

INSPECTION REPORT

CRONTON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cronton

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104449

Headteacher: Mr I Thomas

Lead inspector: Mr B Tyrer

Dates of inspection: 1st – 3rd December 2003

Inspection number: 255923

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	215
School address:	Smithy Lane Cronton Widnes
Postcode:	WA8 5DF
Telephone number:	0151 424 3881
Fax number:	0151 420 5398
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G McGann
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This school is about average in size. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average (1.5%) The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is low (1.2%). The school has two pupils who are not described as white British. The proportion of pupils having special educational needs is below the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs pupils and as a proportion of the school this is lower than average. Pupils' special needs include dyslexia, communication and behavioural problems. Pupils' socio-economic status is broadly average. Most pupils come from the neighbouring authority of Halton. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The school was awarded an achievement award in 2002, has just had its Investors in People Award renewed and also holds a healthy schools award. The school is also engaged in the Networked Learning Community and Partnership Promotion initiatives.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23101	Mr B Tyrer	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education Special educational needs
9981	Mr S Hussain	Lay inspector	
8316	Mrs J O'Hare	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
4350	Mr C Whittington	Team inspector	English Geography History

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	16
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a school with a **good** level of effectiveness which is providing very good value for money. Achievement is good overall by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6. Whilst Year 6 national test results in 2003 were disappointing and suggested underachievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the school's very good leadership and management meant that the cause of the problem was identified and very effective measures were put into place to resolve it. As a result of this and consistently very good teaching and learning throughout the school, pupils are currently achieving very well and standards are improving.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children get off to a very good start in the nursery and reception classes
- Pupils are now achieving very well during lessons; standards are higher than would be expected for similar pupils
- Pupils attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good, as are most aspects of their personal development
- The leadership of the headteacher and the ethos of the school are excellent
- The school is very well led and managed and the governors are making a good contribution to the running of the school
- The school's policy for gifted and talented pupils has not yet been implemented, so the needs of these pupils have not yet been fully identified
- Whilst cultural development is good overall, better opportunities could be provided for pupils to understand the diverse cultures and faiths that exist beyond their immediate environment

Overall the school has made a good improvement since the time of the last inspection in 1998. The key issues from the previous report have been effectively addressed and several aspects of the school have improved since that time. The quality of teaching has improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	B	E	E
Mathematics	B	C	D	D
Science	B	B	D	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is good overall. Results in the 2003 Year 2 National Curriculum tests were very high (in the top 5 per cent) for reading and mathematics and were well above average in writing. In teacher assessed science the proportion reaching the expected level (Level 2 and above) was also very high. Over time standards have risen and the rate of improvement is better than that seen nationally. Pupils in Year 6 recorded disappointing results in National Curriculum tests in 2003. This was due to the trialling of a creative approach to teaching and learning which failed to equip pupils with the ability to perform to a satisfactory level in the tests.

Standards in Year 2 are now above average in English, mathematics and science and the discrepancy between these findings and the exceptional results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests is explained by the difference in attainment levels of the different year groups when they entered school. Standards in the current Year 6, which displays a higher than average pupil mobility, are average in English and mathematics and above average in science and information and communication technology. This reflects good achievement in English and science and satisfactory achievement in mathematics since the same pupils were in Year 2 in 2002. All pupils, regardless of ability, are at least well provided for, and those who have special educational needs are very well provided for. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well and reach above average standards in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are **very good**; their cultural development is satisfactory overall, but more could be done to prepare them for life in a multicultural society. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides good quality education. The quality of teaching and learning is very good.

Teaching is very good throughout the school, including in the Foundation Stage. This is an improvement since changes initiated after it was discovered that the creative approach to teaching, trialled in the year 2002/2003, was not enabling pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, to fulfil their potential. The school is offering a good curriculum. Pupils enjoy good relationships with one another and staff and respond in a mature and sensible way. Pupils were seen to be achieving very well since September and during the inspection, and taking the slower progress made in the previous year into consideration, their achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve very well because of the very good provision being made for them. Specific provision for gifted and talented pupils is being developed but is not yet in place.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are both very good and the governance of the school is good. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fulfilling their statutory obligations well. They are effective in determining the direction of the school and in the way in which they monitor its progress. The headteacher's excellent leadership is directly responsible for the excellent ethos of the school but all staff and governors contribute very well to supporting and realising his vision. There is very effective delegation of responsibility.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents expressed very favourable views of the school both at the pre-inspection meeting and through the questionnaire. Some parents felt that they were not kept well informed about the progress that their children were making, but inspection shows that they receive good quality information and progress reports. Pupils have strongly favourable views of the school and made these clear through their questionnaires and in conversation with the inspection team. This also confirms the overwhelming view of parents that their children like school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- The school should implement as soon as possible its policy for providing for gifted and talented children.
- The school should ensure that pupils are given an adequate understanding of the multi-cultural wider world in which we live.
- The school should improve resources in information and communication technology for pupils in Year 1.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Note: Inspectors found a broadly similar picture in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science. There was evidence that progress last year in Years 3 to 6 was too slow, but progress in lessons seen during the inspection was far better. Achievement is a judgement on whether pupils are doing well enough. Events last year clearly limited achievement, but current provision has accelerated it. The inspectors' judgements involved an assessment of what pupils are capable of, set against what is demanded of them. They are based not only on lessons seen, but also on longer term evidence. This is why the overall achievement judgements in these subjects directly correlate to neither current teaching nor past progress. Inspectors used their professional judgement to give the best overall picture.

Pupils achieve well overall. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well and reach above average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are above average in Year 2 and pupils achieve well. In Year 6 they are average in English and mathematics and above average in science, and achievement is good overall, but pupils are now achieving very well in lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the 2003 Year 2 National Curriculum tests were very high, but they were below average for pupils in Year 6.
- Standards in Year 2 in English, mathematics and science are above average.
- Standards in Year 6 are above average in science and information and communication technology.

