middle and end of a story. They focus attention on aspects such as how to grab the attention of the reader, when is the best place to bring in dialogue and how to move the plot along. An example of this extended work was seen in Year 5, where pupils wrote well-fashioned narrative poems, seventeen stanzas long, on the subject of *Perseus, the Slayer of the Gorgon*. An excellent lesson was seen in Year 5 in which the teacher linked the writing of a report very well with a science topic on the planets.

75. Another valuable initiative to promote a love of writing is the homework assignment called *A Story in a Box*. Pupils take the small box home with them, which contain items appropriate to the age group to stimulate creativity, such as a puppet, toy pet or set of photographs and postcards on a theme. The pupils write, for instance, about the exploits of the toy at home. In the case of examples seen in Year 6, each pupil wrote an extract in a diary about the life of a child evacuated from Liverpool to the countryside in World War II. Samples revealed a range of emotions felt by the child, which were entirely in keeping with the context and indicated an impressive level of maturity and empathy.

76. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils are developing skills well. For example, in a lengthy story set at the time of King Arthur, one pupil wrote, *They were now in a misty, sodden, miserable and silent place that could have been home to a great catastrophe*. Good standards of presentation, handwriting and spelling are features of the work of pupils. Most pupils try to use interesting language in their work and to use correctly speech marks and even ellipses (a set of three dots to indicate the omission of words). Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and examples of work seen show that handwriting is clear and legible, though skills of punctuation and spelling are more limited. The writing of deaf pupils, while showing progress over time, is below average overall.

77. The quality of teaching is good or better in all classes. The teachers' management of pupils is excellent and this is because they engage the pupils so well in lessons. Lessons are lively and have good purpose, so that pupils know what they should achieve. All teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and put their expertise into practice well. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher reminded the pupils about checking to read their own work in case they miss words out, by cleverly introducing a fragment of a parchment that had been *burnt* in the Great Fire of London. The pupils had to guess the omitted words. The pupils were rapt and one was heard to ask in awe, *Is it real?* In an excellent lesson in Year 5, the teacher had high expectations of behaviour and work and made very effective use of praise to raise the pupils' self-esteem and the quality of their report-writing. The outcomes are pupils who thrive on learning. Teachers use ICT to very good effect in their own work and several lessons included *Power Point* presentations. There are good opportunities, for older pupils especially, to develop word-processing skills and to use them to good effect to create polished pieces of work. Pupils have a very good awareness of their own targets for improvement, and because teachers mark their work with a continual stress on how to improve, it is evident from a scrutiny of their work that pupils make good progress over time. Homework makes a good contribution to learning and there is variety in what pupils are asked to do. For example, in addition to reading and learning spellings, they research and produce short reports on topics.

78. Subject management is excellent and all aspects contribute very well to provision. The subject manager has an excellent overview of teaching and standards and has contributed much to the quality of the provision through careful and constructive monitoring of teachers' planning, lessons and pupils' work. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are very good and they are used very well to set targets, to group pupils and plan future work for pupils. There is a very good range of learning resources for teaching. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.

## MATHEMATICS

79. Standards match the national average overall for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is the result of the very hard work by all staff to ensure that their pupils make the necessary progress. Staffing difficulties in their Reception year have disrupted the progress of pupils in the current Year 2. However, good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and the additional support teacher for the large classes have helped them to make good progress towards their targets and they achieve well. The pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving well, and those who have special educational needs or who are deaf make very good progress because of the very good support they receive. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection.

80. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and therefore little time is lost in lessons in dealing with problems. Pupils are very enthusiastic and concentrate well on tasks trying hard to finish their work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan tasks that meet all pupils' needs using the National Numeracy Strategy. Each lesson plan identifies the vocabulary pupils need to know, and teachers expect pupils to use it in their answers. Teachers assess very well, asking questions to find what pupils know and marking work carefully. Where the marking is very good, for instance in a Year 6 class, pupils have a very good understanding of what they have done and what they must do to improve. In addition, this teacher's brief half-termly reviews provide excellent comments for raising self-esteem and motivation.

81. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work together so they can share their ideas and develop their understanding. All pupils have very positive attitudes and hands eagerly shoot up when the teachers ask questions. Pupils concentrate and present their work well, drawing tables carefully with rulers and writing numerals correctly. Teachers group pupils carefully according to their ability and ensure that pupils have appropriate support if they need additional help or require extension activities. However, occasionally teachers make too much use of worksheets, which limit the pupils' opportunities to create their own challenges by choosing their own numbers or developing their investigations of numbers. An example of good practice was seen when pupils in Year 1 used a spinner to generate their own sums and set themselves challenges that were more difficult. Occasionally, pupils practise skills for too long and do not have the necessary time to try the more challenging work at the end of the worksheet.

82. Pupils in the deaf resource base receive very good teaching. The use of sign language ensures that all pupils participate in the lesson, and teachers explain new vocabulary carefully. Staff record detailed assessments, showing how pupils learn and the progress they make. This means pupils build securely on their previous learning and make very good progress. For hearing pupils in Year 2, their work on two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes is reinforced well in signing lessons, where they learn to sign the names of the shapes.

83. The curriculum is good overall. Teachers plan good lessons for numeracy but they miss some opportunities to develop mathematics through other subjects. For instance, few displays show pupils using their mathematical skills in geography or science. Using laptops, teachers show pupils how to make graphs and tables, using data collected in mathematics lessons. This increases pupils' understanding of spreadsheets and data-handling in ICT. In Year 6, pupils learn how to enter a formula into cells on a spreadsheet, and that different formulae provide different results. Teachers use computers effectively to teach data-handling, although for younger children there are fewer opportunities to learn about block graphs and sorting activities in other subjects. In Year 4, pupils use a programmable toy

effectively. This reinforces their knowledge and understanding of positional language and they begin to understand angles of turn as they plan routes for it. Teachers use ICT effectively for older pupils but this is less evident for Year 1 and Year 2. Opportunities for investigating mathematical problems are limited. Although they investigate everyday problems, the pupils have limited opportunities to investigate mathematics choosing a range of operations and appropriate equipment, and attainment in this respect is below average.

84. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and those who are higher achieving or gifted and talented is very good. The school uses test results very well to identify teaching groups and target support. Teachers also monitor all pupils' work very well, through marking and tests results. They track pupils' progress from year to year, ensuring that they make at least satisfactory progress. All pupils set their own targets and they review them regularly. However, younger pupils and those of lower ability do not always set easily measurable targets, and deciding if they have achieved them is difficult. Test results also provide very good information about the curriculum and the staff make changes to ensure that all pupils can achieve in all aspects of the subject. For instance, the school has provided staff training on developing pupils' investigating skills, although more development is required.

85. The subject manager is new to the post and her skills of leadership are developing. She has managed the subject well and identified areas that need further development, using the test results available and the reports on the monitoring of teaching provided by the senior management team. She has reviewed teachers' planning, identifying appropriate areas for her action plan. However, the timescale is three years. This is too long and means that the use of mathematics in other subjects will not be dealt with for some time. This could limit pupils' opportunities to use their skills in meaningful learning situations. Resources are good and pupils use them well. Occasionally support staff are not fully involved at the beginning of lessons but they are very good at assisting pupils, asking questions and encouraging them to think for themselves. All staff are fully committed to teaching the subject and they evaluate their work frequently as they want the best for all pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

86. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment is average for their age. Some pupils in both year groups attain higher standards. As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress. Pupils in Year 2 can carry out simple investigations with help and say whether what happened was what they expected. Some recognise and explain whether a test is fair. By the end of Year 6, pupils recognise the need for making a test fair and make observations and measurements suitable for the task.

87. The teaching is good overall, never less than satisfactory and often very good. A strong feature of the teaching is the way teachers encourage pupils to remember scientific facts and this helps them to build up a solid core of knowledge. Teachers do this by regularly recalling what pupils have learned previously and by giving them the determination to succeed. For instance, after testing pupils in Year 6, the teacher fed back their results and urged them to concentrate on their individual weaknesses. After they had worked on them at home and school, their knowledge improved markedly. As a result, almost all pupils have a satisfactory and some a good understanding of, for instance, the body's circulatory system. At the beginning of each unit of work, teachers set targets for pupils to aim for according to their ability. For example, most pupils in Year 3 are set a target of mastering how different kinds of electric circuits work by investigating first-hand. Lower attaining pupils are set a simpler target to reach, to make a simple circuit which works. This approach enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to learn effectively and at a good rate.

