

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Speke

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104647

Headteacher: Mr P J Price

Reporting inspector: Mr A J Dobell
10373

Dates of inspection: 2nd - 5th June 2003

Inspection number: 246395

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Mannings
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

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10373	Mr A J Dobell	Registered inspector	Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9974	Mr D Singh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
7958	Mrs G Lewis	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Education inclusion English	
22657	Mr M Madeley	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Science Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18466	Mr K Hodge	Team inspector	Mathematics History Music	How well is the school led and managed?
16761	Mr M Hemmings	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This large voluntary-aided school serves a fairly stable community in the Speke area of Liverpool. Most pupils come from the immediate area and live in rented accommodation. The school has a 52 place Nursery which children attend part time. There is the full-time equivalent of 63 children in the Nursery and Reception classes. There are 13 classes from Years 1 to 6 and all are for single age groups. Initial testing shows that levels of attainment and learning skills are very low in relation to those normally found when children enter the Nursery. Many families experience high levels of social and economic deprivation. Most pupils are white and come from western-European cultural backgrounds. Two pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school has 366 pupils on roll with the numbers of boys and girls being broadly equal. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (62.2 per cent) is well above the national average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs (32.8 per cent) is well above average although the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs (0.55 per cent) is below average. The school has good evidence that a higher proportion of pupils merit statements of special educational needs. The nature of special educational needs includes specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and physical impairment.

The school was reorganised into a primary school in September 2002 when the infant and junior schools on a large site were combined. The school still occupies two buildings although plans are in place to educate all pupils in the former junior school building from 2004. The school benefits from a number of national initiatives including the Speke Garston Education Action Zone and Excellence in Cities which are having a positive effect on attainment and progress.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Parents acknowledge that its reorganisation was managed with minimum disruption to their children's education. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in their learning. This is because the quality of teaching is good overall and pupils receive very good levels of care so that they feel secure and valued. All adults in the school work very hard to provide pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities and to give them the ambition to lead fulfilled lives. Parents value the school's efforts to give their children a good foundation for their lives. However, in spite of the good progress that pupils make, many do not reach the expected levels of attainment by the time that they leave the school. Given the community that it serves, the good progress that pupils make, the very good levels of care provided for them and the reasonable costs per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching results in effective learning.
- Good attitudes to school are reflected in good behaviour and good relationships.
- Good quality learning activities, supported by very good activities outside class and very good community involvement, promote good progress in learning for all groups of pupils.
- In this very caring school, pupils become mature and confident.
- The school is well regarded by parents and the local community.
- The headteacher, ably supported by his deputy and all adults in the school, is providing effective leadership and management.

What could be improved

- The level of expectation for pupils' work in class is inconsistent.
- In this new school, there is scope for greater focus on raising standards of attainment.
- Pupils are given relatively few opportunities to develop skills as independent learners.
- The library is not used as an effective resource to introduce pupils to the pleasures of reading.
- Despite the school's considerable efforts, attendance and punctuality remain below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was reorganised in September 2002, it has not been inspected.

STANDARDS

No pupils from this recently reorganised school took the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2002. In 2003, at the end of Year 2, pupils are on course to attain results in the National Curriculum tests in reading and mathematics which will be below the national average and well below the national average in writing. Teachers' assessments are that attainment in science will be above the national average. Attainment in reading and mathematics is likely to at least match that achieved in schools that draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. In writing, attainment is likely to be lower than this. At the end of Year 6, the school is on course to attain results that will be well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. However, results are likely to match those attained in similar schools.

Evidence from the inspection is that children make very good progress in their learning in the Nursery and Reception classes. In Years 2 and 6, attainment is at the level normally found in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education. However, attainment in geography is below that normally found. Throughout the school, pupils find it difficult to speak accurately and at length about their learning and this adversely affects their writing. The school understands that standards in writing are too low and has put strategies in place to improve these standards. These strategies are beginning to have a positive effect in the infant classes.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Most try hard in lessons and are keen to make progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave well and teachers are very skilled in managing behaviour. Play is enthusiastic and friendly.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good. As a result, pupils' personal development is good.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average and a number of pupils are regularly unpunctual.

The school works hard to improve attendance and punctuality and is having some success. Three pupils have been excluded since the school was reorganised, two for fixed periods and one permanently. Pupils' attitudes to learning are improving as a result of national initiatives such as Excellence in Cities and the Speke Garston Education Action Zone.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery & Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

The quality of teaching is good overall and ranges from excellent to satisfactory. During the inspection, 79 lessons were observed. Of these, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in almost one third, was good in just over one half and was very good or excellent in one lesson in six. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and the school has plans in place to improve the impact of this teaching on the quality of writing. Teachers are very skilled in managing pupils' behaviour and, as a result, in most lessons, pupils make very good progress in their learning. There are times when teachers could have higher expectations for pupils' writing so that they make more rapid progress. Most learning is closely controlled by teachers so that pupils have relatively few opportunities to organise their own learning and so do not develop skills as independent learners. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress

in their learning overall and the school meets the learning needs of all its pupils well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school's curriculum meets legal requirements and provides a good range of learning opportunities. All pupils are effectively involved in learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress and are fully involved in the school's activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this supports their good personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are very well cared for with good attention to their welfare and health and safety. Support for their academic progress is satisfactory.

This is a very caring school in which pupils feel secure and valued. The school has good links with parents who appreciate the very good care provided for their children and the sensitive management of the recent reorganisation. Pupils benefit from a very good range of activities outside class.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, well supported by his deputy and other colleagues, is providing good leadership and management. All subjects have managers, but there is scope for their ability to manage their subjects to be improved.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their legal responsibilities well. They have given the headteacher effective support in managing the school during its reorganisation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is still developing strategies for evaluating its performance. They are currently satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its available resources well.

The headteacher has managed the school's reorganisation well. Inevitably, in a newly created school, management systems and strategies are not fully in place. The school has sensible priorities for development and for developing systems for evaluating its progress. It has satisfactory procedures for obtaining the best value from its expenditure. The school is well staffed to teach the National Curriculum. The headteacher and his colleagues have a clear view for the future development of the school. It is to raise attainment while providing all pupils with a secure learning environment in which they can develop confidence and good attitudes for the future. The school is in a good position to improve further.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good teaching results in children making good progress.• Behaviour is good and children become more mature and responsible.• Children are expected to work hard.• Links with parents are good and parents are happy to approach the school with concerns.• The school is led and managed well.• Children like school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents have concerns about work that children are expected to do at home.

The school issued 366 questionnaires and 92 were returned (25 per cent). These views, therefore, represent about one quarter of all parents and carers. The meeting held before the inspection was attended by 11 parents.

Inspectors support the positive views held by parents. The inspection team believes that the school uses homework satisfactorily to support learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. As the school was reorganised in September 2002, no results exist for the school's pupils for the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. In 2003, pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain results in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science which will be well below the national average. However, results are likely to be broadly in line with those attained in schools that draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. Pupils in Year 2 are on course to attain results that will be below the national average in reading and mathematics and well below the national average in writing. There is no national test in science at the end of Year 2. Teachers assess attainment in science for seven-year-olds as above the national average. Pupils in Year 2 are likely to attain results in reading and mathematics that at least match those attained in similar schools, but attainment in writing is likely to be lower than this.
2. Evidence from the inspection is that children enter the Nursery with levels of understanding and learning skills that are, on average, very low in relation to those normally found. They make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, most are on course to reach the levels expected in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, creative development and personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception Year. However, in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, they are not likely to attain these levels. While listening skills develop very well, pupils find it difficult to express their thoughts in complete sentences and at any length. Difficulties in speaking adversely affect the quality of writing. In mathematical development, many children reach the expected level in using numbers, but they do not develop the same level of competence in spatial awareness. For example, many find it difficult to put pieces of a jigsaw into place.
3. The very good progress that children make in the Nursery and Reception classes is carefully assessed and recorded. However, while pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, these assessments are not used systematically to promote further progress. An opportunity is missed to plan further progress in the light of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses. In English, higher attaining pupils are not always given tasks that challenge them effectively and this adversely affects their rate of progress. In writing, there is a large gap between higher attaining pupils and the rest. The school is aware of this and has begun to put strategies in place to improve the quality of writing. These are beginning to have a positive effect, but have not had time to have a significant effect on attainment in the National Curriculum tests in 2003. In mathematics, as in English, pupils make good progress in their learning. Again the work set does not always challenge higher attaining pupils effectively so that their progress is slowed. Work is not always presented well in pupils' books which can result in careless errors and opportunities are missed to practise the skills of using numbers in other subjects such as geography and science. By this stage in Year 2, in science, pupils have made good progress in sorting natural and manufactured materials and in understanding healthy life styles, but there is little evidence of the same rate of progress in the physical aspects of the subject such as electricity and forces. In English, mathematics and science, while good progress is made overall, weaknesses in some aspects of these subjects means that pupils do not reach the standards expected nationally. Now that the school has had a year to settle in, plans are in place to address weaknesses which have been identified.
4. Pupils continue to make good progress in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 but, again, weaknesses in some areas mean that nationally expected standards are not reached. In English, some discussions tend to be teacher-led so that pupils do not develop speaking skills adequately and responses tend to be brief. Higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given insufficient opportunities to develop reading skills by researching independently. In writing, there is a wide difference in attainment with lower attaining pupils sometimes spelling words incorrectly even when they are written out for them. There is a lack of consistent challenge for pupils to produce their best work. In mathematics, work with numbers is the strongest aspect of pupils' work in Year 6. Overall, standards are below those normally found. In science, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have insufficient opportunities to set up investigations for themselves. However, they make good progress in acquiring

knowledge and an accurate scientific vocabulary.

5. In information and communication technology, the attainment of most pupils matches national expectations by Years 2 and 6. They have appropriate skills for their age in using computers and make good progress in their learning. However, computers are not used routinely in classes throughout the school to support learning in other subjects. In art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education, attainment is at the expected level in Years 2 and 6. In geography, attainment is below the expected level. Pupils' recording of their work in geography is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in writing. A limited amount of work is recorded compared with history, for example and, on occasions, work such as maps and diagrams is unfinished.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They are well supported in class by teachers and learning support assistants who usually either provide tasks which are more suitable for these pupils or give advice and help to enable them to complete the class task. Teachers could make greater reference to pupils' individual targets and how they are going to be achieved in their lesson plans. Learning support assistants who work with pupils with a statement of special educational need do a very good job. They keep these pupils focused on the class lesson, which is not always easy, support them in completing work and provide lots of encouragement and praise to keep them motivated. The school is careful to include all its pupils in its activities and there is no difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils.
7. The few pupils in the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language are making good progress in their learning. They receive sound support from teachers, learning support assistants and their peers, but very little specialist support. They have sound 'social language' but, like many other pupils in the school, they find specialist subject vocabulary difficult. The school rightly emphasises the teaching of this skill but it would be wrong to think that this is the only area in which these pupils struggle. For instance, the local accent is sometimes difficult for these pupils to comprehend, as are common idioms and similes that the teachers sometimes use.
8. Effective teaching concentrates on making learning activities interesting so that pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge. However, the school understands that there is scope for greater emphasis on expectations that all pupils will do their best work at all times. This could have a positive effect on attainment. The school plans to make its expectations for attainment and progress more specific and to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils in greater detail so that the results of assessments can be used systematically to plan learning and progress. The school has the capacity to achieve this.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to learning and school are good and are complemented by their good behaviour and by good relationships with each other and with their teachers. This enables most pupils to serve the school and wider community in a mature and purposeful manner and to learn in a calm, friendly and welcoming environment. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils with different kinds of special educational needs have good attitudes to learning because of the good quality of the support offered to them. As a result, they make good progress in their learning. These good characteristics are underpinned by the school's positive provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils.
10. Most pupils are confident, disciplined and motivated learners. They concentrate well and most persevere when tasks are difficult. When given work in groups most pupils co-operate well and work effectively often exchanging information and ideas. For example, this was evident in a Year 5 art and design lesson, but, in a Year 1 physical education lesson, some pupils lost concentration during the lesson and wasted time by talking and so that teaching and learning for others were disrupted. Good classroom management and interesting tasks generally mean that pupils learn enthusiastically and stay focused on learning. Some teachers provided the opportunity for pupils to work independently, for example in a Year 5 art and design lesson, but many opportunities for pupils to use their initiative are lost.