Commentary

1. The 2003 Year 2 test results were very high (in the top 5 per cent) in reading and mathematics and were well above average in writing. The results in teacher-assessed science for those pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2 and above) were also very high. Results over time have improved steadily so that the rate of improvement is better than that seen nationally.
2. The Year 6 results in 2003 were well below average in English and were below average in mathematics and science. Until 2003 the results were above the national average overall although the rate of improvement was less than that seen nationally. The school became aware of the potentially low results for pupils in 2003 during that year and prior to the tests being taken, and began to look for ways in which the issue of underachievement for this group could be addressed. The reason behind this lay with the school's adoption of a creative approach to learning in the year 2002/2003 which, whilst appearing dynamic and effective, resulted in pupils' inability to show their potential in test conditions. The previous year had seen the school receive a government achievement award. Inspection confirms that measures that have subsequently been put in place are effective and are having a beneficial effect in the drive to raise standards for pupils in the current Year 6.
3. Children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of attainment that are broadly average. The school now has a nursery, which was not the case at the time of the last inspection. Because of the very good provision that is made for children in the Foundation Stage they achieve very well. Taking the proportion of pupils with special needs into consideration these children are generally on target to exceed the expectations for their age in all aspects of their curriculum by the time they are ready to enter Year 1.
4. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to achieve well. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, and are average in information and communication technology. Differences in levels of attainment between the current Year 2 and the preceding one are explained by their differing attainment on entry. Standards in Year 6 are average in English and mathematics and above average in information and communication technology and science. This represents a generally good improvement since the time of their National Curriculum tests as pupils in Year 2. The improvement over the previous year's test results is due to the response that the school made to the 2003 test results and as a result the quality of education has improved and is now good overall. The conclusion is that despite the innovative approach that was adopted in 2002/2003, and the realisation that it was not working prior to the tests, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory as it failed to deliver results

that were good enough. The effectiveness of teaching began to improve from that point, and since September is now very good. This is due to the redeployment of existing staff and the addition of the newly appointed teachers. There has been a revision of the approach to teaching and learning and pupils' progress is being carefully and accurately monitored. Literacy and numeracy skills are well used in support of other areas of the curriculum and good use is also made of information and communication technology skills in this respect. Insufficient evidence was obtained to enable a judgement of standards in other subjects of the curriculum and those for religious education are not included in this report. Standards have improved since the time of the last inspection for pupils in Year 2 and also for pupils in Year 6 in science. Whilst standards are lower for Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics, the school is now well placed to see continuing improvement for this age group.

5. Inspection evidence confirms that boys and girls are currently making the same very good progress and that pupils across the ability range also do equally well because of the very good teaching they receive. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and they too are making very good progress within the class and against the targets in their individual education plans. The school is in the process of developing a programme for pupils who are to be designated as gifted or talented, and whilst the issue is being very thoroughly addressed the identification and provision for these pupils is yet to be accomplished. Although the inspection judgement is that pupils who are the most able achieve as well as their peers, this is something that the school should address as a priority, as it cannot ensure their needs are met until they are properly identified. The school is acutely aware of the need to raise standards in National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 and has set challenging yet realistic targets for 2004.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	20.1 (19.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.4 (15.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	19.8 (19.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.2 (27.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.2 (27.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.6 (29.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, attendance and punctuality are very good and their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall. Pupils' very good attitudes contribute significantly to their learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very favourable attitudes to school.
- Their behaviour is very good.
- Their attendance and punctuality are very good.
- Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- Pupils' understanding of other cultures and faiths is a relative weakness, which the school is already beginning to address.

Commentary

6. Pupils are eloquent in praise of their school and parents hold views that support this. This is generally an improvement since the time of the last inspection when this aspect was reported as being good. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school and in lessons ensures a calm atmosphere. This means that lessons are able to proceed smoothly and that they are effective because of the willingness of pupils to participate. This is due in no small part to the careful preparation and provision of lessons carried out by the staff. The pupils follow the very good example of the staff and relationships are very good as a result. Pupils display good levels of maturity and are pleasant to be with. They enter and leave school in good order and play well together at the appropriate times. They are well mannered in an assured way which enables them to be considerate and helpful to visitors. Those children who are in the Foundation Stage are on course to exceed their personal and social goals by the time they enter Year 1.
7. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is very good. Satisfactory provision is made for their cultural development but a weakness of this provision is that which addresses issues of living in a multi-cultural /multi-faith world. The school is an harmonious community because of the care staff take with the personal development of pupils. Spiritual development is well fostered through the religious education curriculum and through many opportunities that occur elsewhere in school such as assemblies when pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on a range of spiritual matters. Parents consider that behaviour is good and that the school is helping pupils to become mature. The view of the inspection supports this and attributes much of this to the provision that is made in the social and moral context. Pupils have a clear idea of what is right and what is not and how they should present themselves. It also shows in the care with which they present their work and the pride they take in it. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of their own culture and, in the case of German language lessons for example, to understand better the way of life in other areas of Europe. The school's provision in areas such as sport and music also lends strength to this. The school's pupils are almost entirely white and it is situated in an area that has very few members from minority ethnic groups. Close by, however, are major conurbations where the community is more diverse. Display within the school does not take sufficient account of wider society and older pupils have little understanding of how others so close at hand may live.
8. The very positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are confirmed by virtue of the fact that there have been no exclusions for inappropriate behaviour.
9. Attendance has remained very good since the time of the last inspection and is well above the national median. Unauthorised absence is zero and as such is below the national median. Pupils arrive on time and as a result lessons can begin promptly. The very good attendance is a strong reflection of the very positive attitudes that pupils and parents alike have for the school and the value they place on the education that is being offered.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school is providing a good quality of education for its pupils. The ethos of the school is excellent. Teaching and learning are now very good. The curriculum is good. Care, support and guidance and the level of resources are all good. Parents support the school and the work of their children very well.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good throughout the Foundation Stage and the rest of the school. There are good procedures in place for the assessment of the progress that pupils make, and this information is well used in meeting the needs of individual pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A significant proportion of the teaching that was observed was very good or excellent. throughout the school, with no significant weaknesses.
- Planning is very good; expectations are high and pupils are well challenged.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Teachers have very good systems for assessing the progress that pupils make.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.