88. Since the previous inspection, teachers have gained more experience in teaching pupils how to plan and carry out investigations. As a result, pupils are making steady progress in learning how to investigate in a scientific way. This is beginning to show through in pupils' performance, especially in Years 2, 3 and 4. However, weaknesses remain. For example, most teachers do not pay enough attention to showing pupils how to record the results of investigations and draw conclusions. Consequently, many pupils do not understand the difference between *results* and a *conclusion*. The school still has some way to go before all teachers are as successful teaching investigations as well as they are teaching scientific facts.

89. The main feature which distinguished the best lessons from others is teachers' knowledge of the subject. In the best lessons, this enabled them to give lessons a smooth and fast flow from start to finish. The high quality of the teachers' skilful questioning kept pupils very highly motivated and engaged throughout. In a lesson in Year 2, the teacher's expertise kept pupils thoroughly interested and motivated. They were enthusiastic and made sensible predictions whether objects such as bread and ice would change with heat, and then said if what happened was what they expected. Because of the teacher's care to help all pupils to learn equally well, they all learned at the same very fast rate. For example, a lower attaining pupil thought hard and came to the conclusion that melted ice *could change back again into ice*. Teachers make good use of the school's scheme of work and the good level of resources for science and give pupils lots of interesting experiences. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils expressed delight when they investigated ways of showing that sound is caused by vibrations, and discovered how a ping-pong ball reacts when it is touched by a vibrating tuning fork. In a discussion to round off the lesson, pupils showed how clearly they remembered what they had learned.

90. The school's policy of ensuring that all pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum pays dividends in how well pupils learn together and from each other. Teachers in mainstream classes are a driving force in making sure that deaf pupils get a 'good deal' in science lessons. This was demonstrated in lessons in Year 2 and Year 3, where deaf pupils were fully part of the lessons. They were helped at all times by the quality and strength of specialised staff, and learned at the same very fast rate as others. The organisational strengths of the class teachers and their skilful questioning gave all pupils excellent opportunities to learn in discussions. For instance, in Year 3, the teacher targeted all pupils in questioning. This gave them all the same opportunities to learn and show their understanding about the structure of teeth.

91. Management of the subject is sound. The subject manager has made a good start to developing science and raising standards and has identified priorities for action. For example, she is in the process of implementing national guidelines for lessons throughout the school. Since the last inspection, teachers' use of ICT has improved and continues to develop. However, the manager's monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning misses some strengths and weaknesses. This limits how well and quickly teachers improve standards. Insufficient use is made of optional tests and the reviewing of pupils' work to ensure that all pupils achieve well.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

92. Standards are at the expected level at the end of Year 2 and above that at the end of Year 6. The teaching is good overall and pupils achieve well. The subject has improved since the last inspection because the subject manager is enthusiastic and has raised the profile of the subject in the school. Since then, pupils have used sketchbooks and these are developing well; they enable pupils to plan, experiment and reflect on their work. The introduction of the history of art into the scheme of work is helping pupils to analyse and

discuss the work of great artists from many cultures and eras. Planning is more detailed and gives better guidance for teachers on what should be taught to each year group.

93. Pupils throughout the school, including deaf pupils, achieve at a good rate. They experiment with a range of media. For example, in infant classes, pupils are encouraged to think about pattern and colour in terms of camouflage when making interesting images of zebras and giraffes. They sketch bulbs as they grow and draw portraits well using pencil lines. They learn the technique of printing and they use wool, cotton and silk to make simple and attractive designs. All pupils benefit from finding out about the art of various cultures, including aboriginal and African. Junior-aged pupils find out about primary and secondary colours and, by looking closely at the work of Van Gogh, they learn to use pencil line to create shade and depth in their work. Pupils in Year 4 examine the work of Monet and produce paintings in a similar style, paying good attention to light, shadow and reflection. Older pupils are influenced by modern art. They use paint and crayon very effectively to make copies of packages such as cereal and baked beans. They also use art in English, when making intricate masks and models of characters who feature in the novel, *The Hobbit*. In pupils' sketchbooks, the work shows a good degree of exploration of ideas and experimentation with techniques, and this has a good impact on the quality of their work. Sketchbooks are marked well by teachers, who offer pupils praise and helpful comments to help them to improve and develop their style.

94. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. A good lesson was seen with a group of pupils in Year 2. Here the teacher used an extensive range of natural items to inspire pupils to look very carefully at lines in nature. Pupils used magnifying glasses and small square frames to eliminate distractions. As a result, the discussion between teacher and pupils was well focused on the interesting patterns. Pupils were very involved in their work and managed to concentrate for a long time to produce good pencil drawings based on their direct observations. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher used the work of Andy Warhol to influence and inspire pupils. By carefully guiding pupils through the technique of repeat printing, all were able to produce work of a good standard. Pupils throughout the school are very pleased to talk about their work and freely express enjoyment, pride and a sense of achievement that the subject gives them.

95. Subject leadership is good. The subject manager is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and is responsible for the high profile that the subject has in school. She monitors pupils' work through plans, displays and sketchbooks. The curriculum is well enriched by after-school art sessions, such as lace-making classes. The subject manager organises a very popular annual art exhibition and themes have included robots, fruit and teddy bears. Pupils benefit from working alongside visiting artists and have produced several high quality pieces of three-dimensional work, including fairies for the school garden, soldiers and clay tiles. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

96. Standards have been maintained at the expected level since the last inspection for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils build on what they have learned in previous years and are achieving steadily in both junior and infant classes. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection, involving pupils in Year 2, and this was taught well. Thus no overall judgement about the quality of teaching is possible. Evidence from a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work shows that pupils' learning is sound.

97. Pupils' skills of design develop at a steady rate. For example, in Years 1 and 2, the pupils draw simple pictures to help them to visualise what they want to make. They label

their drawings accurately, showing the materials and components they intend to use. By Years 3 and 4, they produce carefully labelled diagrams of levers. Pupils consider how to link two or more levers together and what the impact of their efforts will be. By Year 5, pupils design safety clothing and pulleys to lift heavy items. They draw detailed designs of a model car, they label the components carefully and list the materials needed. In Year 6, pupils design healthy drinks, quantifying the ingredients and including clear instructions. They design and make a Ferris wheel for a model fairground and have to consider how to make it rotate. Pupils' skills of measuring, cutting and joining are typical for their age. Before a new project begins, pupils are carefully taught the specific skills needed to enable them to work accurately. For example, the teachers' clear explanation of how to use cutting tools safely was reflected in the *Jack-in-the-Box* models made by pupils in Year 2. Teachers and classroom assistants provide very good assistance for deaf pupils and pupils with special educational needs. This enables them to make good progress.

98. The quality of learning is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully prepared, well organised and safely managed. This ensures that pupils work methodically, purposefully and with enjoyment. Demonstrations are particularly useful because they help pupils' understanding. In the Year 2 lesson seen, the variety and individuality in the pupils' box designs reflected the encouragement given by the teachers and support staff. Throughout the lesson, staff encouraged pupils to experiment and to try different methods, and pupils talked about their work with pride and enjoyment. Pupils were encouraged to evaluate their work every step of the way and think about how they might improve or change their ideas. This challenged their skills of thinking and invention. Resources were well organised and readily accessible, so no time was wasted between demonstrations and practical work. A good feature of the subject is the way pupils throughout the school use their design books to plan and record their work and to reflect on and evaluate what they have made. Teachers mark these well, offering suggestions and ideas for improvement to pupils. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 show that they are aware of the importance of accuracy in measurement. They discuss their work objectively and analyse qualities and faults in their designs. They particularly enjoy working with a partner.

99. The curriculum is sufficiently balanced, although the subject manager intends to review the schemes of work to develop a better cross-curricular approach and to include assessment procedures to help teachers' planning. Subject management is satisfactory. There are missed opportunities in lessons to use computers for design and recording purposes to enhance the subject, and the subject manager is aware of this.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

100. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment is average for their age. Good teaching enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress. As a result, the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the topics they study and acquire geographical skills to help them to undertake fieldwork and interpret maps.