11. Many pupils respond effectively to challenging questions, which promote informed discussion, both inside and outside the classroom. This is a positive feature of many lessons and other activities outside class. For example, in an assembly for Years 3 to 6, good questioning from the deputy headteacher helped pupils to explore the school's values and to distinguish right from wrong. The theme of mutual respect was received with a strong sense of understanding and, throughout the week, pupils celebrated their strong sense of understanding of Catholic values and teachings. This further supported their sense of belonging to the school and to their community.
12. Throughout the inspection, many pupils asked searching questions about life and the teachings of other faiths. A Sikh inspector was asked about his faith and the reasons for wearing the turban. Pupils were interested in the inspector's country of origin. This positive interaction illustrates pupils' interest in others and their spirit of enquiry.
13. Most pupils have good attitudes to extra-curricular activities, particularly sports. Their active participation supports their attainment. During the inspection, a significant number of pupils were observed enjoying for example, netball, football and athletics. This supported their social interaction and cultural and social development.
14. In formal and informal discussions, most pupils shared their positive perception about the school and indicated that staff are caring, sensitive and supportive. Pupils reported that most teachers offered good teaching and interesting lessons and that the school values their aspirations. Most find that there are staff who understand them well and cater for their differing needs. These positive views contribute to effective relationships between teachers and pupils and promote a culture conducive to learning.
15. Good levels of behaviour are evident in most lessons, in the playground and around the school. Inspection evidence indicates that most pupils listen to teachers well and observe the school's rules. These pupils move around the school in an orderly, organised manner, especially when supervised by teachers. The more disciplined pupils are capable of moving around independently. Discussions with pupils indicate that they are polite, courteous and friendly to teachers and, particularly, to visitors. Older pupils care for younger pupils and encourage them to play in a friendly and purposeful manner. Most pupils throughout the school share equipment, toys and conversation and this supports their personal and social development. During the inspection, there was no evidence of bullying, or other types of anti-social behaviour. Pupils respect each other's personal property and the school environment. These good attitudes are further enhanced by the fair and balanced approach of teachers, who actively encourage and often achieve the highest standards of behaviour. As a result, pupils learn in a warm and friendly environment, which is appreciated by parents and those associated with the school. There have been three exclusions since the school was reorganised. There were occasional incidents of silly and sometimes boisterous behaviour during the inspection. This was almost exclusively in the school dining hall and sometimes in the playground and, occasionally, in lessons. However, in most lessons, behaviour is managed very skilfully.
16. Relationships between pupils and teachers and most support staff are effective and based on a trusting, warm, caring and sensitive interaction. Throughout the school there are purposeful and constructive friendships between pupils of all ages, genders and races. The very small numbers of disabled pupils are well integrated into the school and respected as equals by most able-bodied pupils. Teachers consistently encourage learning in mixed gender groups and some pupils are beginning to try to modify their inappropriate attitudes and behaviour, which some bring from home and the community. This environment successfully creates an ethos of co-existence and enables most pupils to make good progress in their personal development.
17. Levels of attendance continue to improve and are above the local education authority's average for the last full school year. However, the attendance and time keeping of some pupils remain unsatisfactory. This disrupts their children's learning and adversely affects their progress. The school continues to develop and promote action to raise and improve attendance and punctuality and is achieving an impressive degree of success for most pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to excellent. During the inspection, 79 lessons were observed. Of these, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in almost one in three lessons, good in just over one half and very good or excellent in one lesson in six. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection.
19. In the Nursery and Reception classes, the quality of teaching is always at least good and is very good or excellent in almost two fifths of lessons. Children enter the Nursery with levels of knowledge and understanding that are very low in relation to those normally found. As a result of effective teaching in the Foundation Stage, children make rapid progress. Interesting and often exciting learning activities stimulate children's interest so that they are fully engaged and anxious to learn. Their learning is very carefully planned and their progress is thoroughly assessed so that new learning can enable them to make further progress. Teachers and support staff work effectively together to ensure that all children are involved at an appropriate level. Great care is taken to give pupils high quality opportunities to talk and explain themselves. Skilful teaching ensures that children in the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning.
20. The quality of teaching is good overall in the infant classes in Year 1 and 2. Almost one lesson in ten has teaching which is very good and, of the rest, half is good and half is satisfactory. Very good teaching is characterised by very clear explanations of the purpose of the lesson so that pupils have a secure understanding of what they are to do. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and understanding, which enables them to ensure that learning is effective. Skilful pupil management is rooted in good relationships and the effective use of praise so that little learning time is wasted. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory, this is usually because behaviour is restless with the result that careful planning does not have its full impact on learning because the flow of the lesson is disrupted. Further, in these lessons, learning tasks are not always appropriate for different attainment groups. For example, in an English lesson in Year 1, higher attaining pupils completed the task very quickly and there were no suitable further activities to extend their learning.
21. In Years 3 to 6, in about one third of lessons, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, in just over one half of lessons, it is good and, in about one lesson in six, it is very good. Again, very good teaching engages pupils' interests and imagination so that they make good efforts and work with sustained concentration. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 are particularly skilled at managing pupils' behaviour. Positive behaviour strategies such as identifying and praising success are used very well and consistently. As a result, potentially disruptive situations are not allowed to develop so that learning is not adversely affected.
22. A number of positive features support the quality of teaching and learning. The school makes very good use of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, during the inspection, a visiting poet worked with a number of classes. There is some challenging questioning in very good lessons which tests and extends pupils' understanding. The community contributes very effectively to the quality of teaching and learning in a range of ways. For example, a business link with a local motor manufacturer has given older pupils the opportunity to visit the factory and to participate in a training film which went on to win a regional award.
23. Good use is being made of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to improve attainment in English and mathematics. Good strategies are being developed in the infant classes to improve the quality of pupils' writing. There are examples of very good teaching promoting very effective learning. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson in Year 1, very successful planning and teaching resulted in pupils of all levels of attainment making very good progress in their learning of a completely new and complex topic. Similarly, in a charismatically taught English lesson in Year 5, as part of a sequence of lessons, pupils were highly motivated and interested and so made very good progress in their learning about persuasive writing.
24. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but the quality of marking is inconsistent. At its best, for example, in some English work, marking is analytical and shows how pupils can make further improvements to their work. However, it is not always clear that these suggestions have been put into effect. The very thorough assessments from the Nursery and Reception classes are not used systematically to underpin progress in learning in Years 1 and 2. Classroom support assistants are effective overall in

supporting learning. However, there are occasions when they do little in whole-class sessions and there is scope for them to support learning more effectively at these times. Teachers do not consistently insist that pupils do their best work. For example, pupils misspell words which are already written out for them without being told that this is unacceptable. Pupils' learning is mostly managed by teachers so that they have few opportunities to organise their own work, research individually and so develop skills as independent learners.

25. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs in specialist situations is good. The 'Outreach' workers from the local education authority help to prepare a quality programme for pupils with statements of special educational needs, and the learning support assistant is, indirectly, being trained in their use. She is doing a good job of passing on these useful ideas and techniques to colleagues but training might be more formalised. The best work with pupils with special educational needs sees learning support assistants answering a question with a question rather than providing the answer. In practical situations, support assistants let pupils use the equipment rather than directing the experiment themselves. The needs of pupils with different types of special educational needs are recognised and teachers and support assistants plan work which meets their specific needs. As a result, they make very good progress in their learning in the Foundation Stage and good progress in Years 1 to 6.
26. Teachers provide sound support for pupils who speak English as an additional language. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, the teacher carefully explained the specialist vocabulary to all the class, which helped the pupil with English as an additional language to understand what was being learned. However, this is not consistent practice and greater emphasis should be placed on analysing and meeting the needs of these few pupils systematically.
27. Throughout the school, teachers work very hard to support their pupils, many of whom find learning difficult and challenging. As a result of this dedication, pupils make good progress in their learning overall. The headteacher is aware that, with more carefully targeted teaching and assessment and more consistent expectations for the standards of pupils' work, there is scope for pupils' progress to be managed more systematically. For this to happen, senior managers with responsibility for raising standards need to have the time to do this. The school has the capacity to achieve this.

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

28. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good. The curriculum is broad, reasonably balanced and relevant to the pupils. As a whole, the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 meets legal requirements and the Foundation Stage curriculum is in line with government guidance for children of this age. Overall, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
29. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage provides good breadth and balance and curriculum planning for this stage is very detailed. The curriculum provides learning activities with very good levels of interest and stimulation and, as a result, high achievement is very often promoted. Appropriate schemes of work are in place and effective use is made of resources to support the curriculum.
30. Even though the school is very new, the curriculum for Years 1 to 6 has good breadth and reasonable balance and planning is very carefully thought out. Policy statements for English, mathematics and science, some of which are currently in draft form, are clear. The curriculum provides satisfactory levels of interest and stimulation and the pursuit of high achievement is high on the school's list of priorities. The time allocated to the teaching of subjects is broadly appropriate, though the total amount of teaching time is slightly low. The curriculum is relevant to the needs of the pupils in that it focuses primarily on raising skills in English and mathematics whilst still giving plenty of time to more practical subjects such as art and design, physical education and music. Appropriate schemes of work are in place following good work by subject leaders to get both the infant and junior sections following the same programmes and good use is made of learning resources.
31. Adult and specialist support for pupils identified as having special educational needs is good. There are strong links with specialist services and these professionals speak highly of the school's

commitment to helping all pupils. These pupils' needs, identified in their individual education plans, are fully met within the constraints of resources available to the school. The school has plans to fully comply with the Code of Practice of the Special Needs Disability Act 2001. However, teachers do not feature targets identified in individual education plans sufficiently in their lesson plans. The school is fully committed to inclusion and so pupils with special educational needs are rarely withdrawn from lessons. Occasional withdrawal has only a very little effect on access to these provisions.

32. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented effectively and it is having a positive effect on standards in English. Literacy skills are generally taught well, but pupils' reading skills are somewhat better than their writing skills at present. The new writing initiatives introduced in the school are appropriate, but will take some time to work through the school from Years 1 and 2. There is some evidence of extended writing in other subjects such as science, geography and history but these opportunities are insufficiently developed.
33. The school works hard to implement the National Numeracy Strategy successfully and this has had a positive impact on standards in mathematics. Numeracy skills are taught well and standards are quite high compared to other aspects of mathematics. There is evidence of a moderate improvement in standards in some other subjects as a result of better numeracy skills, for example, measuring in design and technology and collecting data in science.
34. The present provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory overall, but lacks cohesion and a 'whole-school' approach. Current practice is to deliver personal, social, and health education largely through aspects of science and religious education. Whole-class discussions are also used to enable pupils to reflect on a range of issues. Assemblies and a range of visits also contribute to this area of pupils' development. However, there are no formal programmes of study across the year groups to ensure progression in learning.
35. The school is aware of this and plans are in place to address the situation. Governors have produced a number of draft documents in this area including sex education, drugs education and citizenship. The subject leader plans to audit the present provision with a view to developing a 'culture map' to support learning. The school plans to devote specific time to learning for this subject area. The quality of the provision is then to be monitored and evaluated. The headteacher understands that some further professional development is necessary for some aspects of personal, social and health education to be taught effectively. The school has the capacity to improve teaching and learning in this area.
36. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and many pupils participate in before and after-school clubs as well as lunchtime activities. The breakfast clubs and national test revision sessions have been very successful. A very good range of sports is offered, including soccer, netball, cricket, athletics and cross-country. St Christopher's is one of the few primary schools to take a group of pupils skiing to France each year, and pupils benefit from a weekly French club. The school, when it was a junior school, achieved many sporting successes, not least excellent cross-country results. Opportunities to appreciate music from a good range of cultures are provided by the school and the school choir has performed regularly for the school and the wider community. Participation in drama events is a regular feature of school life with plays and musicals being performed by the pupils mostly to celebrate Christian festivals. The school works very hard to provide a range of stimulating school visits, including three residential visits. It makes good use of visitors like musicians, poets and storytellers to enrich the curriculum.
37. The school is effective in ensuring that its curriculum is socially inclusive. Curriculum planning takes appropriate account of pupils' ages and their development by, for example, changing teaching styles as pupils grow older. By setting pupils by ability, the curriculum helps higher and lower attaining pupils to develop and learn in some subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the curriculum and achieve well because they receive additional support or, in the main, because tasks are set at an appropriate level for them. The needs of the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language are generally well provided for because teachers explain vocabulary well to all pupils.
38. Overall, the impact of the community on pupils' learning is very good. A wide range of activities has a

considerable impact on pupils' intellectual development and broadens their horizons. Pupils' social skills are improved by the school's very strong involvement in the locality. They have received many compliments from various organisations and individuals saying how well the pupils behaved. By travelling to France and Wales as well as more local places visits have had a big impact on pupils' knowledge of the world. Pupils' personal development and sense of citizenship are improving as a result of its very strong links with the community, especially the emergency services and universities. The school makes very effective use of resources within the locality, such as Liverpool museums and the Palm House in a local park. The community is used very regularly to broaden pupils' understanding of the world and the Children's University is an excellent example of this. Pupils are beginning to realise that a wide range of careers is open to them through this initiative and through the school's long-standing relationship with 'CRAC', a careers advisory organisation. The school is effective in encouraging visits from representatives of ethnic minorities, an Indian dancer being warmly welcomed by Year 2. Very effective use is made of links with commerce and industry. A local car manufacturer recently made a very successful training film, which featured the school's pupils. Local events are regularly held in the school and the choir entertains the community at Christmas and at other times.

39. Overall, relationships with local schools and colleges are good. There is a satisfactory level of contact with local providers of education for very young children and the associated health professional. The curriculum has been improved through contact with other local schools, such as the provision for special educational needs pupils and by meetings concerning literacy. Very positive relationships exist with other local schools in sporting activities with fixtures played regularly and coaching expertise shared. The school maintains good relations with local secondary schools, particularly the Catholic secondary school. It also regularly welcomes students from local colleges on teaching practice and is a valued contributor to initial teacher training. It is also a valued provider of work experience for local secondary pupils. In recognition of its wide range of activities, the school holds the Artsmark silver award, which is rare in primary schools. It is also one of only eight schools in the Northwest to hold the Activemark gold award.
40. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual development. The school's mission statement and the good quality of the relationships throughout the school provide pupils with a set of values which have a positive effect on how they behave and the progress that they make. Respect for others and the raising self-esteem is encouraged with opportunities provided for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. Displays in and around the school are a testament to the commitment to Christian values. There is a Pentecostal display in the junior school entrance celebrating pupils' talents and in the infant school, the displays associated with pupils' first communion signal clearly the importance placed on belief both of self and a higher being. Children from the Nursery through to Year 6 pupils say prayers each day which give thanks and seek blessing for the day's activities. The variety of artwork and the way in which children and pupils are taught about their world provide opportunities to develop a sense of wonder for the world around them. Assemblies make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development, together with the daily religious education lessons. The contribution of these lessons to pupils' spiritual development will be considered in more detail in a report from the Archdiocese.
41. There is good provision for pupils' moral development. From an early age, pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Throughout the school, the focus of the week during the inspection was respect for others and, especially, sharing. Pupils share equipment and help each other when in difficulty. There is positive reinforcement of discipline within the school which is consistently applied. Pupils are rewarded for positive behaviour and effort, good attendance and positive contributions to the school community. Classrooms are tidy and well ordered and pupils clear away after each session. Corridors are free of litter as are the school grounds. The bins provided are used well and pupils have been involved in creating gardens in the vicinity of both the infant and junior buildings. All adults are treated with respect and spoken to with courtesy. A calm and peaceful atmosphere pervades and staff set good examples of care and behaviour.
42. There is good provision for pupils' social development. Good relationships are established and pupils interact with each other and the adults in the school positively. A range of activities takes pupils into the wider world and letters are on display from fellow passengers and guests on a skiing trip to the French Alps and from other locations visited, which complement pupils. Pupils write thank you

letters to visitors and to hosts of places visited. There is a wide range of school clubs, at lunchtime, break time and after school involving an impressive number of pupils. The school has won many prizes and awards for its sporting successes. The pride that pupils take in their achievements is clearly seen in the many notices celebrating sporting excellence. The school receives good support from learning mentors in developing social awareness as a result of its involvement in the Excellence in Cities initiative.

43. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Opportunities for pupils to look at their own culture are well supported through a variety of activities within the local community. They have close connections with the parish church, local secondary schools, the library and sports centre. Pupils in the junior school have studied some of Liverpool's history through a topic on 'slavery' and children in the Foundation Stage are looking at their community and learning about the people who live and work in it. There are many opportunities provided by visiting poets and authors, musicians and dancers, for pupils to explore different aspects of literature and the arts. The infant garden has wooden sculptures created with the help of pupils and a stained glass window has been created from their artwork. The multicultural aspects of cultural development are less well developed. There are displays which show aspects of life in India and artwork from a range of other cultures. Months of the year are written in a variety of languages and celebrations such as the Chinese New Year are acknowledged in art and design work. The implementation of a 'culture map' is designed to meet some of the multicultural needs not as adequately covered, together with a 'twinning' with an inner-city Liverpool school with a very varied ethnic mix.
44. This newly reorganised school has worked hard to provide its pupils with an effective curriculum. It has achieved a good degree of initial success. It is now in a good position to adapt the curriculum and the way in which it is organised to raise standards of attainment, particularly in English. Some useful work has already been developed in this area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The provisions for pupils' care and support are very good and complement the very effective and appropriate arrangements for child protection. The school provides a safe and secure environment for learning. There are very good systems for promoting pupils' welfare and security.
46. There are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. The headteacher, governors and staff work in an effective and purposeful way to provide very good levels of individual support and guidance. Teachers use registration time, assemblies, extra-curricular activities, lessons in personal, social and health education and organised play activities to create a warm and friendly environment for learning. Teachers are always ready to provide information, support and guidance, helping pupils to approach learning constructively and raising their confidence and self-esteem.
47. Teachers listen and respond very constructively to pupils' individual concerns. For example, 'Rainbows' is a group of pupils and teachers who meet weekly to speak about bereavement and loss. The group is very effectively supported by specialist teachers and enables pupils to come to terms with loss.
48. Lunchtime supervision is usually effective and supports pupils' play activities well, but, very occasionally, some staff lack the appropriate management skills. During the inspection most lunchtime supervisors investigated any concerns that pupils had successfully, ensuring an objective and acceptable solution to pupils' problems in the playground. However, occasionally, some lunchtime supervisors did not deal with pupils' inappropriate behaviour effectively, especially in the school dining area and this affected both behaviour and discipline.
49. The school staff are very caring and professional and implement a clear policy on health and safety very efficiently and effectively. They ensure that pupils feel safe and secure so that they value themselves and their environment. Non-teaching staff have received training in first aid so that the school has very good provision. There are regular checks on fire and safety equipment and pupils are aware of the evacuation arrangements. Outside specialists, for example, health workers and the education welfare officer, support pupils' welfare and well being. The school recently won an award for

its health programme and continues to provide good levels of personal and social education, promoting safety, security and discouraging the use of drugs and other illegal substances. Parents appreciate this provision.

50. To build on its existing good practice, the school could further improve its physical environment by providing separate play facilities for children in the Foundation Stage. Play between older and younger pupils is a potential safety issue.
51. The special educational needs managers use assessment well to identify and track pupils with special educational needs. Good use is also made of specialists, such as the psychological service and the local education authority's 'Outreach' workers, to the extent to which they are available, to analyse pupils' difficulties further and provide suitable programmes for them.
52. There is an effective system for monitoring, investigating and raising levels of attendance and time keeping, which enables the school community to adopt a positive attitude to learning and good practice supports pupils' personal and social development. Attendance continues to improve, due mainly to the hard work of staff, particularly the learning mentors and the effective use of rewards for pupils, although attendance remains below the national average. This is principally due to a small, but significant number of parents who fail to meet the school's high expectations of regular attendance and time keeping for their children. However, the school could develop a more rigorous system to record and monitor late arrivals on the infant site to support the very hard working clerical officer.
53. The good policy and procedures for monitoring and achieving good behaviour are applied consistently and enable most pupils to exercise good attitudes to learning. Pupils are expected to behave in a manner that contributes to a warm, friendly and welcoming environment in the school and supports learning.
54. The school and headteacher are committed to establish and maintain effective race relations and there are good systems in place to monitor and combat all types of anti-social behaviour, including bullying and racism. Any instances of such behaviour are investigated, recorded and reported and the information is used to monitor and discourage further unpleasant behaviour. However, some aspects of recording racist incidents are underdeveloped and this affects the system for monitoring and reporting to the local education authority. The headteacher is aware of this and has plans to implement the recent recommendations set out by the Commission for Racial Equality fully.
55. The procedures for checking and recording individual pupils' attainment, together with monitoring the progress that they make, are satisfactory. They are better in English and mathematics as the school is beginning to track the progress that pupils make. In other subjects they show mainly coverage of the National Curriculum, rather than the progress made by individual pupils as they pass through the year groups. There are also inconsistencies between the procedures used in the infant and junior classes. To improve arrangements, a strand manager has been appointed to bring into line and develop a whole-school approach to assessment, tracking and target setting. As a result, the school is now developing its assessment and evaluation procedures with a view to creating clearer targets and improved strategies for both teaching and learning. There is also an intention to involve pupils more in the assessment process, in order to develop their understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve. Systems for the assessment of pupils when they start school are in place and the information from these is used well to plan their subsequent learning experiences in the Nursery and Reception classes. Systems for assessing the progress of pupils with special educational needs are good and meetings are held as required to set new targets and review statements of special educational needs.
56. The school provides its pupils with a secure and supportive learning environment which enables them to develop as individuals and promotes attainment and progress. The headteacher recognises that systems for assessing pupils' academic progress need to be improved so that they match the good systems that promote their personal progress. The school is in a good position to achieve this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. Most parents are pleased with the education that the school offers. Inspection evidence indicates that

parents value the positive ethos of the school, the good teaching provided, standards of behaviour and the efforts of teachers, who ensure that their children are very well cared for. As a result, pupils become responsible and mature members of the school community and this also pleases parents. Parents rightly value the good and efficient leadership of the headteacher, which ensures that their concerns are addressed and that their children's achievements are celebrated. Inspectors support the constructive comments of parents. However, some parents have concerns about the consistency of homework. Inspectors found that the overall provision is variable, but generally satisfactory.