Commentary

10. The very good quality of teaching is an improvement since the time of the last inspection and, more importantly, since the creative approach to learning that was put in place in 2002/2003 was changed prior to the time of the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2003. Re-deployment of teaching staff within the school and the introduction of three new teachers since September 2003 have considerably improved the quality of teaching and learning. A more conventional approach to teaching and learning is now enabling pupils in Year 6 to fulfil their potential more effectively. As a consequence the achievement of pupils, taking both their past low achievement and their current very good achievement into consideration, is now judged to be good overall. Increased rigour with respect to monitoring and assessment is now being applied and this also contributes effectively to ensuring the maintenance of the high standards of teaching and learning seen during the inspection.
11. Teaching is very effective because very good planning provides for the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Their individual education plans dovetail well into the planning and assessment that teachers carry out. Assessment is a strength because teachers are able to see how individual pupils are progressing. Homework is used appropriately and parents are generally satisfied with its quantity and content.
12. Teachers express their high expectations through a knowledge of what their pupils need to do next, in the way in which they plan for that, and in the response they expect from their pupils. As a result, relationships are very good and pupils' attitudes show that they are mature and able to reflect on their responses. The staff provide excellent role models for their pupils.
13. The quality and deployment of classroom assistants is also a major contributor to the way in which pupils learn and make progress. Similarly the very effective use of technology such as the interactive whiteboards in classrooms serves to engage pupils and facilitate high quality presentation of information.
14. Pupils respond very well. Because of the ethos of the school, to which they subscribe readily - and in so doing further enhance - the pupils are able to learn in a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere where humour finds its rightful place. The work they produce is neat and accurate and pupils take justifiable pride in its quality. Being secure further allows pupils to offer suggestions and make observation in the knowledge that their responses will be sympathetically listened to.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (17%)	13 (43%)	11 (37%)	1 (3%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum throughout the school, including the Foundation Stage, is good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The range of extra-curricular activities, together with the number of visits for the pupils and visitors to the school to enrich the curriculum, are very good. The quality and range of resources are good and the accommodation is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum planning is clear and relevant.
- Special weeks to focus on individual subjects are held each term.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good.
- The contribution made to pupils' learning by support staff is very good.
- Participation in sporting activities is very good, but there is a lack of non-sporting activities provided to enrich the curriculum.
- The development of English through other subjects is effective.
- German is taught to the older pupils.

Commentary

15. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and is based on nationally recommended schemes. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, including the provision for sex and drugs education. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided are good. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used effectively to teach English and mathematics. The school is developing relevant opportunities to work in a cross-curricular way. For one week each term a specific area of the curriculum is covered in depth throughout the school. So far, these have included sports, arts, design and technology and history. The curriculum is effectively designed to enable pupils to move from one phase of their education to the next.
16. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers and support staff plan the curriculum well to make it appropriate for the stage of children's learning. Both the nursery and the reception classes work very closely to the spirit of Foundation Stage learning. The curriculum provides the children with many very good opportunities to explore and investigate inside and outside the classroom. A particular strength of these arrangements is the strong focus on independent learning.
17. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is because of the very good leadership and management of the coordinator, who is able to make effective use of the school's monitoring procedures and in such a way is able to provide specifically, through very good individual education plans, for these pupils. The needs of pupils, as shown in their individual education plans, are then very effectively met through the teaching that results. This is equally so whether it be from outside agencies or school staff.
18. The curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education in the school is good. The school is inclusive in all its aspects and teachers have positive strategies that develop children's initiative and responsibilities. A School Council is chaired by a pupil and another acts as secretary. Pupils have real responsibilities here, including decision-making and choosing and ordering play equipment.
19. The curriculum is enriched by the large number of sporting activities provided for the pupils. However, no non-sporting activities, such as drama, arts club or choir are offered. As a result the opportunity to develop the creative element in some pupils is missed. Older pupils have regular lessons in German.
20. The quantity and quality of resources are generally good, and these are used appropriately. Whilst they are good overall in information and communication technology they are unsatisfactory for pupils in Year 1. The non-fiction library is underdeveloped, which affects the pupils' development of non-fiction skills.
21. Curriculum co-ordinators have been identified for each subject area and they ensure that their subject is covered effectively. The teachers and learning support staff in all parts of the school are experienced and work very efficiently together to support the pupils' learning and contribute to their good achievement over time.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are given good support, advice and guidance based on monitoring of their learning and personal development. Consequently, they feel valued and confident in their learning. The school is very good at seeking and acting upon the views of pupils. The care, welfare health and safety arrangements have improved since the time of the last inspection and are now satisfactory. The school has made several improvements in this area of its work since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements are good.
- Pupils have very good, trusting relationships with adults in school.
- The school works very well with outside agencies in supporting pupils with special educational needs.
- The school does not yet fully identify gifted and talented pupils.

Commentary

22. Home visits for all new pupils to the nursery and very good information to parents about provisions and learning routines underpin the induction program.
23. Procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are satisfactory overall. The school's designated officer for child protection is fully trained and deals with any issues effectively. All staff are issued with good written guidance about the school's policy and procedures. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when procedures were unsatisfactory. The local education authority introduced new health and safety risk assessment procedures for school trips in September 2003. The school is in the process of ensuring that the new requirements are met and all trips have appropriate evaluations made. The school works well with external agencies to promote health and safety. For instance, the road safety officer, police and fire service all visit regularly and give talks.
24. Pupils are very well involved with the school. There are suggestion boxes in all classrooms. The school council channels pupils' ideas very well. It is pleasing to see that the school has taken up so many of their suggestions, for instance, regarding the 'friendship bench' and playground equipment. These factors raise pupils' self-esteem and develop citizenship skills very well.
25. Pupils have very good relationships with staff. They are confident that they can always turn to staff for help in their learning or if they have any problems such as bullying. Pupils are happy during the school day because of the good support they receive. The school works effectively with Knowsley Southern Support Centre regarding pupils with special educational needs. This includes the availability of an outreach worker from the centre once a week. Other agencies such as the educational psychologist, speech therapist and behavioural support service are involved when necessary. These factors demonstrate the school's inclusive approach to education. The school is well aware that its planned provision for the gifted and talented is not yet in place. At the moment full identification of pupils' needs does not take place, so the school cannot be certain that its support is exactly what these pupils need.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the wider community, including other schools and colleges, are very good. Both parents and the community are making a very strong contribution to learning. The school has made good improvements to both the information supplied to parents and community links since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a very high regard for the school and are very satisfied with its work.
- They receive very good information about the school and pupils' standards and progress.
- The school involves parents very well through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.
- Parents make a very strong contribution to learning at school and at home.
- The school has established many links in the wider community, taking every opportunity to enrich pupils' learning.