101. Most of the teaching is good and is often very good. A strong feature of the teaching is the way teachers use fieldwork and maps to develop pupils' skills. For example, in Year 1, pupils looked at features in the streets around school and drew routes they take from home to school. Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to develop their skills in fieldwork. In a good lesson in Year 5, the teacher prepared pupils well for a visit to a nearby seaside resort. Good organisation of group work helped all pupils to prepare for what they would focus on. For example, one group drew a key on a map to mark what they would find about land-use. As a result of such opportunities, by the end of Year 6 pupils are good at interpreting maps and know features of rivers and valleys such as tributaries, meanders and ox-bow lakes. A good feature of the teaching is the emphasis teachers place on learning key vocabulary through practical experiences. For example, pupils in Year 1 learned about the postal service by addressing their own letters and posting them home. In a very good lesson in Year 3, pupils built up their knowledge about locations and weather around the world at a very fast rate. This was because the task was an imaginative and practical problem. Pupils were thoroughly absorbed looking for clues in lost suitcases to match them with their owners and intended destinations. As a result, pupils located destinations using maps and atlases and learned key words such as *continent* and *Europe*.

102. Teachers make sure that all pupils have good opportunities to learn. This was demonstrated particularly well in Year 3. Pupils who have special educational needs, including those who are deaf, were fully included in the lesson and were given extensive specialist help, teachers from the mainstream class and the deaf resource base working very well as a team. This enabled these pupils to make the same very good progress as others.

103. Teachers make better use of computers than previously. This gives higher attainers good opportunities to develop their skills of independent research and to learn quickly. In an ICT lesson in Year 3, the teacher made good links with pupils' learning about weather around the world and they learned key vocabulary, such as *tornado* and *water-vapour*. In Year 6, pupils regularly access the Internet to explore news from around the world.

104. Management is sound. The subject manager has made a good start to develop the subject. She has given teachers a good lead in implementing new guidelines for lessons and has identified priorities for action. However, some weaknesses in teaching and learning have not been identified because new procedures for monitoring the subject have not yet been implemented. For instance, some teachers rely too heavily on worksheets in lessons, and marking does not point out how pupils can improve their work.

## **HISTORY**

105. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment is average for their age. The teaching is good, so that pupils learn at a good rate. Teachers ensure that all pupils, including those who are deaf and have special educational needs, have full and equal opportunities to learn at the same rate as others.

106. The curriculum for history is good, firmly based on a practical approach. Pupils learn in a wide variety of ways, through stories, video recordings, books, pictures, photographs, artefacts, role-play, visits and visitors. Cross-curricular links are strong, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and throughout the school with literacy. Teachers give pupils lots of interesting and first-hand experiences, which capture their attention and enthusiasm. These help them to enjoy lessons and they are very keen to learn. The subject manager has built up a good range of resources which teachers use well. So, for instance, pupils in Year 1 compare toys that they use themselves with the school's collection of old toys from years ago. This approach introduces them well to the use of primary sources of historical research.

107. Another good feature of teaching is the use that teachers make of visits and visitors. Pupils gain valuable experiences first-hand from, for example, regular visits to Wigan Pier and the Pier Master's House at the Albert Docks in the city. In an excellent lesson in Year 2, a visiting drama specialist set up an *eyewitness* role-play, re-enacting events of the *Great Fire of London* which included the full participation of all pupils, deaf and hearing. He set scenes so vividly that pupils were held enthralled and played their parts with enthusiasm throughout. By the end, they gained a good deal of historical understanding and recognised why the government of the time looked for scapegoats to blame for the fire.

108. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach the subject. This is evident in the way they handle discussions and use key vocabulary for pupils to learn and remember. For example, in a small group lesson in Year 2, the teacher's own good knowledge of fossils led to good learning about Mary Anning, an early palaeontologist. The pupils showed real enthusiasm exploring a good range of artefacts and this encouraged them to pick up useful vocabulary such as *extinct* and *palaeontologist*. Teachers set interesting and challenging tasks and give pupils good opportunities to distinguish fact from opinion. For example, pupils in Year 6 compared written accounts of items of news from the 1970's with video clips and then reported back in groups with their own accounts. This developed their skills of historical enquiry well. However, the time allotted for a lesson in Year 5 was too short to develop the same skills as the teacher planned. Pupils gained a lot of information from four of their colleagues who played the role of eminent Victorians in discussion, but time ran out before they could pose questions raised in their minds. A common shortcoming in teaching is the way teachers mark pupils' work. Although it is marked regularly, few comments indicate how pupils can improve their work.