58. The quality of information provided to parents is satisfactory. Parents are actively encouraged to attend parents' evenings and annual reviews. This offers them the chance to visit the classroom, to celebrate their child's achievements and to understand the topics being taught. Most parents of younger pupils bring their children to school and take this opportunity to meet and talk to class teachers in the playground and resolve any concerns. Parents receive clear and purposeful written information in a user-friendly style through the school prospectus, which meets with statutory requirements. Parents also receive regular newsletters, which keep them informed of events in the school and local community and ensure that the whole-school community celebrates pupils' achievements.
59. Parents are consistently encouraged by the school to support learning in the classroom and at home. A few parents come to school and support activities in lessons, which helps to raise standards and contributes constructively to pupils' personal development. During the inspection, a number of proud parents visited the school to support the Nutrition Club and this occasion very effectively supported pupils' learning and personal and social development.
60. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are made aware of their children's difficulties and how the school intends to support them. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, this frequently involves personal contact with a teacher or learning support assistant because parents bring their child to school and this leads to them attending review meetings. As a result, they have a positive effect on attainment and progress. This level of contact diminishes as pupils get older and come to school independently. As a result, parents sometimes do not attend and contribute to review meetings which reduces their impact. It is good practice and a legal requirement, that parents are kept fully informed about and involved with the support their child receives. The school is aware of the need to continue to seek ways in which parents can fulfil their responsibilities, possibly through the learning mentors.
61. The Friends of the School, a group of very dedicated parents, teachers and friends support numerous social and recreational activities. These enhance learning and help to raise significant funds to support learning and purchase educational resources. This support continues to have a productive impact on pupils' learning and personal development. The work of parents also ensures productive and purposeful links between the school and home. However, some parents fail to support the school's attendance policy and this adversely affects pupils' achievements. The school and especially the headteacher and learning mentors, are determined to win the support of all parents and so to improve attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development. It is to raise standards of attainment while offering pupils a secure and stimulating learning experience in the school, within its Roman Catholic tradition. Parents appreciate the school's commitment to giving their children a 'good foundation for life'. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the governors have ensured that the initial amalgamation of the two former schools has been achieved effectively. The staff share the headteacher's positive commitment to building on the strengths of the two former schools. Their roles and responsibilities are outlined appropriately, although some are not yet fully effective. The 'transitional' governing body supports the school positively and provides a good level of support to the headteacher and staff.
63. The school's aims and values are achieved well. There are particularly good links with the community and a strong feature within the school is the emphasis upon the respect and support that staff and pupils have for each other. The school is rightly focusing significant effort in developing its building

programme, so that all pupils can be accommodated on one site from 2004.

64. The day-to-day management of the school is good. The deputy headteacher has clearly defined areas of responsibility and supports the headteacher successfully. Since the amalgamation, many staff responsibilities have been reviewed, mainly to good effect. The senior management team includes newly created posts called 'strand managers'. Some of these roles are not yet sufficiently developed or effective. For example, the majority of these managers are based in the former infant school site with comparatively little time to monitor or influence the practice of staff in the former junior building and this is a weakness.
65. Similarly, the current subject leaders for English and science teach in the infant building and have little opportunity to monitor and develop teaching and learning in the junior classes. The focus on care and welfare is particularly strong, although there is insufficient consistency in improving pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, the expectations of staff vary between classes, leading to some pupils making better progress in learning than others. The management of subjects is satisfactory overall and many schemes of work and policies are being reviewed to reflect the changed nature of the new school. The subject leaders are beginning to monitor pupils' work in their subjects, but this is not yet well developed. There are exceptions to this. Writing for example has clearly been identified as an area for improvement and the school is concentrating on how to do this with some good results already identifiable in the infant classes. However, the school recognises that there could be a sharper focus on raising attainment.
66. The senior management team has reviewed the strengths of the two former schools and is sufficiently aware of what general improvements are needed. The pupils' performance in recent National Curriculum tests in the former schools has been analysed and the school also uses a range of additional tests in order to assess the progress of pupils. It has prioritised raising standards in English, mathematics and science and this is appropriate. The school improvement plan is a useful tool for setting out the proposed actions for development. It identifies a number of priorities appropriately, covering pupils' attainment and progress, welfare and staffing. The plan is well laid out and each main focus has an overview of the proposed actions and time-scales. The staff are currently reviewing the priorities so that more detailed plans can be written and assessed for cost.
67. The special educational needs provision is managed well by the two co-ordinators. Records are up to date, assessments are carried out thoroughly and support for learning is well managed. Monitoring is usually through testing procedures and by one co-ordinator working in different classes on a regular basis. Finances for special educational needs are controlled by the headteacher although small amounts are made available for buying resources. The school supplements its special educational needs grant quite heavily in order to provide the staffing levels required to support these pupils. Learning support assistants are quite well trained for their important roles but would benefit from regular updating on new programmes, such as those provided by the local education authority's 'Outreach' specialist. They would also benefit from training on different teaching styles so that they all understand how much support to give to pupils and when to give it.
68. The 'transitional' governing body has been effective in supporting and managing the amalgamation of the two former schools. The legal requirements for consultation, for example, have been carried out well. Governors have given the headteacher good support in developing the imaginative plans for the building work due to be completed later next year. They possess a range of expertise that provides valuable insight and help and provide a good basis for the governing body when it becomes formally constituted from September. The governors visit the school informally, but more systematic ways of monitoring what goes on have not yet been developed. Overall the governors, supported by the headteacher, have a clear vision for the development of the new school.
69. The school is well staffed to teach the National Curriculum. A programme of performance management for teachers is in place and is effectively organised. Teachers' targets have been agreed and link appropriately with the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. All non-teaching staff exercise very high levels of care for pupils and all are used mostly to good effect within the classroom to help to promote their learning. However, there are occasions during whole-class sessions, when they merely sit and observe and, on these occasions, they are not managed effectively. The headteacher has taken specific steps to promote teamwork between the staff, given that many had not taught together before. This is proving to be effective and the levels of commitment

to the school are impressively high. For example, a number of staff, including teaching assistants, help out with clubs before and after school and at lunchtimes.

70. The quality of the learning environment is generally good and is a direct result of the efforts that staff make to make the school look attractive. There are a number of impressive displays and the entrance halls of both buildings are interesting. The classrooms are used well to display pupils' work. Some areas of the school are not as attractive or well organised however, such as the library in the junior building. The books are not displayed to their best effect which reduces the library's impact on learning. The library does not provide an attractive environment to promote reading or research. The provision of resources generally is satisfactory in terms of their quality and quantity.
71. The accommodation has good features such as the playing fields and playgrounds, but there are weaknesses in the current level of accommodation. For example, the provision of a dedicated outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage pupils is planned for the new building, but is not yet available.
72. The school benefits from the support of a number of national initiatives. These include Excellence in Cities, the Speke Garston Education Action Zone and the Children's University. These initiatives are providing extra resources which are having a positive effect on pupils' confidence and so raising their performance. For example, the Children's University has provided valuable extra resources for physical education. In particular, two learning mentors are working with parents and children with poor attendance records. Their work is having a positive effect with some families on attendance and punctuality and so raising the expectations and attainment of the pupils concerned. They are aware that more work needs to be done in this area.
73. The financial management of the school is efficient and is linked effectively to the school improvement plan. As a new school, the finances have not yet been audited. The budget for this financial year has not yet been finalised following a review of the priorities by the staff. Money has been allocated appropriately from the capital school's budget to help to fund the new building work. The surpluses accumulated by the former infant and junior schools remain with the local education authority and have not been made available for the new school to use. The school administrative officer is effective in enabling the day-to-day procedures of the school to operate smoothly and allowing the headteacher and staff to focus upon teaching and learning. Computers are used well to track and monitor the budget and for other administrative purposes. The governors have an appropriate overview of the school's finances and the school is developing 'best value' principles satisfactorily. For example, the governors and headteacher have consulted widely on the key features that staff and parents would like in the new building plans. The school is developing its ability to 'challenge' itself about the priorities to follow in developing this new school. Additional funds and grants are applied appropriately to their designated purposes and often supplemented from the school's budget. For example, additional funding was allocated to support the provision of learning mentors who are providing a valuable service.
74. The headteacher, ably supported by his deputy, governors and other colleagues, has successfully amalgamated the previous infant and junior schools. Parents are grateful that the good qualities that they valued in the former schools have been retained. The school provides pupils with a secure learning environment in which they feel valued. A range of initiatives are in place to improve attainment and some of these are already having a positive effect. The headteacher is aware that more needs to be done. The school is now in a good position to continue to improve.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to improve the quality of education further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- i. Create a whole-school culture of high expectations for pupils' work and effort so that pupils of all abilities are given work that challenges them to do their best so that attainment improves.

(Paragraphs 8, 23, 26, 64, 103, 106, 108, 110, 117, 121, 127, 138, 139, 144 and 149)

- ii. Develop staff roles so that identified senior managers have responsibility for raising standards of attainment and are given time to fulfil their responsibilities.

(Paragraphs 26, 64, 113, 128, 135 and 149)

- iii. Develop a strategy to gradually increase opportunities for pupils to manage their own work so that they develop skills as independent learners.

(Paragraphs 4, 10, 23, 105, 110, 111, 125, 127 and 140)

- iv. Improve the school's library provision so that it plays a more central role in pupils' learning as they improve their skills in working independently.

(Paragraphs 69 and 106)

In addition to these key issues, the governors should consider the following point for development when writing their action plan:

- Continue to improve attendance and punctuality throughout the school.

(Paragraphs 17, 60 and 71)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

79

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	12	43	23	0	0	0
Percentage	1	15	55	29	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)	26	340
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	213

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	120

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	N/A
National comparative data	N/A

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	N/A
National comparative data	N/A

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
290	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
9	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
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

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	387

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
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
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	366
Number of questionnaires returned	92

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	27	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	28	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	27	5	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	58	26	13	2	1
The teaching is good.	80	20	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	23	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	13	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	87	13	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	32	3	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	81	14	2	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	77	22	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	24	7	1	3

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

76. Children are admitted to the Nursery on a part-time basis until they enter the Reception classes when they attend full time. When they start school, their attainment is mostly very low in relation to that expected for their age. The majority of children begin with very poor communication, language and literacy skills. Their personal and social skills are also well below those normally found. Overall, children, including those who have special educational needs, make very good progress in all areas of learning. By the time that they leave the Reception class, they are on course to attain the standards expected nationally in creative, physical, personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make very good progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development starting from a very low base, but are still below the level expected by the end of the Reception Year. Overall, their progress is very good.
77. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Teachers plan thoroughly and provide interesting activities which give the children good quality experiences in all areas of learning. These are closely linked to the early learning goals designed for children of this age. The quality of teaching in the Nursery is good with elements of very good teaching in the creative and mathematical areas. The teacher uses songs and rhymes with actions to reinforce their acquisition of number skills very skilfully. This is much enjoyed by the children and even those who had recently joined the Nursery class were included in the activity and had the confidence to join in with the songs so that all made very good progress. Teaching in the Reception classes is consistently at least good with some excellent practice seen in a guided writing lesson, where children progressed through letter recognition to word recognition and higher attaining children then went on to write. The range of activities provided ensures that all levels of attainment are catered for and that all children are given confidence in their ability to achieve. Teachers are enthusiastic, the pace of learning is brisk and both the Nursery and Reception classes provide a bright and stimulating environment for learning. Children with special educational needs are well supported and staff work with parents to involve other agencies where necessary. For example, one child in the Nursery, who had very little speech, is now confident enough to ask a visitor her name and to join in singing and saying prayers.
78. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well. All the teachers and the support staff have a very good knowledge of how young children learn, including those with special educational needs and this is reflected in their planning. The assessment of the progress of children in the Foundation Stage is thorough and records focus clearly on the standards expected nationally. The new Foundation Stage profile is being used effectively by staff with support from a liaison worker within the school from the Education Action Zone. Ongoing assessment guides the planning of future learning and activities are varied to meet all children's needs. There is sufficient challenge to help all children to improve their skills and ability across the areas of learning. Although there are no parent helpers in the Foundation Stage, relationships with parents and carers are very good and staff have daily contact with them when they bring and collect their children. As some staff have been teaching in the school for a number of years some of the parents know them from their own time at the school and this results in effective relationships.