Commentary

26. Replies to the inspection questionnaire and responses at the parents' meeting show that the school has a very strong relationship with parents. Parents are very pleased with the school's work and the quality of education provided. The school deals with parental concerns and complaints very well.
27. The school has a very detailed prospectus and nursery brochure that set out clearly its policies, provisions and practices. The 'welcome pack' for reception children is also very helpful. In addition, there are many handy booklets such as 'targets for pupils in Year 6' and information about the curriculum and topic work. Pupils' annual reports give parents a good pen picture about their children and how well they are doing.

28. Three consultation opportunities in the school year enable parents to meet staff, discuss their children's progress and see how the school works. In addition, the school canvasses for views on particular points. The inspection team was pleased to learn how well parents' suggestions and ideas are valued and taken on board. This was certainly the case regarding school uniform, the format of pupils' annual reports and the school ethos statement in the prospectus.
29. Many parent helpers give their time generously by helping in lessons, listening to readers or supporting school trips. The parents, teachers and friends association works very hard in organizing social and fundraising events. Money raised is used to buy additional learning resources. Parents also support learning at home very well by helping with homework tasks and reading.
30. There are many valuable links in the wider community. An associate priest from Cronton Church leads assemblies at the school each week, making a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Sports clubs and organisations offer coaching in many sports after school. Knowsley Community College provides adult education courses at school. For example, many parents take advantage of courses such as in ICT, history, signing and languages. Links with other schools include very effective mechanisms for pupils to transfer. The school puts much back into the community, for example, by supporting charities, providing parcels at harvest time and taking part in community events.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is good. The leadership and management of the school are very good and the leadership of the headteacher is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body is effective in the way it supports and directs the work of the school.
- The headteacher is providing excellent leadership and is very well supported in this by other key staff.
- The school is very effective in monitoring its work and in taking action to improve provision and standards.
- The school has an excellent ethos.
- The management of the school is very good.

Commentary

31. The governors are effective in planning the direction of the school. This is because they are closely involved in its work and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They meet their statutory obligations well and the school has made a good improvement since the time of the last inspection. They control the school's budget well and are aware of possible future demands on it. They are kept well informed by the school and enjoy good relationships with the staff. They have effectively supported the headteacher in curriculum innovation and have also been instrumental in monitoring the school's performance and in seeking ways to improve it. This has been achieved in part through the effective monitoring and appraisal of headteacher and staff. The school is careful to ensure that it seeks best value in its purchase of goods and services.
32. The headteacher is providing excellent leadership and it is because of this that the school has an excellent ethos. Parents recognized this in their responses both through their questionnaire and at their meeting. The headteacher has a very strong commitment to innovation and this is reflected in the good curriculum and the very good links with partner institutions. The school received a government achievement award in 2002 when standards were above average for pupils in Year 6 and were very high (in the top 5 per cent nationally) for pupils in Year 2. This remained the case in 2003 for pupils in Year 2. The issue of underachievement in 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 was anticipated. The measures put in place then and since then, whilst too late to have a significant impact on the test results, have very effectively addressed the issue of improving test performance and standards. Results for pupils in Year 6 in forthcoming tests are set to rise. This has been a very good improvement. Teachers know what is expected of them and this allows responsibility to be very effectively delegated. In this respect the deputy headteacher is also making a very good contribution as a member of the senior management team. He has responsibility for the now much more rigorous attention paid to the assessment of the progress that pupils make and the way in which teaching and learning are planned and undertaken. Because of this teachers know what pupils have achieved and can set targets for their future development. Those pupils who have special educational needs benefit not only from this but also from the very good leadership that all staff receive from the coordinator. Teaching is now very good and this improvement since the time of the last

inspection contributes in the main to the now very good progress that pupils across the school are making. Development planning is carried out effectively and the school's priorities are appropriate.

33. The management of the school is very good. The excellent ethos results in all staff having a strong sense of involvement. The management of the induction of three newly qualified teachers has ensured that they are working well and are making a very good contribution to the very good teaching that was observed during the inspection. The performance management of all staff is effectively in place and this enables suitable individual targets to be set. The school has effective systems in place to assess the progress that individual pupils are making and the way this is utilised in the way teachers plan is now much more effectively scrutinised by the senior management team. Particularly impressive is the outward looking nature of the school. This means that the school is able to commit to joint initiatives that will benefit other institutions, both within and beyond the local education authority. Not all these ventures have been successful, however, as evidenced by the schools adoption of its creative approach to learning in 2002/2003. Another example of the school's desire to provide a wide curriculum for its pupils can be seen in its relationship with a school in Germany and in the German language lessons given to pupils in Years 5 and 6, and the way exciting sports such as fencing and judo extend the physical education curriculum.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	527862
Total expenditure	500775
Expenditure per pupil	2318

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	48482
Balance carried forward to the next	27087