109. Management of the subject is good. The subject manager has moved the subject on since the previous inspection. The curriculum and resources for lessons are good and cross-curricular links are planned and effective. The use of ICT has improved. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are in place. The subject manager monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work in books. However, there are no opportunities for her to monitor the quality of teaching in the classroom and this limits how well strengths and weaknesses can be identified and acted on.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

110. Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6, a judgement that includes the standard achieved by deaf pupils. This is a broadly similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. Standards have risen in line with the national rise since 1997.

111. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a range of skills enabling them to use the keyboard and mouse with confidence. They can input text and save and retrieve it. For instance, they create images in the style of the artist Jackson Pollock, having first used the Internet to find information and look at his work. Pupils record results from science

investigations for the topic *Growth and Change* and produce bar graphs to represent their findings.

112. By the end of Year 6, pupils use ICT successfully in a range of contexts. In Year 3, pupils use ICT to organise and present their work. They use desktop publishing programs to word process text, varying the font size and colour, and they insert graphics and borders. They are beginning to use databases and learn how they work. The subject is used for a range of purposes across the curriculum, for example in English and in geography, where pupils learn new vocabulary and spelling of weather vocabulary through using a weather CD-ROM. In Year 4, pupils search the Internet and CD-ROMs for information. An improvement since the last inspection is the pupils' appreciation of how ICT is used in the wider world. Pupils in Year 5 enter data collected in a mathematics lesson on to spreadsheets and can compare charts produced by hand and by computer. They are aware that although the computer can complete the task more quickly, it is easy to make mistakes when inputting the data. Pupils in Year 6 use spreadsheets and enter data and they are able to identify cells and enter formulae to perform mathematical calculations. The oldest pupils use ICT skills to produce *The Knotty Ash Smash*, a newspaper, using a wide range of fonts, highlighting techniques and all enhanced by the inclusion of graphics to improve the overall quality of presentation. Pupils extract information from CD-ROMs to aid their research. Gifted and talented pupils have opportunities to take laptops home at weekends to extend their work. They produce multimedia presentations of a very high standard.

113. The teaching is consistently good and very good teaching was observed in Year 6. This is an improvement since the last report. A feature of the best teaching is the very good introduction to the lesson, where the interactive board is used to give a whole-class demonstration on how to operate a spreadsheet. Pupils are given the opportunity to participate in the demonstration and this ensures that they all understand the task and how to attempt it. Since the last inspection, larger group or whole-class teaching has become an integral part of lessons when it is appropriate for making a teaching point or to develop critical discussion. Lessons are well planned and time is used effectively to maintain high levels of interest. Support staff are effectively deployed to help pupils as they work on the computers and this enhances the pupils' attainment in lessons. Pupils enjoy the work and respond by working hard. Good links have been developed with other schools locally and internationally, and these provide exciting opportunities for pupils to communicate through the use of ICT.

114. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject manager is very knowledgeable, enthusiastic and supportive. Staff are introduced effectively to new software and given chances to try it out. The school is in a strong position to raise standards further, because of completion by all staff of nationally funded training, a very well planned curriculum and increased provision of resources, including computers in the two mini suites, interactive boards in some classrooms, and the use of laptops.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (GERMAN)**

115. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has introduced German into the curriculum and has become one of three *Centres of Excellence* for Modern Foreign Languages in the city, an award-winning project organised by the local education authority. The school is whole-heartedly committed to the project and the deputy headteacher takes an important lead in overseeing and co-ordinating provision. The subject is currently taught to all classes, including the Nursery on a weekly basis by one of the local education authority's teacher advisers for modern foreign languages in primary schools. During lessons he is very ably assisted by foreign language students visiting from abroad. The quality of provision, which has been running for two years, is excellent. It is promoting very well the pupils' overall skills of communication, such as speaking and listening, as well as their proficiency to speak

a foreign language. It makes a very significant contribution towards the richness of the curriculum and the pupils' social and cultural development. It provides an excellent opportunity for pupils with talent in language learning to excel and is often a source of achievement for pupils with special educational needs who have difficulties reading and writing, because the work is predominantly oral. A commitment has been sought from associated secondary schools for pupils from the school to work at a higher level of challenge when they start in Year 7 and for some to take a GCSE in the subject up to two years earlier than typically found. Staff at the school learn German alongside pupils and take an active part in lessons. Over time, the objective is that all teachers will grow in confidence and expertise to teach their own classes, with a phased withdrawal of support from the primary advisory team.