Personal, social and emotional development

79. The level of personal, social and emotional development of the majority of children when they start school is well below the national expectation for children of this age. As a result of very good relationships with adults, all children, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. They are in line to achieve the expected standards in this area by the time they reach Year 1.
80. Children are confident and happy and join in activities with enthusiasm. The routines of the Nursery are quickly learned and all children self-register, recognising their names and posting them on the magnetic board. When serving their snacks, they use named place mats and serve themselves with drinks. When they have registered, children take a 'reading book' and sit in the reading area until all

have arrived. They recite their morning and afternoon prayers confidently and have the confidence to talk to visitors. They are happy to discuss their learning with adults and each other. They play purposefully and move around activities when they have completed each one. They share and help each other, showing sensitivity if another child is upset.

81. The children's behaviour in both the Nursery and Reception classes is good and often very good and they have very good attitudes to learning. The nursery children enjoy singing especially and sing with actions enthusiastically. As a result, they learn well. Children in the Reception classes listened and concentrated well and remembered features of past reading very well. The concentration of one class was exceptional as they recalled features from a story narrated by Roger McGough with the teacher holding the storybook as the narration progressed. Some recalled all ten features of the story. Children respond very well to teachers' instructions and clear away activities when told, which shows good independence.
82. Both the nursery and reception classrooms provide a calm area where there are no loud voices and children show respect for each other and the adults present. This is as a result of the clear, high expectations of staff for standards of behaviour and the children's positive attitudes to learning. Any minor incidences of poor behaviour are dealt with quietly and effectively without fuss. Displays of children's work are impressive and are a celebration of their achievements. All children receive praise for good work and respond well to the encouragement given.

Communication, language and literacy

83. When children enter the Nursery, a significant number have poor skills in speaking and listening. They make very good progress as a result of the very good teaching that they receive, but insufficient progress to attain the standards expected nationally by the time they are ready to enter Year 1. Their listening skills are very good by the time that they transfer to Reception classes and their speech is developing very well. They do not, however, respond in sentences and, often, their responses are very short. Particular difficulties are quickly identified and, where necessary, additional help is sought from external agencies who work closely with the school for children who have special educational needs.
84. Children talk about what they remember from previous learning and, when singing, saying prayers or reciting rhymes, are fluent. Their skills in singing are often better than their speaking. The way in which staff provide opportunities for language and communication development ensures that progress is impressive. For example, children working with their teacher in the Nursery used a bag of objects which were then placed on a tray and removed when their eyes were closed. They could recall not only what was missing but, where it had been moved from and described in detail what the object had been. In the Reception classes opportunities are provided for whole-class as well as small-group discussion. Children are encouraged to speak in sentences and to use standard English. In one class observed, children talked confidently about the books they enjoyed and why they enjoyed them.
85. All children in the Nursery recognise their names when they register each day. They also identify their own place mats at 'snack time'. Children hold pens and pencils correctly and make good attempts to write their own names. The majority of Reception class children successfully write their first name on their work. Some need assistance in spelling but most attempt writing in response to the various activities given. A group of children in a class who had read 'Guinea Pig Grass' wrote and illustrated the other places in which the 'guinea pig' might have looked for grass, using correct letter orientation with assistance from the support assistant in spelling words. Activities are well matched to previous attainment and children grow in confidence to work independently.
86. Children in both the Nursery and Reception classes enjoy looking at books. A wide range of books is provided for them and good use is made by the teachers of 'big books' for reading. Children recognise familiar stories and accurately recall most details from them. They use their knowledge of letter sounds well and are building up a bank of familiar words which they can read. Handwriting is taught each day in the Reception classes and reinforced in other activities to ensure that children develop handwriting skills using the correct orientation of letters.

Mathematical development

87. Children make very good progress in this area of their learning and are almost in line with the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. In the Nursery, children count up to 15 with confidence when following the teacher's 'head count' each day. This forms part of the beginning of a session. The number of names left is counted, the total number of children present is worked out and then 'heads' are counted to check that the total is correct. Children understand 'one more than' and 'one less than' when involved in their counting songs and count from one to ten and backward from ten to one. They identify shapes well and know what a circle, a triangle, square and rectangle are. Staff maximise opportunities for counting activities. For example, in games and songs, children respond positively and learn effectively.
88. Children in Reception classes count reliably up to 20 and higher attaining children go beyond this. They understand 'taking away' and 'adding to' and some reception children have developed a good understanding of methods to achieve the correct answer. Some children experience difficulty in recognising shapes in jigsaw puzzles. When looking at the 'times of the day' jigsaws provided, which illustrated the different times of the day, some children could not match pieces very well and did not see how shapes fitted into the puzzle. Activities in both the Nursery and Reception classes provided for all attainment levels and good support is provided by staff for both higher and lower attaining children. Teachers' time is well organised so that all groups, including those with special educational needs, benefit from some input from the teacher. This takes the form of questions to ascertain children's understanding or help and advice in order to help them to complete the task.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

89. Children, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and are on course to achieve expected national standards by the time they reach Year 1. The topic being used at the time of the inspection was 'Community' and children in the Nursery were learning about the different people who serve the community in which they live. The resources for imaginative play included several tabards depicting many of the jobs done in the community which gave children the opportunity to pretend to be the 'police officer', the 'fire fighter', the cook/chef. They successfully named people they knew from the community who did some of the jobs. They discussed as a whole group the shops and types of houses in their community and correctly identified the baker's shop by name and could describe the different kinds of houses.
90. Within the nursery area, children are growing sunflower seeds. One child carefully watered the plants and understood the need to water regularly 'or the plants would die'. Goldfish were fed. The teacher poured the amount out and the child sprinkled it carefully into the bowl. These experiences extend their knowledge of growing things well.
91. In a Reception class, children had a visit from the school's cook and were amazed when she told them how many dinners she cooked every day. They asked questions about her day and answered her questions about favourite foods sensibly, albeit a little excitedly. Children successfully sequenced the events of the day from getting up in the morning to going to bed at night. They used cues in illustrations to identify times of the day correctly. A younger group of children working with the classroom assistant were in the home corner and used a variety of boxes of things to do with each part of the day to identify the 'name' of the box. The situation was also used effectively to extend children's vocabulary.
92. Children's computer skills are underdeveloped. Many use the mouse, controlling it effectively to make drawings using the 'Splosh' program. However, at the time of the inspection the computer in the Nursery had had to be replaced by a more limited machine as their own computer was being repaired so it was not possible to assess attainment fully. Children in one of the Reception classes were seen using the computer to design patterns using different colours and shapes. Their use of the mouse and understanding of the program was good.

Physical development

93. Children make very good progress in their physical development and are on course to achieve the

nationally expected standards by the time that they reach Year 1. The outdoor play area is part of the general infant playground and some break times coincide with outdoor playtimes for the Nursery, which is not ideal. Children from other classes are respectful of the 'nursery space' and very good supervision ensures the safety of children from the Nursery. It is anticipated that a dedicated area will be provided in the new building of this newly amalgamated school. There are few large items of equipment for climbing and again, it is anticipated that this will be addressed when new resources are made available in the building programme. The space available at present is generous and has a circular seating area in the centre used at the start and the end of the outdoor sessions.

94. A range of wheeled toys is available including a variety of scooters, tricycles, a bicycle and cars. Children from the Reception classes seen during the inspection made good use of these toys and showed impressive skills in steering and balancing. The track provided helps them to appreciate some aspects of the Highway Code, as there is a zebra crossing in the middle where they had to stop to allow pedestrians to cross. The vast majority of children had no difficulty with sharing and taking turns; only one or two children needed to be reminded about sharing.
95. Children using balls of varying sizes and weights displayed good control skills in kicking and throwing. Some used a bat to hit the balls and showed good hand and eye co-ordination. Several children used a ball to knock down skittles with increasing accuracy. Two girls in the classes showed great skill in skipping with their feet together, in a running motion and using the rope to skip backwards and on one leg. Beanbags were used by one group to throw and catch and to aim at a basket which they achieved with growing accuracy. Children do not change for these activities and there are no warm up exercises or cooling down activities at the end of the session.
96. All children observed used pencils and crayons correctly and concentrated well on the activity in which they were engaged. Children using a magnetic fishing set were very good at manipulating the stick and the magnets to 'catch' the fish demonstrating good hand and eye co-ordination.

Creative development

97. Children make very good progress in this area of their development and are on course to achieve the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Very good provision is made in the Nursery for children to use paint, crayons, pencils, play dough and glue on a daily basis. The good learning environment and good teaching help children to use their own ideas in their creative work. Their drawing is becoming more sophisticated in terms of shape and detail and they have made their own gallery of faces using a variety of media. In one observation, children were using a variety of combs and implements effectively to make patterns in paint with some purpose.
98. In the two Reception classes the use of paint is more limited but children have access to crayons, pencils and playdough on most days. There is, however, extensive evidence around the classrooms and also in the corridors of children having done three-dimensional work in a display of 'mod rock' rainbow fish. There are paper stuffed fish and other sea creatures which are suspended from the ceiling to create an underwater world in the entrance to the two Reception classrooms. As part of the work with the co-ordinator from the Education Action Zone, it is anticipated that a common approach to play will be developed throughout the Foundation Stage. This will include the further development of creativity in the Reception classes.
99. Music is very important in the Nursery as it is used very effectively to teach children both literacy and numeracy skills through song. They sing enthusiastically, mostly in tune and remember the words to lengthy songs. The teacher and nursery nurse lead singing without accompaniment well, they sing in tune and the children follow their enthusiasm with matched enjoyment. They successfully do actions in time with the singing and use musical instruments with a secure sense of rhythm. The children appreciate differences in tone and volume and respond accordingly. The enjoyment that they have in singing was well demonstrated when a morning group spontaneously broke into song whilst waiting for children to arrive. Their singing was relatively quiet showing an understanding that it was a quieter time at the beginning of the day.
100. In the Reception classes, children have a good repertoire of songs and, when listening to a tape recording during milk time, 'sang along'. Children sing well, in tune and with confidence. For

example, they sang the 'Wheels on the bus' sitting on the 'bus' and thoroughly enjoyed the exercise of organising the 'passengers' and counting the fares.

101. Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's experience of language in the learning activities planned for them. The children's efforts are well supported and praise is used very effectively. At no time was a child criticised and behaviour is moderated by using positive reinforcement. As a result children throughout the Foundation Stage behave well and often very well. They work, often without direct supervision of their activities and are very effectively prepared for the next stage in their education.