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

34. Children enter the nursery in September and January and attend part-time either in the morning or afternoon sessions. They enter the reception class in September of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. Children's attainment on entry into the nursery is broadly in line with expectations. They make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and taking the significant proportion of children with special educational needs into consideration are expected to enter Year 1 with levels that are generally above those expected for their age in all areas of their learning. The teachers and staff emphasise the development of social, personal, language and mathematical skills as the foundation for learning. They plan stimulating activities that engage the children and make learning enjoyable. There is a very good balance between teacher and child-initiated activities, through which the children become independent learners. There are good induction procedures into school to ensure a smooth transition between home and school. The close liaison between the nursery and the reception staff provides continuity of learning for the children.
35. There are very good assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage. All staff are involved in gathering information about each child across all areas of children's learning, which is then used to inform planning. The very strong commitment to inclusion is seen in the way all children, including those with special educational needs and those who are particularly able, make very good progress in all areas of their development. There are no barriers to their learning. The curriculum provided for the children is good, with stimulating activities, through which the children enjoy learning.
36. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The co-ordinator has established a very good ethos of teamwork. The very good co-ordination has helped to create a very effective first stage of children's learning. This has led to a commitment to high standards of provision and care for the children, in keeping with the aims of the school. In addition, the very good relationships that exist make a positive contribution and build a strong foundation for the children's future education.
37. At the time of the previous inspection, the school did not have a nursery. The judgements on progress in reception were that the children were making satisfactory progress and the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Teaching is now very good and children are achieving very well in the Foundation Stage. The school, therefore, has made very good improvements.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children achieve very well.
- Teachers and support assistants ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- The outdoor play area is limited and restricts play.

Commentary

38. Teaching is very good in both nursery and reception classes. All staff expect the children to behave well, set a very good example for them and gently encourage the children to give of their best. The children in the nursery class are confident and chat happily to visitors and each other. They concentrate well. Similarly, in the reception class, the staff build on the children's very good progress and use the well-established routines to promote children's emotional, moral, spiritual and social development alongside their academic development. A particularly good feature of the arrangements is the way that in both classes, the staff provide experiences that help the children to develop independence and a love of learning.
39. Teachers and support assistants ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued. As a result, there is mutual respect. In addition, the children are provided with very well planned

activities that engage their imaginations. They are often observed in the nursery initiating new ideas, such as filling up their cars with petrol and the attendant reminding the driver that he must pay for it. Similarly, in the reception class, the children continue to be interested and motivated to learn, organising their activities and show considerable maturity, when investigating, for example, the variety of resources for early science explorations.

40. The two classrooms are separated, without an overhead cover. This separation is not ideal, as it brings difficulties with sharing resources especially in the outdoor play area. The staff do their utmost to overcome these difficulties, through careful timetabling of activities. Nevertheless, the secure play area is too small to accommodate both classes simultaneously, limiting opportunities for active and co-operative play projects.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well through the very good teaching they receive in both nursery and reception.
- Teachers and support staff encourage children's enjoyment of stories and imaginative ideas.
- The limitations of the outdoor area adversely affect reception children's role-play.

Commentary

41. Children achieve very well throughout this stage, because of the very good teaching they receive in both year groups. As a result, reception children enter Year 1 with levels that are above the expected level. All staff are particularly skilled in developing children's language. Children in the nursery listen well to their teacher and to each other. They readily speak in informal free activities and in role-play. They "ring" the doctor to explain the baby's symptoms, for example, and are often seen completely engrossed in books. The children use whiteboards and a variety of pencils to experiment with writing their names and practising the formation of letters, carefully taught by their teacher.
42. In the reception class, the teacher builds on children's previous learning successfully. During the inspection, the teacher read with the children the story of Big Billy Gruff, retold and illustrated by them. The children recognised words and some of the phrases. The more able children talked confidently about the contents page. The high quality of conversation between staff and the children was seen in the confident manner the children express themselves. They readily ask relevant questions, such as 'What does this writing say,' in the full knowledge that they will get a courteous answer. The lively and stimulating activities, which are thoroughly planned, enable the children to build progressively on their literacy skills successfully.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of mathematical language and skills is very good and results in children's very good achievement.
- In the nursery and reception, children learn through practical activities.
- The outdoor area imposes some limitations on children's learning.

Commentary

43. Children enter the nursery with expected levels in mathematical awareness. They make very good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and consequently, enter Year 1 with levels that are generally above average. The teachers plan and resource good practical activities to give the children hands-on experience which leads the children to understand shape, size, weight and capacity. The nursery staff stress the importance of correct vocabulary, and through careful discussion, they enable the children to articulate their thinking. The reception children recognise shapes such as cylinder, cone, sphere and cuboid. They provide good examples in their observation of shapes. Both the Foundation Stage teachers seize many opportunities to point to numbers, for instance setting problems around the register, or singing number songs. The many opportunities for children to play with construction kits enable them to see different shapes, how well they fit together, how heavy they are and how to make patterns with them. The children enjoy mathematics and are eager to learn more.
44. The staff track where the children are in relation to their mathematical development, by careful observation. They plan accordingly, and match tasks to the needs of the children, providing suitable support, as necessary. The children learn how to arrange shapes into sets by the properties, such as the number of corners or sides or those shapes that cannot roll.
45. The outdoor area places some limitations on teachers' organisation and children's learning. For example, the area can only be used during dry weather, which poses problems for reception children particularly, such as for investigating capacity. Nevertheless, both teachers plan practical and stimulating activities to enable the children to observe numbers and patterns in the environment and in their daily routines.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in knowledge and understanding of the world, through the very good teaching they receive in the nursery and reception.
- The staff plan exciting activities to stimulate children's curiosity.

Commentary

46. Through the very good teaching in the Foundation Stage, the children achieve very well in this area of their development and are on course to exceed the expected standard. In the nursery and reception, the teachers create a lively learning environment to capture children's interests. The forthcoming visit to Delamere Forest has already heightened children's curiosity, with staff creating a sense of suspense at what may be found on the visit. Both year groups have gerbils to look after. The children take responsibility for feeding them regularly, and observe animal growth through watching them. The nursery children make jelly, observing changes and talking about them. The reception children explore the outside area to look for signs of autumn. During the inspection, these children were engrossed in investigating pushes and pulls, using a variety of toys the teacher collected for them from home. Through the teacher's skilful questions, such as 'What makes this toy move,' the children make accurate observations such as 'this toy needs to be wound to make it move.' In this very good lesson, the children were observed to be totally involved, exploring, observing and problem solving.

