

INSPECTION REPORT

ECCLESTON C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Eccleston, Chester

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111349

Headteacher: Mrs S M Warner

Lead inspector: Mr M J Mayhew

Dates of inspection: 9th – 11th February 2004

Inspection number: 256033

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: | 4 – 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 101 |
| School address: | Eaton Road Eccleston Chester Cheshire |
| Postcode: | CH4 9HD |
| Telephone number: | 01244 674330 |
| Fax number: | 01244 674839 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr E Gittins |
| Date of previous inspection: | 18 th May 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Eccleston CE Primary School is housed in a Grade II listed building in Eccleston, a village two miles south of Chester. The school is smaller than most primary schools. There are 101 pupils (46 girls and 55 boys) on roll, who all attend on a full-time basis. About a fifth of pupils live in rented housing in the local village. The rest live in privately owned housing in the wider community, often as far as Chester, or across the border in Wales. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups, and all pupils speak English as their first language. Fifteen per cent of pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, which is about average, and two per cent of pupils have been assigned statements of special educational need, which is also about average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Whilst there is a wide range and variation of children's attainment on entry from year to year, the average this year is above what is normally expected. Some pupils, following examination, leave the school at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 to enter private schooling.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---|
| 22197 | Mr M J Mayhew | <i>Lead inspector</i> | Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Special educational needs Personal, social and health education and citizenship |
| 9652 | Mr C Herbert | <i>Lay inspector</i> | |
| 14842 | Mrs S Cook | <i>Team inspector</i> | English Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Physical education |
| 22990 | Mr C Furniss | <i>Team inspector</i> | Science History Geography |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some considerable strengths. Pupils enjoy their lessons and achieve well over their time at the school. Due to small numbers, standards overall in the core subjects vary from year to year, but are generally above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Teaching is good, as is leadership and management of the school. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Current standards at eleven are above average in English, (including above average reading standards, and well above average standards in speaking and listening) and mathematics.
- There is good provision for pupils to develop their creative skills, especially in art and design and in music.
- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good overall, with some significant strengths.
- Though standards in writing are satisfactory, pupils do not write enough at length, either in English or in other subjects, to develop their skills as well as they could.
- Handwriting and presentation of work are still not good enough.
- The consistent setting of homework successfully encourages parents' involvement in their children's learning at school.
- Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning because listening to them, valuing their views and catering for their special needs is integral to the school's ethos.
- The marking of their work does not give pupils enough guidance about how they can improve.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are better than they were and are now satisfactory, with strengths in some aspects. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning is firmly established, and there are detailed plans and staff guidance for most subjects. The governors now fulfil all their statutory requirements, and systems for performance management are in place. However, despite good efforts, standards of handwriting and presentation are still not consistently good enough.

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 | B | D |
| mathematics | C | B | A | A |
| science | A | D | C | 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.*

Children in the Foundation Stage reach the learning goals children are expected to attain by the end of Reception. They exceed the communication, language and literacy goals, and the mathematical, personal, social and emotional goals. **Children's' achievement is good in the Reception class and pupils in Years 1 to Year 6 achieve well.** Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading and speaking and listening, and above average in writing and mathematics. The 2003 results show that attainment at Year 6 in comparison with all schools was above average in English and well above average in mathematics. Published results in comparison with similar schools on the basis of prior attainment are unreliable. This is because there were only ten pupils in the year group, and a number of higher attaining pupils had left at Year 4 to enter private education. Careful tracking of the remaining ten pupils' progress shows that they achieved

well in English and mathematics, and satisfactorily in science. Current standards in Year 6 are above average overall in English, above average in mathematics, and satisfactory in science. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of science, but they do not write about it sufficiently well in order to reach the higher than expected standard.