ENGLISH

102. As this is a newly amalgamated school no comparisons can be made with previous inspection reports or National Curriculum test results. A significant number of pupils enter Year 1 with below average skills in aspects of language and literacy. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good, pupils improve their skills well but were still below average in work seen during the inspection. There has been some improvement in reading with more pupils gaining at least the national expectation and above by the end of Year 2. This is as a result of improved teaching strategies and the foundation laid in the Nursery and Reception classes. Standards in writing have not improved at the same rate.
103. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 is below that normally found and their reading skills are better than their writing skills. A number of pupils achieve the national expectation for pupils of their age but a significant number do not reach these standards. The proportion of pupils likely to attain Level 4 or above is not yet in line with the national expectation. The school is developing its strategies to improve standards in writing but they have not yet had sufficient time to improve results by the time that pupils leave the school.
104. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average speaking and listening skills. They listen and concentrate well in lessons and teachers use appropriate strategies to develop speaking and to encourage pupils to speak in sentences. Teachers provide stimulating activities to support pupils' learning. However, tasks set for higher attaining pupils do not always fully challenge them. By the end of Year 2, all pupils have made good progress and some pupils achieve the expected standards, but a higher proportion than is usually found fail to do so. Pupils are able to recognise rhyming patterns with little difficulty and suggest other rhymes in a sequence. Their speech and concentration have also improved, their recall of previous learning is good and they use the knowledge gained well to develop further learning.
105. Progress in speaking and listening is good overall in Years 3 to 6 and teachers use good strategies to encourage discussion. However, most discussion is whole-class based and often teacher led. In a Year 3 class for example, the activities were well organised, lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs were well supported and adults ensured that there was a high proportion of direct teaching so that all pupils had a good work rate. But opportunity for discussion in pairs or small groups was limited. This was illustrated further in a Year 6 lesson where pupils in a setted, higher attaining group were not given sufficient time in smaller groups to explore the task set. Too much time was spent in whole-class teaching which did not provide the highest attaining pupils in the class with sufficient challenge. Pupils in the lowest Year 6 set listened and concentrated well and worked well in the small group activities organised. However, responses to questions were brief and not always expressed in complete sentences. An above average number of pupils do not achieve the national expectation in speaking and listening although their listening skills are good.
106. Reading skills on entry to Year 1 are below the national expectation. Pupils enjoy reading and have been well prepared for developing their reading skills in the Foundation Stage. Higher attaining pupils in Year 1 read fluently and know how to build unfamiliar words by using letter sounds. They are at the expected level of attainment, but most average and lower attaining pupils are below the expected level. Year 1 pupils heard reading were enthusiastic about books and talked eagerly about their reading outside school. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 understood and interpreted italics and bold printing in the text and were able to say why they had been used. The average and lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, were more hesitant in their reading and used little expression as they concentrated on reading accurately. Teachers' reading in whole-class and

- small group situations is expressive and provides good models for pupils. Pupils are given opportunities to practise the variety of reading skills needed, in well organised and well prepared activities which meet the needs of all pupils. Good use is made of support staff and this ensures that pupils with special educational needs and lower levels of attainment are able to build their confidence and make good progress. Pupils have a reading record which is signed by parents when books are taken home. However, this is a record of what is read and rarely comments on the quality of the reading so that its effect on attainment and progress is reduced. There is also some inconsistency in monitoring the quantity of reading done by individual pupils. By the end of Year 2 pupils have made good progress, standards are improving but are still not in line with national expectation.
107. Pupils make good progress in reading in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, pupils know about the main features of a book and the purpose of the 'blurb'. Small group activities are organised so that the class teachers are able to listen to different groups and use guided reading materials to improve their comprehension. This ensures that pupils' reading is regularly monitored so that skills are developed. Some Year 6 pupils are involved in being 'reading buddies' to Year 2 pupils at lunchtimes. This provides good opportunities for Year 6 pupils to develop their reading and also extends the experience of Year 2 pupils by introducing them to a wider range of books than their ability to read. The reading standards of pupils by Year 6 are below the national expectation. Although there are higher attaining pupils who achieve and exceed the national average expected for pupils at the end of Year 6, there is a significant minority whose reading is below and sometimes well below expected levels. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are not given sufficient scope to extend their reading skills for research or independent learning.
108. The school library, located in the junior building, lacks a bright and inviting environment and many books are 'tired'. The selection of books available for individual research and reference is limited and there is insufficient access to information and communication technology research facilities there. Pupils have library duties and some classes make use of the facility during lesson time. However, it is not available for pupils to use independently. All classrooms have a selection of books available for pupils to borrow and most have their reader from the Ginn reading scheme and a book selected from these mini-libraries. The books that pupils read do not consistently challenge them so that they reach higher standards and this is a weakness.
109. Attainment in writing varies widely in Year 1. There are some pupils who enter Year 1 with the ability to write clearly in simple sentences but the majority have standards which are below the expectation for their age. Teachers in the Reception classes prepare children well for their transfer to Year 1 by teaching pre-writing skills and regular handwriting lessons. As a result, when children enter Year 1 they will be able to write letters with correct orientation and with growing accuracy and fluency. In pupils' work in Year 1, there is a range of examples of written work. They do not use punctuate sentences consistently and sometimes capital letters appear in the middle of sentences. Many pupils by the end of Year 2 are achieving standards in their writing which are in line with expectations. But there is a large gap between pupils who have achieved the expected standard and above and the significant number of pupils who experience difficulty in writing letters correctly. In Years 1 and 2, there is a consistent approach to the teaching of writing which ensures good progress in the development of writing across these years. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop handwriting and to vary the content of their writing. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 use a joined-up style of writing and there were examples in some pupils' work of the use of more complex sentences and a range of vocabulary. Overall, however, the standard of work seen is below expectation.
110. Pupils in Year 3 write mostly in a joined up style of writing. Although some pupils are still printing, the letter orientation is correct for the move to joined-up writing. They use punctuation with growing accuracy and use speech marks correctly. Pupils in the additional literacy strategy group in Year 3 are making good progress. In the highest attaining set in Year 6 all pupils have been involved in contributing to a class newspaper. Their writing was interesting and largely accurately spelled and punctuated. A number of activities that they had enjoyed formed the basis of the content and many adopted a good reporting style. In individual samples of work analysed, the highest attaining pupils were able to write for a range of purposes and used sophisticated vocabulary. There were examples of extended writing which were impressive both for their content and accuracy. Pupils in the lower attaining Year 6 class do not have the same level of skill and work is often below and sometimes well below the expected standard for their age. Writing is not consistently joined, letters are inconsistent in size and words are misspelled. There is a wide difference in attainment across the Year 6. The

level of challenge provided for both the lower and the higher attaining pupils in the year is not rigorous enough to ensure that they are able to make consistent progress. Writing targets provided for Year 6 are not individually based. Teachers' marking of books is thorough and supportive and, while some pupils are set individual targets for improvement, this practice is not consistent.

111. The range of writing seen includes poetry, book reviews, reports of visits and displays around the school. There are few examples in the work seen, of pupils using computers for word-processing. The majority of the work displayed is handwritten. Most classrooms have access to at least one computer and both the infant and junior classes have access to computer suites. Opportunities to practise writing in subjects such as history and geography are limited.
112. Learning is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2 it is good and in Years 3 to 6 it is satisfactory as a result of the limited challenge given to both higher and lower attaining pupils. There is also inadequate provision made for pupils to extend their independent learning. Standards are improving and more pupils are achieving the average standard. There are plans to introduce a more cohesive strategy to improve writing across the school, as has been done for reading. There are adequate new resources in the school to support teachers in the teaching of writing and there are plans for these to be audited and utilised.
113. The quality of teaching is good overall. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully adopted by all teachers and gives a consistent structure and continuity to all literacy lessons. The majority of teaching seen in class was good and sometimes very good with a few examples of satisfactory teaching. Where teaching was judged to be good or better, teachers planned and prepared well and provided a range of tasks to suit all levels of attainment. Lessons had a brisk pace and the level of challenge provided ensured that pupils made good and sometimes very good progress. In lessons which were satisfactory, planning and preparation were good but the pace of the lesson was slower, there was too much teacher direction and less opportunity for individual work resulting in a general lack of challenge. Pupils are usually given the lesson objectives at the start of the lesson. At the end of lessons, discussions focus on how well the objectives have been met. In lessons which were very good this was an opportunity for pupils to demonstrate what they had learned.
114. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into classes. They are given good support by both teaching and support staff so that they make good progress. Tasks and activities are designed to build confidence and success. Praise and positive discipline ensures that, in almost every lesson observed, behaviour was well ordered with pupils working meaningfully without direct supervision. This gives support staff and teachers the opportunity to work effectively with small groups and still maintain a monitoring brief over the whole class.
115. The subject leader for English has only been in post for a short time. She has a clear commitment and an obvious enthusiasm to improve standards, especially in writing and to develop a greater cohesion between the infant and junior sections of the school, which are at present in separate buildings. However, she has little time available to monitor teaching and learning in the subject. An action plan has been drawn up to facilitate the raising of standards in all areas of literacy, using previous test data to plan areas for future development. A 'strand manager' for raising standards is working closely with the subject leader to improve teaching and learning. Consultants from the local education authority and the Education Action Zone are supporting the school in its work to raise standards. Resources, which are provided through the Education Action Zone funding and shared by the school, are available to give teachers the materials to support good practice in the teaching of literacy. There is an extensive collection of 'big books', including both fiction and non-fiction texts to support the teaching of literacy across the curriculum.
116. The curriculum is broad and relevant although there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning. Pupils have the opportunity to meet visiting poets and authors either in school or at the local library. This broadens their experience and provides them with added stimulus for their own creative writing. The introduction of the 'culture map', with its planned visits and visitors, will extend the experience of pupils and provide extra material on which to draw for creative writing. Books in classes provide pupils with extra reading material. These are of a good quality and give valuable extra resources to support reading.

117. The school has identified the raising of attainment in English as a key priority. Plans are in place to develop this. With full commitment, the school has the capacity to achieve this.

MATHEMATICS

118. Overall, pupils reach standards that are below the national expectation by the time they reach the ages of seven and 11. Their attainment in basic number work throughout the school is more secure and is closer to the standards expected nationally. Pupils make good progress given their lower than average starting point and those with special educational needs also make good progress. There is good teaching throughout the school and pupils' attitudes to the subject and their behaviour are often good throughout.
119. By the time they are seven, pupils have made good progress in developing their skills in basic number work. They add accurately to ten, although some reverse their written numbers when working out. Others, in Year 1 for example, quickly add pairs of numbers to ten using their fingers, although some need more help. In the same lesson, pupils made reasonable guesses when trying to identify solid shapes. They recognised that a can of drink for example resembled a cylinder, although other shapes were not so well known. In Year 2, pupils recognise odd and even numbers to ten, but are less sure past 20. In another activity, solving money problems, pupils added 20p pieces accurately, although, for some, this did not fully stretch their thinking or extend their skills effectively. Pupils' past work indicates that they understand simple concepts of measuring and comparing lengths, but some worksheet based activities do not fully extend their knowledge, particularly that of the higher attaining pupils. Other past work in Year 2 indicates that pupils have a simple understanding about how to record data, but this is not presented well and is covered comparatively briefly. Although pupils' skills in number work develop appropriately, they do not readily apply them in other subjects. The presentation of their work is generally satisfactory. The balance between pupils recording their own work and using worksheets is generally appropriate, but progress in improving the layout of work over the year is unsatisfactory.
120. By the time that pupils are 11, their level of attainment is below the national expectation, but they generally make good progress in their daily work. Pupils' number skills are a stronger aspect of their work and they reach higher standards in this area. In Year 3, pupils know how to sort and group information into a 'Carroll' diagram and, in another class in the same year, pupils understand how to record pictorially the number of packets of crisps eaten by the staff in a week. In Year 4, pupils recognised and successfully drew symmetrical patterns using a mirror and then used these patterns to plot co-ordinates of points on the shape. Some of them began to understand how the co-ordinates can have negative or positive values. In Year 5, pupils correctly added simple decimals such as 0.25 and, in Year 6, they confidently added simple fractions such as a half, quarters and tenths. Pupils often record their answers on whiteboards in class, helping them to work out problems and display their answers. The higher attaining pupils in a Year 6 setted group had better levels of understanding. For example, they suggested alternative ways of working out, using calculators to check their answers. In their mental addition and subtraction number work, pupils generally reach standards that are nearer to those expected nationally.
121. Pupils make limited use of their mathematical knowledge in other subjects, but this is not well developed. In a lower attaining Year 6 group, for example, pupils calculated the length of their stride, many accurately. They linked this to their history work about a Roman 'pace' as a unit of measurement.
122. Teaching and learning are often good throughout the school and this promotes pupils' attainment well in lessons. In the majority of the lessons, teachers have good relationships with their pupils and successfully use interesting activities to motivate them. For example, in Year 6, pupils enjoyed the practical nature of measurement linked to their history work. In Year 4, during work on symmetry, the class teacher maintained a positive relationship with pupils, despite a small minority trying to disrupt the activities. In the younger age groups, teachers make effective use of learning resources to reinforce teaching points. For example, in Year 1, pupils enjoyed learning about different solid shapes and in handling them. They were particularly pleased when some classmates were blindfolded and had to identify them. Generally, through the school, pupils enjoy their activities and try hard to complete their tasks.