47. There are regular opportunities in both classes to acquire skills in information and communication technology. Children are taught how to use the computer and learn how to manipulate the mouse to move the appropriate set of clothes to dress teddy. They learn about the cultural richness of various faiths such as Sikhism. This term, for example, the children celebrated Divali by making diva pots.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well despite limitations imposed by the outdoor area.
- The very good teaching successfully develops children's physical skills.

Commentary

48. In the nursery and reception, the imaginatively planned activities, both indoors and outdoors, enable the children to make very good progress in the development of their physical skills. In the nursery, the children learn to ride tricycles and improve their balance when climbing over apparatus. They use scissors and brushes proficiently and already show considerable control when using the space outside. In reception, the children share the outdoor space when the nursery children are not using it and this has to be carefully timetabled, thereby limiting use of it more frequently. Nevertheless, the teacher plans activities in the hall to improve children's co-ordination and physical skills. Children know that they need to warm up before taking exercise and to cool down at the end. The children persevere with their activities and practise to improve their throwing and catching skills. By the time they leave the reception class, children's physical development is above expectations.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well through the imaginative and stimulating activities in both classes.
- There are ample opportunities for children to explore and to develop their ideas.

Commentary

49. Children achieve very well in this area of their development because of the variety of imaginative and stimulating activities provided for them in both classes. As a result, children show remarkable creativity. The children express their feelings through exploring different materials, musical instruments, story making and imaginative play. They thoroughly enjoy exploring the variety of resources available to them. The children in the nursery use instruments and sing familiar songs while doing so. They spontaneously dress up in Christmas costumes and make up words to re-enact the story from Mary's perspective, for example. Outdoors, they are often observed absolutely engrossed in play. When the teacher brought out a cardboard box, the children immediately engaged their imaginations in Jack in the Box play.
50. There are ample opportunities for children to explore and to develop their ideas. In the reception class, the children talk about their 'cup and ball' game from learning about toys in the past. They use building blocks to create imaginative constructions, to represent a variety of scenes. During the inspection, the children experimented to see how tall they could make their towers and how best to build them using the available equipment. When one of the children saw another standing by, he immediately included him, by asking, 'Would you like to help?' They instantly set about building a castle, happily sharing resources and chatting to one another. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children achieve very well, because all staff value their creativity and

expression. By the time they enter Year 1 they are likely to exceed the expected of attainment for their age.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are above average at the end of Year 2 and, whilst average at the end of Year 6, are improving.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The development of writing is a strength and some of the content is excellent.
- Speaking and listening skills are very well promoted in all classes.
- The very good relationships between adults and pupils enhance the pupils' learning.
- Good use is made of assessment to track the progress of pupils across the school.
- The use of literacy across the curriculum is developing well.

Commentary

51. The Year 2 National Curriculum test results in 2003 were well above average, whilst Year 6 results were below average. The co-ordinator and teachers have been determined to rectify these lower standards for the older pupils, and their strategies, including a more rigorous system of assessment, are proving very successful: writing is a school priority and the quality of this is now generally high. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well over time. Standards were above average for pupils in Years 2 and 6 at the time of the last inspection and this remains the case for pupils in Year 2. Whilst standards are now in line with expectations for pupils in Year 6, they represent good progress for those particular pupils since their below average results in Year 2.
52. Speaking and listening skills are promoted well. In many lessons, very good use is made of 'talking partners', which give all pupils opportunities to speak and listen to each other.
53. The standard of reading is above average for most pupils from Year 2 upwards. Pupils are encouraged to take books home and read to an adult, and many do this on a regular basis. The constructive use of home-school reading records, where a parent, carer or pupil writes a comment, is widespread. There are some minor weaknesses in pupils' library skills. Although some have a reasonable knowledge of contents and index, their knowledge of systems used to find a particular book are less secure.
54. Standards in writing are improving well and remain an area for continued development. The range of extended writing is very good – and often excellent. The writing of more able pupils is lively and captures the reader's interest. A pupil in Year 5 described Cinderella as being "like a butterfly wrapped in a beetle's body". This high quality use of language is encouraged in all classes. The standard of what is actually written (spelling and handwriting) still needs improvement for the older pupils.
55. There are displays of work around the school, which record the pupils' achievements. These include poetry in Year 2, play-scripts in Years 3 and 6, history reports by Year 4 pupils on the visit by Queen Elizabeth I to the school (where the headteacher was knighted!) and some excellent writing by Year 5 pupils on 'The Speckled Band' – a Sherlock Holmes mystery. Year 1 pupils benefit from a role-play area, set up as a post office.
56. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and ranged from satisfactory to excellent during the inspection. In all lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge, lessons are very well prepared and the pace is brisk with the result that pupils are learning at a faster

rate. All lessons are imaginative and many observed were inspiring. Examples include a lesson in Year 2, where pupils were held spellbound as the teacher told them a story of his childhood; in Year 4, great fun was had by all during a well-planned range of practical activities which reinforced the alphabetical order of words; in Year 6, the teacher's very high expectations and infectious enthusiasm ensured excellent progress in understanding the conventions of punctuation.