Standards in ICT are satisfactory, and better than they were at the previous inspection. Pupils exceed national expectations in music, and meet them in history and geography. Not enough work was seen in other subjects to make a judgement. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve well.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They behave very well and have very good attitudes to their work. Levels of attendance are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good quality of education**. **Teaching and learning are good** across the school, and some lessons are very good. The very good relationships between the adults and pupils contribute significantly to the good progress that pupils make. Teachers make most lessons interesting and suitably challenging to pupils of all levels of ability. The school makes good provision for pupils with SEN because they get carefully planned support.

The good curriculum gives pupils rich learning experiences that meet national requirements. Pupils develop their creative abilities well through the good provision for the arts. All pupils are fully included in what is on offer, and the school's very good links with parents do much to enhance pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

There is good quality leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, who leads with a clear sense of purpose, and is a good role model of teaching competence to her colleagues. Leadership by other staff is good overall, but there is a need for more regular monitoring of performance in the core subjects, so that any necessary initiatives can be more quickly applied. The governors fulfil statutory requirements, offer good support to the staff, and play a full part in helping to improve the school's effectiveness.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Nearly all parents are happy with what the school provides for their children, and are pleased with the progress they make, both academically and personally. Similarly, pupils enjoy coming to school because they like the attention they get, and the interesting lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- In order to attain higher writing standards, increase the number of times that pupils can write independently and at length.
- Consistently use marking of work that gives pupils guidance about how they should improve, and then check that they act on the guidance.
- Raise the standard of handwriting and presentation in all pupils' work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in relation to their abilities. Standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics. In Year 6, standards are above average in reading and average in writing. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average across Years 1 to 6. Science standards are average at Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement for pupils with SEN is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in mathematics is good because pupils learn well how to apply their computational skills to a wide range of mathematical problems.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in the personal, social and emotional aspect of their development, thus setting the basis for their further development across the curriculum in the rest of the school.
- Pupils' very good speaking and listening skills help very well their other learning.
- Although average, standards in writing are not as good as they could be.
- There has been good improvement in the standards pupils reach in ICT.

Commentary

1. The children currently in the Foundation Stage class (the Reception class) reach above the attainment levels normally expected of children in their Reception year. They achieve well and are likely to reach at least the learning goals expected of children by the end of their Reception year. They achieve particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development because the staff value highly their individuality and provide every encouragement and resource for them to do their best.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 15.9 (17.3) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 13.9 (16.0) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 15.7 (17.4) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The above table shows that pupils at the end of Year 2 scored, overall, below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. This was because most of them had at least some difficulty in learning. Despite the school's good arrangements for intervention teaching, not a high enough proportion of pupils made the necessary progress to reach or exceed the expected attainment levels. Additionally, there were only 14 pupils in the year group, which is a small number to use as a basis for making secure comparisons with national data.

3. Current pupils in Year 2 are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics and should do well in the statutory tests at the end of the academic year. Their attainment in reading is already well above that which is normally found, and they attain well in writing.

4. There were only ten pupils eligible to take the 2003 tests at the end of Year 6, so it is not relevant to publish attainment tables because they would not portray a secure comparison with national data. For example, whilst the table would show that the pupils, overall, attained below the national average in science, in line with the average in English, and well above it in mathematics, other data shows that the pupils made good overall progress from Year 2 to Year 6 in each of the

subjects. Current Year 6 pupils achieve well in English and mathematics, and exceed national expectations. Pupils at all levels of capability achieve well in both subjects, although their standards in writing are not as good as their reading standards. High standards in mathematics are well supported by the use that pupils in the Juniors make of workbooks, (set aside solely for working out mathematical problems) and of regular homework. In science, pupils achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts, but their skills in writing about science are not well enough developed for them to score above average in the science tests. This is because they do not write often enough in detail and at length in this and other subjects.

5. Standards in speaking and listening skills are very good in both the Infants and the Juniors. Pupils use these skills well to pose questions and to offer explanations in all aspects of the curriculum. In this way, most pupils develop good knowledge in several subjects because they take a deep interest in them as a result of the interesting discussions they have about them, both with their classmates and with their teachers.