116. During the inspection three lessons were observed, one in each of Years 1, 2 and 6. All were excellent examples of teaching a modern foreign language with vigour, pace and enthusiasm. Some deaf pupils were included in lessons where they could benefit and signing was used to assist them. Pupils in Year 1 are able to greet each other in German and count to 20, and they are familiar with the vocabulary for everyday objects such as parts of the body. Pupils in Year 2 can also say when their birthday is, how old they are and how many brothers and sisters they have. They learn about terms to describe the weather and items of clothing. Teachers make very good use of favourite stories, for example *The Enormous Turnip*, to teach the younger pupils. Pupils in Year 6 can describe their hobbies and at the time of the lesson were being introduced to the vocabulary for various types of houses and rooms in a house. Lessons make good use of quizzes and games to keep pupils' attention. For example, teachers use picture clues of vocabulary that they are teaching, and reveal them only slowly or alternatively in a flash, to see if pupils are watching carefully. In one game, pupils in Year 6 had to use their knowledge of numbers up to 100 to play a game of concentration about rooms in a house. The lesson planning is often closely linked to other work that pupils are doing in order to increase its relevance. For instance, prior to a residential visit, the pupils learned phrases and words for packing a suitcase. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and their rate of progress is excellent. Standards are rising and are currently above the average expected of primary-aged pupils. Younger pupils are on course to achieve very high standards by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.

## MUSIC

117. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average for the pupils' ages and pupils make satisfactory progress. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Activities outside lessons, such as recorder groups and for some pupils tuition by peripatetic teachers in flute, clarinet and keyboards, mean that a significant minority of pupils achieve good standards in playing instruments and reading standard notation.

118. In Year 1, pupils learn a variety of songs and hymns that they sing from memory. The pupils use a variety of percussion instruments in their lessons. They learn to name instruments and are able to play musical opposites, for example long / short sounds with a recorder, loud / soft sounds with cymbals and triangles, and fast / slow sounds by shaking a tambourine fast or beating a drum slowly. The pupils develop awareness of different instruments and their sounds. They learn to name the different percussion instruments and recognise the sound each makes. They can identify the trumpet and trombone when listening to *Puttin' on the Ritz*. In Year 2, pupils memorise words quickly when learning new songs. They enjoy the humour in the song, *Man with a Beard*, and are able as a class to make up a new verse, emphasising the humour. By clapping out the rhythm, they understand the number of words they need in each line. They enthusiastically sing the whole song, including their own verse, and are pleased with their achievement.

119. Pupils in junior classes sing tunefully with clear diction and they sustain melodies well. Deaf pupils and pupils with special educational needs are included well in lessons so that they make satisfactory progress. In a Year 3 lesson, all pupils sang and signed *I Love the Sun* and *He's Got the Whole World in his Hands*. They used their voices expressively and were also able to express the ideas through sign language. Singing is a high priority in the school and the standard is good. The pupils are able to sing in rounds, singing clearly. They perform well in assemblies. The development of pupils' skills of composition progresses so that by the end of Year 6, they can plan and score their own work in a group composition. However, there are too few opportunities for them to keep a record of their compositions in written form.

120. The quality of teaching is good overall but varies. Teachers plan their lessons carefully. Some very good teaching was observed in Year 3 when the class teacher and staff from the Deaf Resource Base taught as a team in singing and signing. The pace was lively and teachers made learning fun and effective. In some lessons, support staff are not used effectively and the lesson pace slows pupils' progress. Pupils enjoy their music making and most have enthusiastic attitudes to lessons and behave very well. They develop confidence in performing as they move through the school, and are keen to participate. They have the opportunity to sing in the school choir and to perform in local music festivals and in the community. The *Signing Choir* performed at the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, and at the Big Top in Liverpool.

121. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The school has recently introduced a published scheme which gives the non-specialist good support in planning lessons. Resources are in good condition, well organised and readily available.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

122. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average overall and the pupils achieve well. In swimming the pupils' skills are above average because of good teaching, in which they learn basic rescue and survival skills as well as swimming at least 25 metres. The subject contributes very well to the social development of the pupils through the very wide range of extra-curricular activities provided and the quality of the curriculum, which are available to all pupils including deaf pupils and the few with physical disabilities. Improvement in provision since the time of the last inspection has been very good.