57. Very good relationships between adults and pupils enhance pupils' learning. Pupils have very positive attitudes and are willing and eager to learn. Teaching assistants are involved fully in lessons and clearly enjoy their work, making a positive contribution to pupils' achievements. All adults give praise to reward and encourage pupils, and the vast majority of lessons make learning interesting and enjoyable, where pupils are fully involved. Guided reading sessions are used purposefully as teachers support pupils with uncertain words, sometimes explaining the meaning of unfamiliar words and at other times encouraging pupils to use dictionaries to deepen their understanding.
58. Good use is now being made of assessment to track the progress of pupils across the school. There is now a tighter focus on measuring the outcomes of teaching and the way teaching takes place. This is helping to raise standards by ensuring that the work set is appropriate for each pupil. Day-to-day assessment is constructive and relevant, with teachers giving considerable time to marking their pupils' books.
59. The work of a highly effective co-ordinator is helping to raise standards. The overall quality of resources is good, although the lack of high quality non-fiction books in the school library limits development of the pupils' non-fiction skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well and adapted appropriately to support effective learning. Growing use is made of other subjects to develop writing skills. These opportunities include history, where Year 4 pupils have written about a visit to their school by Queen Elizabeth I, and geography, where Year 5 pupils considered the points for and against building the Aswan Dam in Egypt. Numerous opportunities are also provided for extended writing to develop pupils' ability to sustain their skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expectations for pupils in Year 2 and are improving in Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- The subject leadership is good.

Commentary

61. The results of National Curriculum tests in 2003 for pupils in Year 2 were very high (in the top 5 per cent). This was also the case when their performance was compared with similar schools. The results for pupils in Year 6 were very disappointing to the school as pupils' performance was below average. Inspection shows that standards in the current Year 2 are above average and those in Year 6 are now average. Standards in Year 2 remain similar to the time of the last inspection. Whilst current standards for pupils in Year 6 are lower, they represent satisfactory progress over time when the pupils' previous attainment at the end of Year 2, and changes to the class roll are taken into consideration.

62. The school has rigorously applied itself to addressing the issue of the under-performance of pupils in Year 6 in the 2003 National Curriculum tests and the measures that have been put in place show that the issues have been successfully identified and addressed. The result is that since September, teaching and learning have become very good and pupils in Year 6 and the rest of the school are now achieving very well. Taking the experience of the previous year and the quality of teaching and learning that was observed during the inspection into consideration, pupils are achieving well overall. Teaching is now very good overall and this constitutes an improvement since the time of the last inspection. It was excellent in one lesson, very good in three lessons and good in the remaining two. The best lesson gave pupils a clear understanding of strategies for determining the factors of a given number whilst reinforcing many aspects of pupils' mental mathematics. Carried out at a rapid pace, pupils were carried along with enthusiasm for the challenge with which they were presented. Upon consolidation of this work the classroom assistant was seen to provide very good support to pupils because of her own very good understanding of the strategies that had just been outlined.
63. Teaching and learning have many common strengths which include the comprehensive understanding by pupils of the objectives for the lesson and the ways in which teachers effectively evaluate – including self-evaluation by the pupils themselves – the progress pupils are making. The planning of lessons, the provision for individuals and groups of pupils and the sensible deployment of classroom support also contribute significantly to the very good learning that takes place.
64. Because relationships are never less than very good pupils are seen to be enjoying their work. They enjoy the particular challenge of the subject and because they feel secure with staff and one another, they are more than happy to participate with suggestions and answers. Very good attitudes are further reflected in the careful presentation of work that pupils produce and in the constructiveness with which that work is then marked.
65. The leadership of the subject is new to the current coordinator, who has had little time since taking up the responsibility to monitor teaching. Nonetheless, the progress of pupils is well monitored and the way in which teaching styles have been modified and the way staff are deployed, including the induction of three newly qualified teachers, shows that the leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject is well resourced and effective use is made of those resources. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, which arises from the careful analysis of very good quality assessments that are made on the progress of all pupils. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the way that pupils are given the opportunity to work cooperatively, and in the way in which they are encouraged to listen to, and evaluate, the explanations of other pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. The subject is making a good impact in other areas of the curriculum such as science, where data handling skills are required. Such work also effectively consolidates pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising as teachers place more emphasis on scientific enquiry.
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school; pupils achieve well in the subject.
- Pupils apply their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology well.
- The newly appointed co-ordinator has insufficient opportunities to monitor standards or teaching.

Commentary

67. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, where standards were average. Standards seen during this inspection by Years 2 and 6 are above average and improving in comparison with previous years. Pupils in Year 6 are now achieving well. Standards in Year 6 have risen steeply since last year, when they were well below average. This was attributed to the school adopting a creative approach to learning in 2002/2003, and resulted in the pupils' inability to perform in test conditions.
68. Learning through scientific enquiry and experimental work contributes strongly to the good progress throughout the school. The pupils with special educational needs progress well, because they are provided with help from the staff who support them and from other pupils in the group. The higher attaining pupils are provided with consistently challenging tasks that meet their specific needs. Boys and girls make similar progress. The school takes great care to ensure that this system works for all pupils. As a result, there are no barriers to pupils' learning, because of the school's very strong commitment to inclusion.
69. The very good quality of teaching throughout the school is at the heart of the pupils' very good learning. All the pupils have the opportunities to engage in a range of rich experiences through experimentation and investigation. They are used to making observations. Skills of recording gradually become more sophisticated so that, for example, by Year 4, the pupils can plot a graph to record, for example, their findings whether adults have bigger bones than the pupils in the class.
70. Teachers make lessons interesting and valuable in many ways. They give a scientific 'feel' to lessons, when they use a variety of vocabulary associated with the topic. The very good quality of discussions results in pupils' ability to use the newly learned terminology and to articulate their understanding. Teachers make interesting introductions to lessons. In Year 2, in a lesson on life processes and living things, the teacher used an interactive whiteboard very effectively to introduce the learning objectives.
71. There is a good breadth of study in science. The teachers ensure that science is taught in familiar contexts and they make very good links with other subjects. Their infectious enthusiasm, together with the very good relationships and a variety of teaching methods, all ensure that the pupils achieve well and are enthusiastic learners. The very good balance between teachers' expositions and pupils' experiments enables the pupils to work collaboratively when required, but also to encourage independent learning. Well planned homework consolidates and extends pupils' learning effectively.
72. The newly appointed co-ordinator for science leads the subject well, both by example and through her own enthusiasm. In a very effective lesson on thermal insulators, the Year 4 pupils were buzzing with excitement when developing their scientific investigations. In this lesson, the teacher made learning fun.
73. Presently, the co-ordinator has insufficient opportunities to maintain an overview of science and to track pupils' progress from year to year. The co-ordinator has made very good links with the Knowsley adviser and with local businesses such as Chrysler, to develop the subject further. She ensures that, apart from literacy and numeracy, information and communication technology is well used to support and to extend learning in the subject. With her infectious enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge and how to teach it, science standards are well placed to continue to rise.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, particularly in Year 3 to 6.