6. Pupils achieve well in several aspects of ICT, and reach expected standards for their ages. By Year 6, most pupils reach above expected standards in data logging, musical composition and multi-media presentations. These standards are good improvements from the previous inspection. Pupils do well in the creative aspects of their learning. Their achievements in various elements of the music curriculum are above what is normally expected. Pupils take delight in musical performance, especially singing, which they do with considerable skill, confidence and enjoyment. There is not enough evidence to make secure judgements about standards in the other subjects. Provision and standards in religious education are the subjects of a separate inspection and report.

7. Pupils with SEN are well supported in class, in small groups and on a one-to-one basis when required. Most parents of these pupils are pleased with the skilled attention that their children get to support their needs. As a result, the pupils achieve well in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs).

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to their learning and they are very well behaved. Attendance is good and above the national average for similar schools. Punctuality is also good. The school has maintained the very high standards in these aspects since the last inspection. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, and this aspect of school life has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and all adults in the school community are excellent.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are excellent.
- Behaviour in lessons and pupils' attitudes in and around school are very good.
- The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good and pupils have a good appreciation of their own and others' cultures.
- Attendance rates and punctuality are good.

Commentary

8. From the moment that they arrive at school pupils are enthusiastic. In the playground each morning they are very keen to talk to each other or visitors. They said that 'they were looking forward to their lessons' and they hoped 'that visitors would attend their school council meeting later in the day'. This enthusiasm extends into the classrooms. Pupils are very polite and well mannered towards visitors.

9. The pupils' behaviour is very good in the classroom, the playground and in the dining hall at lunchtime. There was no indication of any unsociable or racist behaviour during the inspection. There have been no exclusions for the past three years.

10. Relationships within the school community are excellent and all pupils respond very well to the guidance that adults give them. The impact of these very high quality relationships is that all pupils are fully included in all school activities. Teachers encourage discussion and value the contribution of pupils to school life through such activities as the school council. This raises the confidence and self-esteem of pupils to such very high levels.

11. Parental responses to their questionnaire and at the meeting were very positive about this aspect of school life and the great majority agreed that the behaviour of children in school was very good.

12. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, as is the outcome of the provision. All pupils have a very clear idea of right and wrong and are successfully encouraged to become mature and responsible members of the school and local community. Their spiritual development, which is very good, provides opportunities in assemblies for them to reflect quietly about such subjects as 'each one of us is special'. Very good opportunities are provided for social development through such activities as the school council, where pupils gain an understanding of democratic decision making, and of listening and speaking to each other. In lessons, also, teachers very successfully encourage pupils to speak confidently, to listen carefully to each other, and to understand others' points of view. Elected class representatives in the council speak with real enthusiasm about taking responsibility in the playground, and of how they can help younger children to make effective use of the suggestion box. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good and pupils have many opportunities to make visits into the community to enhance their learning. The very good provision for all these aspects of school life has a very positive impact on the personal development of all pupils in school.

13. The attendance rate is consistently good and is above national average. The school works hard to maintain this level of attendance, which is higher than many other similar schools. Punctuality to school is good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.2 | School data | 0.3 |
| National data | 5.4 | National data | 0.4 |

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching is predominantly good, with some lessons that are very good. The curriculum is also good and is considerably enriched by a programme of visits and visitors, and by the way that the school takes advantage of links between subjects. The school makes good provision for pupils with SEN.