123. In nearly all lessons, support assistants are effective in supporting teaching activities. Teachers plan well for all ability groups ensuring good support for pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils. Marking is undertaken regularly throughout the school but is not always consistent between classes. The best examples suggest ways for improving work while other comments are brief or work is simply ticked. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively throughout the school, although work that promotes pupils applying their knowledge in other subjects, or to solve more complex problems, is not sufficiently developed. As a result, pupils' best work is not consistently promoted. Homework supports class teaching but the range of activities is comparatively small.
124. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The subject leader was absent during the inspection, but has developed a clear picture of how the school compares to other schools nationally. The subject, along with others, is being assessed to see if the priorities need changing or amending. Pupils' progress against the key learning skills is regularly monitored and recorded each term. There are plans to assess attainment more frequently and to assess predicted progress more carefully. Resources are generally satisfactory, used effectively and stored appropriately. The school is well placed to improve standards further.

SCIENCE

125. Standards are below national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards had been rising in the two schools that now constitute this amalgamated school and, compared to similar schools and the national average, last year's Year 6 results were exceptional. This success was partly due to high quality teaching and partly to the setting arrangements, which allow pupils to be taught at an appropriate level. The current Year 6 has made good progress but, partly because of a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, will not, in the school's estimation, match last year's results. Inspection evidence confirms this prediction. A significantly large proportion of pupils struggle to record their science work accurately, though most use scientific vocabulary reasonably well.
126. In Year 2, pupils identify manufactured and natural materials and also sort some materials into magnetic and non-magnetic categories quite well. They have a growing understanding of how to stay healthy and have touched on appropriate foods and exercise as the means to do this. A strong part of the programme was the brief sessions on safety with medicines. Little work connected with physical phenomena, for example, electricity and forces, was seen in books, although 'forces' is a new topic for this term.
127. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of testing but have too few opportunities to set up a test themselves. They have acquired a good scientific vocabulary, partly from the list in the front of their books, which they use accurately. Understanding of physical phenomena is good. They know about circuit diagrams, forces and magnets, although the understanding of lower attaining pupils is much weaker. Higher attaining pupils talk comfortably of reversible and non-reversible change, sometimes quoting examples. Knowledge of the human body and the position of some of the organs is satisfactory but there is scope for higher attaining pupils to know more about their functions.
128. Pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but is inhibited by pupils' limited ability to record. Teachers find appropriate alternatives to writing, which help these pupils to retain an understanding of the practical experiences that they have had. Pupils' knowledge of language is extended well. In Years 3 to 6 pupils make good progress. Teaching is more knowledgeable and consistently good and practical work is emphasised and pupils really enjoy their science lessons. The few pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. They are helped to learn the technical vocabulary of science because teachers use a good deal of practical work, which provides pupils with visual cues. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. They do not have any specific targets for improvement in science, but the practical nature of the subject allows them to succeed and this raises their self-esteem.
129. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Management of pupils is both consistent through the school and strong so that a situation is created in which

everyone can learn. Pupils know what is expected of them and generally respond keenly. They look forward to their science lessons. Practical work is used well to help pupils to understand scientific vocabulary, although this work is often over-directed by the teacher. For example, lessons in Year 4 on electricity and in Year 6 on escaping gases were totally organised by the respective teachers. This meant that pupils did not have opportunities to decide which variables should be controlled, which changed and how results might be measured. Despite this, pupils worked well together, sharing equipment fairly and allowing each member of the group a role in the experiment. Language was explained well, often using equipment or diagrams as happened in a Year 2 lesson on plants. In occasional lessons pupils were not challenged sufficiently to think scientifically and the pace of learning slowed when teacher explanations became too lengthy. Planning lacked detail in Years 1 and 2. Marking was particularly good in the older classes where both praise and pointers to improve the work were given. Throughout the school, pupils' presentation of their work was often weak and disorganised, particularly if worksheets were used.

130. The management of the subject is good. Standards have been improved, dramatically in the former junior school and an appropriate action plan is in place. The subject leader has monitored samples of pupils' work but, because she has too little time to carry out this complex task, errors in the assessment of pupils' work have crept in. Assessment is currently satisfactory with National Curriculum test scores being carefully analysed so that the programme might be revised to cover weaker aspects in the future. The action plan indicates that the testing of units of work will take place next year and this is a positive improvement. Participation in the annual 'Science Weeks' organised by the Education Action Zone plus visits to local science museums enrich the curriculum well and have a positive effect on attainment and progress.
131. Now that the newly amalgamated school is settled, greater rigour would put the school in a good position to raise standards further. The headteacher understands this and is keen to provide opportunities for this to happen.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

132. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards that match the national expectation in both subjects. In art and design, most pupils in Year 2 experiment with line, texture and colour and then use these skills satisfactorily in their drawings and paintings. A good example of this is the way in which they have effectively blended charcoal and pastels to make observational drawings of pineapples. They mix primary colours confidently to create a variety of secondary colours to be used in their paintings. They know about the lives of some famous artists and paint satisfactorily in their style. This is evident in their paintings of sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh, for example. They recognise patterns and talk with enthusiasm about the textures involved in their work.
133. By Year 6, pupils show suitable skills in working with a wider range of materials. They select and record successfully from first hand observation of the environment, as was seen when they were making sketches of various parts of the school grounds. In this activity, they showed good skills in using a viewfinder to identify a particular aspect of the feature to be sketched. Pupils talk with suitable understanding about the techniques of famous artists, such as the use of dark, sombre colours by Lowry, the geometric shapes of Klee and the bright and vibrant colour usage of Hockney. They show an appropriate knowledge of proportion in their pencil drawings of the human body and use suitable vocabulary such as perspective, contour, shadow and texture when discussing their work.
134. In design and technology, most pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the properties of different materials and how best to shape, assemble and join them. They have suitable skills in making a variety of models, using different construction kits. They know how simple mechanisms work and use this knowledge well to make wheeled vehicles with working axles. Pupils use their scientific understanding of healthy eating to design and make nourishing meals in their food technology activities. In their work they show that they can make simple evaluations of the finished product.
135. By Year 6 most pupils have appropriate skills in using a range of materials and tools and recognise the need to work safely when engaged on technological tasks. They also evaluate their work sensibly and make modifications as it progresses. This was evident in their designing and making of a variety

of headwear on the theme of the 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party'. They have a satisfactory understanding of the need to use materials for specific purposes, as is seen in their designs for a variety of shelters to be used in different circumstances.

136. It is not possible to make a judgement on teaching and learning in design and technology as no lessons were held during the inspection. In art and design, the quality of teaching and learning is good and enables pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and, as a result, demonstrate a variety of art techniques effectively. This was apparent when pupils in Year 5 were being shown how to make thumb and coiled pots from clay. Lessons are planned and prepared carefully so that pupils have suitable resources ready to hand. Learning activities are interesting and, as a result, pupils respond positively, showing a great deal of interest and enjoyment in completing their tasks. In the best lessons, teachers give pupils stimulating and challenging activities and have high expectations for pupils' performance. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 5 on investigating how functionality and visual elements can be combined to make a pleasing object and when pupils in Year 6 were being taught how to collect visual and other information to help develop their ideas about the environment.
137. The manager of both subjects provides secure and enthusiastic leadership, though the school acknowledges the need to develop her monitoring role to give her a better view of teaching and learning throughout the school. The curriculum for design and technology is satisfactory and, for art and design it is good, being enhanced by opportunities for pupils to work with artists and to visit places of artistic interest, such as the Tate and Walker Art Galleries. Pupils are also able to join an after school art club as a result of the school's involvement with the 'Children's University', which provides further stimulating learning opportunities. In both subjects, the planning and assessment procedures are satisfactory, though the checking of pupils' progress is underdeveloped. Art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' artwork is very attractively displayed throughout the school and clearly celebrates and values their efforts.

GEOGRAPHY

138. Standards are below national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6. In both year groups, many pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are finding it very difficult to record their geographical knowledge because their ability to write is weak. Year 2 pupils have learned that different styles of home are needed in different climatic regions. They have a growing knowledge of the countries of the British Isles and their capitals and higher attaining pupils successfully name them all. Their knowledge of 'how maps work' and their observation skills are improving through their quite successful drawings of their routes to school. Year 6 pupils have emerging, mapping skills and higher attaining pupils completed a self-drawn map with keys from an aerial photograph well, but neither the average nor the lower attaining pupils completed this task. Higher attaining pupils name specific parts of a river accurately, but other pupils do not appear to have recorded this work and thus are likely to be less familiar with the terminology.
139. From a low starting point all pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. There is a strong focus on mapping skills from Year 1 and this shows steady progression to comparisons of Speke with other localities in Years 4 and 5. Work on traffic surveys and the environmental impact of traffic is sound. The technical vocabulary of physical features is learned gradually, from 'town' and 'road' in Year 1 to the key features of a river in Year 6. Fieldwork in and around school and on residential visits is helping pupils to understand conservation issues better.
140. From an analysis of pupils' work and displays, teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory. Pupils engage in a good range of topics and use both written and pictorial work to demonstrate their knowledge. Pupils' work is usually marked and rewarded with house points and praise but there are too few pointers for improvement. Pupils' presentation skills are not well developed.
141. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory. Pupils are managed very well, with consistent use of the school's reward scheme being a strong feature and enabling learning to take place. Resources like globes, maps and aerial photographs are used well to help pupils to understand where

they are in the world and to compare their homes with others around the world. Interesting tasks, such as the imaginative Year 3 lesson on climate, often excite pupils who are keen to learn about the world around them. The presentation of work, especially of worksheets, could be neater. Whilst Year 6 has one more topic to cover this year, the work in pupils' books is very limited compared to their history work. Pupils show little pride in their work with diagrams being rushed and maps, particularly for lower attaining pupils, being unfinished. Teacher's marking, whilst conscientious, does not encourage them to improve the quality of their work.

142. The management of the subject is good. There are appropriate plans in place to raise standards, improve teachers' knowledge and thus take the subject forward. The subject leader monitors pupils' books in his own time but has no planned opportunities to observe colleagues teach. Sufficient resources are now in place for the whole programme. Visits to the locality and three residential stays for older pupils greatly enhance the curriculum. Assessment is at an early stage of development and analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses are not used to guide teaching sufficiently well.