- Teachers make good use of the available resources to teach skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject.
- In Year 1, unlike in all other classes where resourcing is good, there are insufficient resources to enable the teacher to make full use of teaching and learning.
- Standards are rising and have improved since the last inspection.

Commentary

74. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology as a result of good teaching, particularly in Year 3 to 6, where standards are above average. Pupils reach the expected standards in Year 1 and 2, despite insufficient resources for the younger pupils in Year 1. The teacher in Year 1 carefully teaches basic skills to small groups of pupils, who know how to click and drag pictures and words to the desired place. Presently, both teachers do their utmost to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. They also make very good use of parents' expertise to teach skills on a one-to-one basis.
75. In Year 2, the pupils have reasonable mouse control, but they are not confident to find letter keys as yet, to enable them to write at speed. The teacher uses a programmable toy to teach the pupils how to program instructions to move the toy from one position to another. In providing the pupils with clear instructions, he enabled them to proceed with confidence and much enjoyment and to reinforce knowledge and understanding. The pupils know about technology used to control microwaves, video recorders and cash machines.
76. In Year 3, the pupils know how to cut and paste, change text and how, with good safeguards in place, to surf the Internet. They log on in their own name. When changing text, the pupils decide on the font, size and colour, and import pictures from clip-art to illustrate their work. This good progress continues as the pupils move from year to year, so that, by Year 5, the pupils confidently exchange information and ideas via email to pupils in Germany. The very good access that parents provide at home enable the pupils to consolidate their learning in the subject. The Year 6 pupils showed particular competence in making a multimedia presentation on World War 2. During the inspection, the pupils were observed confidently adding transitions to their presentations to move from one slide to another, adding animation to text and pictures. Some pupils successfully added sounds to their animations. The teacher ensured that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are particularly able, were making good learning gains. The school's strong focus on independent learning is evident in the way the pupils competently use computers in their projects.
77. The quality of teaching is good and pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. Pupils in Year 4, for example, are keen to talk about their work and are keen to share ideas when word-processing and writing for an audience. In an effective lesson observed, the teacher provided the pupils with clear and precise instructions that enabled them to produce a class newsletter. She successfully used the whiteboard to demonstrate skills and to consolidate learning by encouraging the pupils to show others what they have achieved. Pupils' self-assessment enables them to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do next to consolidate their skills. Throughout the school, the teaching assistants' confident knowledge and skills in using computers helps the pupils' learning in the subject.
78. The co-ordinator has only had the responsibility for the subject since September but is already making a good contribution to raising standards. The co-ordinator has successfully sought the help of the Mersey Grid for Learning, through which training and resources such as whiteboards have been obtained. Since the last inspection, which judged that standards were in line with expectations, the school has made good progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Information and communication technology is increasingly used to assist pupils' learning in other subjects. For economy of time and to make learning more effective, the teachers link

learning in the subject to improve learning in another. This is evident In English to consolidate skills in instructional writing. Teachers access the Mersey Grid for Learning to provide extra support in mathematics. Displays around the school amply indicate that teachers use this subject not only to reinforce learning but also to help the pupils experiment and to explore. For example, in Year 3, the pupils made very effective pictures on the computer, using repeated patterns.

HUMANITIES

*Too few lessons and too little work were seen to make a judgement on the quality of teaching or standards reached in either geography or history. **Religious education** is not covered in this report because of the school's voluntary aided status.*

80. **Geography** and **history** are covered in rotation during each year. Although too little teaching was seen to judge standards of attainment or the quality of teaching, the planning map and high quality displays around the school show that the required aspects of each subject are covered. These include work on family trees in Year 1, an excellent display on the Tudors in Year 4 and another on Britain since the 1930s in Year 6. In Year 5 there is a display on Egypt, where points for and against the building of the Aswan Dam were considered. Some useful work is done using the Internet as a source for information.
81. Teachers are developing these subjects well as a means of teaching extended writing in English. The curriculum is enhanced by a good programme of visits to add interest and excitement. A special history week was held earlier this term, following which all the classes presented examples of what they had learned, including an entertaining Tudor dance by pupils in Year 4. A geography week is to be held next term.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*None of these subjects were foci for the inspection so it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision or standards and achievement. **Music** and **physical education** were not inspected.*

82. Evidence of **art and design** was seen in display and in pupils' sketchbooks, and one lesson was observed. Whilst what was seen was at the expected level, there was not enough evidence to make overall judgements about standards or teaching. It is clear that the requirements to teach the subjects of art and design, music and physical education are being met. There are good procedures in place for recording the progress that pupils make.
83. Scrutiny of displays and pupils' work in **design and technology** indicate that standards are in line with expectations in Year 2 and 6. There are some good examples of work in Year 4, where the pupils confidently use saws to mitre dowelling wood, when making Tudor houses. The pupils in Year 2 design picture frames and draw side and front views. The pupils employ their skills of literacy and numeracy well, for example through writing and following instructions and measuring accurately when making a conveyor belt in Year 6.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. No teaching was seen in this area, so no overall provision judgement can be made. However, the good curriculum for personal, social and health education ensures pupils develop the skills necessary to live safely in their community and to be able to recognize the challenges and responsibilities they face. Issues are drawn out in class and in assemblies that enable pupils to explore and express their feelings as well as listening to and valuing the opinions of others.
85. Pupils' social skills are well provided for. The ethos of the school is such that pupils are encouraged to help and befriend others and they know that this will happen if they ask for help. The operation of the school council has yielded some concrete results in terms of decisions made about, for example, school uniform. Visitors to the school, including the regular

assemblies taken by the local vicar, further strengthen pupils' understanding of the needs of others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).