Teaching and learning

All the teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory. It was good or better in nearly all lessons in all classes. Evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work this term indicates that the teaching seen is a fair reflection of previous work. No overall judgements were made about teaching in art and design, design and technology, geography or history but the teaching was good in the few lessons seen.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in all year groups and for all pupils in English, mathematics, scientific knowledge and ICT. It is very good in music, and in personal and social education in the Reception class.
- Teachers are skilled in their questioning of pupils and challenge their thinking.
- Teachers manage their classes very well to maintain good behaviour.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support for Reception children, lower attaining pupils and pupils with SEN.
- The marking of pupils' work does not consistently indicate how it could be improved.
- Teachers do not remind pupils often enough about the need for neat handwriting and careful presentation of work.
- Although teachers encourage pupils to write independently, they do not encourage them enough to write at length either in English or in other subjects, such as science, to support learning across the curriculum.
- Teachers use their subject specialist knowledge well to teach pupils in other than their own class.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 5 | 18 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

14. The teaching for the Reception children is good and they achieve well. Teachers and other adults help children to understand how to behave, with the effect that children show very good attitudes to work and behave very well. Children's developing communication skills are nurtured by staff, who listen closely to them and then extend their vocabulary through focused questions. A strength of the provision is the emphasis staff put on children talking and listening to one another, which they do with a maturity in advance of their age. As a result, children are confident speakers. Those with speech problems take an active part in all discussions and in play. The teacher and other adults have good questioning skills and, building on children's experiences, extend their knowledge well. The teacher provides an interesting and stimulating range of activities, many of a practical nature that are usually well matched to children's ability. The classroom assistants and other adults and parent helpers are very well deployed and make a particularly valuable contribution to children's learning. The outside yard is too small for physical activities but physical lessons in the hall adequately compensate.

15. Good teaching continues throughout Years 1 to 6. Teachers have a good knowledge of the different subjects, which they use skilfully to extend pupils' learning, and use their specialist subject knowledge to good effect when teaching other classes. For example, music is taught throughout the school by the headteacher, who has high expectations of what pupils can achieve and is a good role model for other staff. Teachers are well organised and prepared, and use a variety of imaginative resources well. A strength of the school is the way they manage their classes very effectively to sustain pupils' interest and attention, and use a good range of strategies to ensure that pupils behave very well. Teachers are skilled in posing questions in the oral parts of lessons that challenge pupils' thinking. They ensure that their questions are directed at pupils of all abilities and, for example, those with SEN are keen to answer.

16. In English and mathematics particularly, teachers make it very clear to pupils what they are to learn and, at the end of the lessons, they assess thoroughly what the pupils have learnt. Assessment procedures in English and mathematics are good, and used well by teachers to set targets for groups and individual pupils, and to help them plan lessons that match pupils' learning needs well. From their assessments, teachers plan for future work and this ensures that what is

learnt in one lesson is built upon in the next. Pupils know their learning targets and staff sometimes refer to these during lessons to help pupils raise their attainment. Assessment in science is less rigorous, but improving. Whilst there is use of assessment in the other subjects, the school has clear plans to improve its systems in the next academic year.

17. Written work is not consistently well enough marked to inform pupils how to improve. Teachers do not give a sufficiently high priority to insisting that, in all subjects, pupils present their work neatly. Consequently, pupils' work is not as well presented as it might be. Although the school's priority for improvement is pupils' writing, teachers are not providing them with frequent enough chances to write at length in a given time period, either in English or in other subjects.

18. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good and work is carefully matched to their needs. Classroom assistants help pupils with SEN and lower attaining pupils, so that they make good gains in their learning in the tasks they are set. They take a full part in lessons, in line with the school's ethos of including all pupils in the whole life of the school. Teaching assistants are clear about the learning intention for each lesson, and are well briefed by teachers on their tasks. They treat pupils with respect and help them to make good progress.

19. Learning is good. Pupils are very attentive in lessons and very keen to contribute and participate. They enjoy working with others and, when left to work independently, apply themselves conscientiously. Homework is set and marked regularly and makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum of sufficient breadth and balance to meet the needs of the pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. Opportunities for enrichment are very good through effective use of visits and visitors, and a broad range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and are well used.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum.
- Good links between subjects make learning more interesting and relevant to pupils.
- A good match of teachers and very good use of support staff helps to promote good learning and very good relationships.
- Accommodation is rather cramped, with lack of storage space, and the small hall space available restricts indoor physical education activities.