HISTORY

143. The standards that pupils reach are in line with the national expectation by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their work and some very good teaching was observed in a Year 5 class.
144. By the end of Year 2, pupils have learned about the past in a number of suitable ways and they are developing an appropriate knowledge of historical events. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to see how the past can influence present day events and to identify how times have changed. The past work of pupils indicates that they know how homes have changed from simple dwellings to modern houses. They know that today's kitchen appliances for example, are quite different from the 'dolly tub' used in the past. In the lessons seen, pupils developed a satisfactory understanding of time passing and the sequence of seasons and festivals during the year. For example, pupils in Year 1 had an appropriate understanding of yearly events such as Christmas and Easter and could place them on a simple time line. By the time they are seven, pupils have studied significant events in the past. For example, in Year 2, pupils know about the Great Fire of London. They recall where it possibly started and the reasons why it spread through the city. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady gains in their learning. They appreciate the passage of time and higher attaining pupils recall other differences over time such as shops and ways of living.
145. Only one lesson was observed in the junior classes, but evidence from past work seen and informal discussion with pupils indicate that they reach the standards expected by the end of Year 6. A wide range of topics is covered. For example, in Year 4, pupils develop their understanding of the five Tudor monarchs, place events on a time line and research facts about the wives of Henry VIII. As part of their work, the pupils visited Speke Hall to appreciate the design of Tudor architecture. They also study the Victorian period and had a 'Victorian day' where they dressed in the style of the period. In Year 6, pupils' past work indicates that they know about the significant events of the Second World War. This includes the effects of evacuating children from major cities, rationing and the formation of the 'home guard'. In the one lesson seen in Year 5, pupils developed their sense of investigation and questioning when they studied the Victorian era. They looked carefully at pictures and simple artefacts to see if they were from that period. Many knew how to find clues from the pictures such as dates and initials on buildings.
146. The teaching of the subject is good in Years 3 to 6 and the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 were taught satisfactorily. There are good features in the teaching. Relationships with the pupils are good and they respond well to questions and expressive storytelling by the teachers. There were few weaknesses in teaching, although there were missed opportunities to extend pupils' awareness of the dramatic impact of the Great Fire of London, for example. Pupils enjoy their work and listen well during activities. They try hard to recall important facts, for example, from their visit to the local fire station. In the one lesson observed in Year 5, teaching was very good. The imaginative use of simple historical documents, pictures and artefacts motivated the pupils well. It developed their ability to work together and brought the Victorian period more alive. Teachers planned their work thoroughly and made provision for pupils of all abilities. Pupils enjoyed the work and behaved well. Their past work generally indicates that they present their work neatly and some good examples of this were

seen in their work on Egypt in Year 5. However, the general standard of presentation of work varies between different year groups and, in some, the presentation by some pupils is unsatisfactory with too little improvement being expected over the year. In Year 4, pupils produced some good work for a collaborative project to support Liverpool's bid as culture capital, but the work in their books was generally not presented well.

147. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The scheme of work and policy are being amended and updated to account for the different age groups in the school. Pupils are assessed informally at the end of the units of work and the information gathered is appropriate but is not used effectively to guide future learning. There has been some monitoring of pupils' progress in the subject, but this is not a strong feature. There are several displays around the school such as the influence of the slave trade on Liverpool which stimulate pupils' interest. The school makes very good use of educational visits in order to enrich pupils' experiences of historical environments, for example, through visits to Croxteth Hall, Speke Hall and local museums. Resources are satisfactory overall in terms of quantity and quality.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

148. The attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 6 matches the national expectation overall. Most pupils in Year 2 have satisfactory mouse and keyboard skills, which enable them to change the style, colour and size of text in their word processing work and to retrieve, process and display information. When using data handling programs, they produce a range of simple tables and graphs to record their work. These skills are also evident in the presentation of the findings of their survey to find the favourite fruit of infant pupils. They also show suitable skills in using a paint program to make interesting drawings and pictures using different coloured shapes. As part of their work in geography, pupils have used a digital camera well to take photographs of different kinds of houses in the local area and then used their word processing skills appropriately to describe their features.
149. By Year 6, most pupils are able to use information and communication technology correctly to organise and present their ideas and show confidence when using computers. They know and understand the functions of icons on the toolbar and use these to edit and save their work during word processing activities. Most pupils use the Internet confidently to find out information to help them with their work and use related technological vocabulary such as 'web site', 'search engine' and 'e-mail' to explain what they are doing. They also use 'Power-Point' facilities suitably to create a presentation combining graphics, sound and movement. This was illustrated in their presentation about the activities of the breakfast club. They are confident when entering information onto a spreadsheet and then creating a range of graphs and charts to demonstrate their findings.
150. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and enables pupils of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs, to make sound progress. Teachers clearly explain the learning objectives for the lesson so that pupils know what is expected of them and understand how to set about their work. Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively in pairs on the computers, which makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development. There is an emphasis on pupils using correct technological terms to explain their ideas, which helps them to extend their own vocabulary and, in so doing, develops their literacy skills. In the best lessons, the teachers showed good subject knowledge which enabled them to use a variety of equipment confidently when demonstrating techniques for pupils to use. This was evident in good quality lessons for pupils in Year 5 on using the Internet to research information. Teachers used the smartboard with confidence to develop pupils' understanding of how to narrow down an Internet search by using 'AND' or '+'. However, not all teachers show such confidence and the school recognises the need to provide training to improve the expertise of some teachers, so that they are better able to develop pupils' skills in the subject. The good relationships between adults and pupils in lessons result in pupils' attitudes to learning being positive and, when working in pairs on the computer, they are well behaved and concentrate well. They treat equipment with respect and show interest and much enjoyment in their work.
151. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but the school recognises the need to develop the role of the subject leader so that she has a suitable overview of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. There is an appropriate curriculum in place, with all classes

having timetabled sessions in the computer suites to develop their skills. However, the school knows that the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other subjects is underdeveloped and is working towards teachers identifying opportunities more closely in their planning to integrate it better into classroom activities. Planning procedures are secure and enable teachers to set work that builds well on previous learning. Arrangements for assessment are satisfactory and let teachers know at what level pupils are working. However, the school is keen to improve them so that the progress of pupils can be tracked so that they understand how well they are doing in addition to what they need to do to improve. The resources and accommodation are satisfactory, so that all aspects of the subject can be covered.

152. There has been a good start to teaching and learning in information and communication technology in this new school. With further professional development, the school will be in a secure position to continue to improve attainment.

MUSIC

153. Throughout the school, pupils' overall attainment is in line with what is expected nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. During the inspection, three class lessons, singing in assemblies, teaching by visiting specialists and extra-curricular activities were observed.
154. In Year 1, pupils accurately identify short and long sounds from a variety of sources ranging from those made by a hair dryer, to other more percussive sounds. They listened attentively and enjoyed the activity. Teaching was satisfactory overall and the teacher, helped by the teaching assistants, made the activity stimulating. Past pictures of work in Years 1 and 2, indicate that they cover a number of different activities linked to percussion work and in finding how different instruments sound.
155. In the junior classes, only two lessons were observed, one in Year 4 and one in Year 6. In the Year 4 lesson, there were some helpful links with literacy work as a visiting poet led the activities. Pupils listened very attentively and developed their vocal sense of rhythm linked to words and phrases. They worked well together to start their own poems, using an interesting range of vocabulary. In the Year 6 lesson, pupils wrote down their responses when listening to some extracts from the music of Beethoven. In the majority of cases pupils wrote relevant and interesting comments that reflected the mood of the music's tempo and style. The teaching seen in the Year 4 lesson was good, due to the specialist knowledge of the poet, effectively organised by the class teacher. In the Year 6 lesson, teaching was satisfactory and had good features such as the good relationships promoted.
156. The singing observed in a junior assembly was good and pupils were enthusiastic singers. An after-school singing practice was observed, when pupils were preparing for their 'Crikey Moses' concert. The pupils sang well and tunefully. A small number of pupils were also observed learning the trumpet, taught by a visiting teacher. Pupils have had good success playing their brass instruments in the Liverpool Music Festival. They played well and developed their abilities appropriately. Good provision is made to include all pupils in musical activities and pupils with special educational needs are catered for well. In all the lessons observed, pupils enjoyed the activities, listened particularly carefully and contributed enthusiastically. Overall, pupils learn appropriately.
157. The subject is managed effectively and the co-ordinator took over at the beginning of the year. The scheme of work and the policy are being updated to reflect the changed nature of the school. There are a number of musical activities arranged both formally and informally, such as Christmas and Easter concerts and there are opportunities for pupils to sing publicly outside the normal class routine. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall and the school benefits from additional rooms used for musical practice and activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

158. Attainment is at the level normally found for pupils aged seven and 11. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. All pupils are fully included in the good curriculum that the school offers in physical education. Swimming was not available during the inspection because the pool that the school uses

has recently been renovated. Normally, all pupils in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to swim for at least part of the year. Attainment in swimming is satisfactory.

159. Pupils throughout the school understand why it is necessary to warm up before physical education activity and cool down afterwards. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 understand that others need space if physical activity is to be safe. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were impressively responsive in a warm up exercise using 'traffic lights'. They were inventive in devising different ways of moving, for example, hopping, skipping, rolling and using star jumps. There was sound progress during the lesson. In Years 3 to 6, most lessons were building up ball skills using a range of bats – small and full sized cricket bats as well as rounders bats. Some pupils have good hand-eye co-ordination and strike a tennis ball accurately. Others swish hopefully. Most pupils throw with reasonable accuracy, but some are unable to deliver the ball in a way to give the striker a reasonable chance of hitting the ball well. Overall standards were at the level normally found.
160. Most pupils have positive attitudes in physical education lessons. They behave sensibly, participate willingly and co-operate well in pairs and group work. However, in some classes, a minority of pupils have short concentration spans and become disruptive. In most lessons, pupils worked with a good level of interest and concentration. In these lessons, most pupils made good progress.
161. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and skills systematically, often over a sequence of lessons. It is unfortunate that, in lessons when behaviour and concentration are unsatisfactory, this good planning does not have its full effect on learning and progress. Overall, teachers manage behaviour with considerable skill and their teaching methods are effective in promoting learning and progress. Support staff contribute well to learning and help to ensure that all pupils play a full part in lessons. Good resources and indoor and outdoor facilities promote learning well.
162. The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator has a great enthusiasm for physical activities and games and, with very good support from other adults in the school, ensures that pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, have a wide range of learning experiences both in and out of class. Outdoor and adventurous activities are available both in the school grounds and on residential visits. During the inspection, the subject manager offered an activity each lunchtime and after school on each day. These included athletics, cricket, netball and soccer. In this, he was supported by other adults including a learning mentor who took a girls' soccer practice and a classroom assistant who took a netball practice. As a result of this impressive dedication from the subject manager and his colleagues, the school has considerable success in competitions outside school. For example, one Year 6 girl is currently Catholic Primary Schools national cross-country champion. The team from the junior school, from which this school was partially formed, won the competition in five out of the previous six years. Another example of these successes is that a Year 6 boy is representing the city at cricket.
163. Pupils have very good opportunities to experience competitive sport. These activities include soccer, cricket, athletics, cross-country, indoor athletics, girls' soccer, netball, tag rugby and badminton. Pupils benefit from external coaching in rugby, soccer, tennis, athletics and golf. This rich provision is a strength of the school and enables all pupils, including those with particular gifts or talents, to make very good progress and reach high standards in their area of expertise.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

164. Since this is a church school, religious education has not been covered during the inspection. This subject will be reported on by the Archdiocese.