123. The quality of teaching is good and has some very good features. Out of six lessons observed three were very good, one was good, one satisfactory and one was excellent. Where lessons are very good, pupils show each other their sequences and comment positively on each other's work. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson, hearing and deaf pupils evaluated each other's performances in gymnastics using sign language, so all pupils developed the quality of their cartwheels. Lesson planning is very good with very good input from the subject manager, whose enthusiasm is boundless and who is a very good role model for pupils and staff. Although space in the hall is limited for large classes, teachers use the space imaginatively to provide adequate working space. The outdoor areas are large and are used well. Teachers manage the pupils very well; therefore, pupils use their time well to develop their skills with different apparatus or activities. Deaf pupils benefit from the very good curriculum because teachers and pupils sign to them so that they join in fully and answer questions posed to the whole class. The pupils are very enthusiastic and work hard at their activities. The attendance at extra-curricular clubs such as line dancing and yoga, which boys and girls from all age groups attend regularly, demonstrates their very high level of interest.

124. The quality and range of learning opportunities are excellent. Pupils play team games, including rugby and football, and learn fairness and the need for rules. While developing their individual skills in gymnastics, they learn to trust each other performing balances with a partner. There are good opportunities for talented pupils to excel through both activities in school and contacts with outside organisations and summer schools. Visitors such as members of Liverpool Football Club raise pupils' interest but also provide excellent personal and social development. In a powerful assembly, pupils learned significant messages about anti-racism, anti-bullying and anti-drugs, while the importance of being a good person not just a good footballer was reinforced.

125. The subject manager has developed the subject very effectively and knows the training needs of the staff. Teachers' assessment of pupils' skills is generally good. Many pupils enter award schemes for gymnastics and the regular recording of their achievements is good. The school awards its own certificates for swimming and the majority of the pupils achieve the targets set for them. Each term, teachers set targets for their classes, which identify skills that most pupils must achieve and those that higher attainers might achieve. However, teachers do not enter pupils' names against the targets that particular pupils may need to practise. Also not all teachers set the targets consistently. These are points for improvement. However, teachers identify their pupils' attainment against National Curriculum levels and use these to report pupils' achievements to parents.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and continue to meet those prescribed by the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This is because the subject is led and managed satisfactorily and the teaching is sound, which ensures that pupils learn at a steady rate. All pupils, including those who are deaf and have special educational needs, have full and equal opportunities to learn at the same rate as others.

127. Although most of the teaching is sound overall, some lessons are good. Good teaching in a lesson in Year 4 was underpinned by the teacher's good knowledge of the subject. The fast pace and challenge motivated pupils to learn well about the meaning of Easter. The value that the teacher placed on pupils' responses set the tone of very good relationships and attitudes to learning. On the other hand, two lessons finished before pupils had the chance to learn everything the teachers had planned. This was, firstly, because the pace was slow and the teachers did not handle discussions effectively, and secondly the time allotted for the lessons was short. Throughout the school, teachers mark pupils' work diligently, but very often the comments they make are praise for effort or about presentation. Few comments reflect the nature of religious education and help pupils to know what to do to improve their learning. One of the strengths of teaching is the broad curriculum teachers provide, which ensures that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the faiths they study. Pupils in Year 2 know about the parables that Jesus taught and talk about the changing emotions of the father of *The Prodigal Son*. In Year 6, pupils compare Muslim and Christian beliefs and how they might apply them to their own lives.

128. The methods that teachers use are generally effective and ensure that pupils enjoy lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 were moved and amazed by a video recording about the story of Moses. This led them to develop a good understanding of the qualities of a leader who *sticks up for people...and is brave*. Teachers use religious artefacts to make lessons interesting and show them in attractive displays. However, they give pupils few opportunities to learn from the first-hand experiences of visiting clergy or visits to places of worship.

129. The subject manager has made a good start to develop the subject and is taking a course of action based on clear priorities. For instance, she intends to develop better procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know, and recognises the use of ICT as an area in need of development. However, she has had little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom and this inhibits how well weaknesses are identified.