Commentary

20. There has been good improvement in this aspect since the previous inspection. The curriculum overall is good and meets nearly all the needs of pupils in all areas of the National Curriculum and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is also good. The good balance of activities arranged by the teacher and her assistant ensures that the children learn at a good rate and achieve well in most areas of learning.

21. There is effective use made of topics and links between subjects. This helps to make the teaching more interesting and relevant to the pupils, and they draw on skills learnt in one subject to enhance their learning in others. Good examples were in Years 5 and 6, where the history topic on Tudors included some good use of computers and the Internet for research, and in a science investigation to help Tudor sailors extract fresh water from the sea!

22. Curriculum provision for pupils with SEN is good. The school provides effective and caring provision for these pupils. Their IEPs have good short-term teaching strategies where appropriate, and teachers use these when planning class work. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCo) deploys teaching assistants well to support classes and individual pupils. Teaching assistants have

clearly defined roles, work well with teachers and have a good effect on pupils' learning. Pupils who are especially gifted in mathematics or aspects of English have lessons with pupils in the year above. This works well because the level of difficulty of the tasks challenges them appropriately. Similarly, either individually or in groups of like ability, all other pupils are given work in these subjects that matches their capabilities well.

23. The curriculum across the school is very well supported by a broad range of well-planned visits and visitors. These include a residential trip for Class 4, the Roman Centurion Walk at Chester for Class 3, a trip to a recording studio for Class 2 and visits to a local thatched cottage by Class 1. Visitors include members of the local community, the police, a district nurse, musicians and resident artists. The curriculum is also enhanced, and most parents agree, by a range of extra-curricular and sporting activities that is unusual in such a small school. Nevertheless, some parents would like to see more sports outside of the school day, especially for boys.

24. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. This most attractive building is in beautiful surroundings and provides a pleasant learning environment. The accommodation is a little cramped in places. There is a lack of storage space and the small amount of hall space currently available places restrictions upon indoor physical education. However, the completion of the additional classroom under construction will release the hall for more extensive physical education lessons, as well as providing an adaptable space for use by the school for a wide range of useful activities. The accommodation is clean and well maintained by the caretaker.

25. Human resources are good. The committed team of able teachers is well matched to the needs of the curriculum. Well trained and deployed teaching assistants support teachers and pupils very well, and their commitment and expertise make a significant contribution to the good provision.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a very high level of care, good support, advice and guidance to its pupils and makes excellent provision to involve them in school life.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides excellent opportunities to listen to pupils and act on their views.
- There is a very high level of care for pupils and very effective procedures are in place for health, safety and child protection.
- Good procedures are in place to support, advise and guide pupils.

Commentary

26. The school takes very seriously its responsibility for all health and safety and child protection matters. Appropriate records are maintained for risk assessment, first aid, fire drills and accident recording, and the procedures for child protection are very effective. The school is very aware of the need for road safety in the village and it is taking every opportunity to inform parents about the need for safe parking of vehicles.

27. There is a good level of provision for the support, advice and guidance of all pupils. This is based on the good knowledge that all adults have of the academic and personal circumstances of pupils and the very high quality of trusting relationships that exist between them. Consequently, each pupil receives equal attention from teachers to do with their work, no matter what their level of capability.

28. Pupils know that the school will listen to their concerns, particularly through the newly created school council. In this excellent forum all pupils are encouraged to give their views and every response is valued. The school council provides an excellent example of the inclusive way that the school operates. During the inspection, pupils confirmed that they were very happy to go to teachers or other adults if they had any concerns.

29. Teachers and teaching assistants give good support to pupils with SEN. These pupils are fully included in what the school has to offer. Of particular note is the way that teachers and teaching assistants successfully and skilfully provide them with work that matches their learning needs. This is because teachers have a good knowledge of these pupils' capabilities, and their IEPs identify necessary steps in learning.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed very strong links with its parents and its community relationships are very good. There has been an improvement to both these aspects of the school since the last inspection. Information to parents has also improved and is now very good. Good links have been established with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Community links, including those with local businesses, are very good, and have a very positive impact on learning.
- There are very good links with parents, several of whom help out in school on a regular basis, thus enhancing the school's resources.
- The way the school communicates with parents has improved.
- Good links exist with other schools.

Commentary

30. The school promotes itself very well to its parents. Those who responded to the questionnaire, or who attended the meeting, have very positive views about the majority of aspects of school life. Parents hold Ecclestone Primary in high esteem.

31. A good number of parents help out in school on a regular basis. Additionally, the school makes very effective use of parents and grandparents who have special skills to offer. There is a very active and hard working parent teacher association (PTA). The events that are organised by the PTA, which include fashion and beauty demonstrations, barbecues and fairs, raise considerable sums of money for such things as library resources and additional equipment for physical education. The school also provides very good support for any of its parents who want to undertake personal development. Recently, five parents have succeeded in attaining National Vocational Qualifications in classroom care. All these activities have a major impact on pupils' learning and the school values the contribution that all its parents make to its life. Parents of pupils with SEN are pleased with how the school uses its resources to support their children's learning, and agree that they achieve well.

32. The quality of information provided for parents is now very good. Most parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting agree that this aspect has improved since the previous inspection. Newsletters are informative, annual reports on progress are appropriately personalised, and parents are made aware of curriculum topics and targets for their children. The school makes good use of ICT and, if required to ensure the fullest circulation, information such as the weekly newsletter can be e-mailed to homes. Additionally, the school makes very good use of the home/school diary system for homework information, which results in a very good two-way dialogue between school staff and parents.

33. Community links are now very good. In addition to making very good use of the village for surveys into traffic and housing, pupils also visit the nearby City of Chester, often to explore its Roman heritage. The community provides very good support for the school through visits by local organisations, such as Belgrave Arts, and individuals who give up their time to work in class on specialist subjects, such as science and design and technology. Community links have also been enhanced by the business support provided by major firms on the nearby business park. One firm, through its 'excellence in education' project, has funded artwork, library software, interactive whiteboards and playground games. Another company has provided management expertise in the form of a 'business partner' for the headteacher. All these initiatives have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

34. There are good links with partner primary schools and the many state schools and independent schools in the area. These ensure that pupils in Year 6 are able to make the move into the next stage of their education without any concerns.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's leadership is good overall, and the school is managed well. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of the school's good overall leadership and management.
- The governing body is fully involved in strategic planning and in formulating and implementing policies.
- The headteacher sets a very clear direction for all the work of the school and leads teaching and the curriculum very well by example.
- The otherwise good strategic school development plan should identify more frequent evaluation of attainment in the core subjects.
- The school makes very good use of its available resources, especially individual staff expertise.

Commentary

35. The school successfully maintains a calm and supportive ethos that is conducive to hard work and the promotion of learning. Much of the reason for this lies in the good leadership qualities of the headteacher who has a clear vision for the school, and in the good way that all responsible persons manage the school on a day-to-day basis. Parents and staff appreciate the headteacher's 'hands on' approach, and pupils relate very well to the standards she sets them in terms of positive relationships and ambition to achieve well, both personally and academically.

36. Since the previous inspection, governors have improved their effectiveness in the strategic management of the school. The good relationship between them and the staff ensures that, through regular discussions and reporting, most governors are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are now well versed in their responsibilities, and some have had training in how to observe and evaluate lessons. As a result of this level of involvement, they are in a good position to question and discuss, as critical friends, the strategies the staff use in order to provide a quality of education that raises and maintains high standards. Additionally, they have successfully promoted and overseen some remarkable additions to the building, which considerably enhance the school's resources and will no doubt have a positive effect on standards.

37. The school is managed well on a day-to-day basis. All staff are diligent in carrying out their duties, and co-ordinators now have some opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in their subjects. However, with such a small staff, the co-ordination responsibilities can be onerous. A current imbalance of responsibility means that science has not recently had the attention it has needed. The school is poised to redress this imbalance.

38. Financial matters are dealt with efficiently, and the governors make good use of available funds to provide sufficient resources to carry out in their plans, including additional buildings and renovation. Much of the current carry forward amount is designated to effect the current building of a second new classroom, so releasing the hall for better provision for subjects such as physical education and drama.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Total income | 230,385.00 |
| Total expenditure | 231,477.00 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,489.00 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Balance from previous year | 29,744.00 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 28,652.00 |

39. The strategic school development plan is a good document, which rightly focuses on standards, yet provides also a blueprint for development across a range of aspects and initiatives over a three-year period. The school uses the plan well as a guide for its work, and to evaluate the success of its policies and actions. Specific action plans supplement well the main plan. Nevertheless, the plan allows detailed monitoring of the core subjects only on a three-year cycle. This is too infrequent to ensure that the highest quality provision is maintained. For example, standards in science, whilst average, are not as high as they could be, yet this subject is only now on schedule for review.

40. The staff and governors are strongly committed to the inclusive nature of the school. Consequently, all pupils of whatever level of prior attainment have equal opportunity to benefit from what the school has to offer. All pupils achieve well overall because each gets equal attention. The leadership and management of SEN are good, and these pupils achieve as well as their peers. Pupil reviews take place regularly and good efforts are made to keep parents fully informed. Similarly, higher attaining pupils achieve well because the school generally ensures, through a range of strategies, that they are suitably challenged by the work the teachers ask them to do. However, the school is aware that there is a need to offer pupils more opportunities to write in detail and at length in order to raise above average the standards in writing, and also to improve science standards.

41. Of note is the way the school manages and uses to good effect the particular strengths and expertise of individual teachers and teaching assistants. For example, one teacher is responsible for teaching art and design across the Infants and Juniors, and another for teaching music across the whole school. Yet all teachers have opportunities to improve and use their own expertise in these and other subjects. As a result, pupils benefit from being taught on regular occasions by teachers other than their own class teacher, thus raising their confidence and competence in several subjects because different teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for Reception children is **good** and they achieve well. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the last inspection.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are 16 children in their Reception year and their achievement is good overall. On entry to the school, their attainment was above average. The provision is managed effectively, and the children's progress is carefully monitored. The teacher and classroom assistant work as an effective team, and are often well supported by parents and other adults. The accommodation is cramped, and it is necessary to have an adult in each room to ensure there is enough supervision for children. The teacher provides imaginative resources for outdoor play but the small yard is not suitable for the riding of wheeled toys or other physical activities requiring space. Physical education lessons in the hall mostly compensate for this. The headteacher leads the management of this key stage and monitors provision effectively.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well.
- The teaching is very good.
- Children have very good attitudes to their tasks and activities, and behave very well.
- A warm, secure atmosphere is generated in which the children feel valued and enjoy coming to school.

Commentary

42. Standards by the end of the Reception year exceed what is expected. The teacher and classroom assistant have very good relationships with the children, and make them feel valued. Children are expected to be responsible and staff take every chance to encourage this. The teacher encourages children to be independent in the choices they make and the materials they use. She knows the children very well and places a great deal of trust in them to do their best. Consequently, children behave sensibly, concentrate well and work unsupervised for extended periods, sharing their resources and discussing their tasks. Children tackle their work with enthusiasm and are willing to have a go at new experiences because the teacher and classroom assistant provide every encouragement and facility for them to do so. Children are very familiar with the routines of the class and try hard with all their activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make particularly good progress in reading, speaking and listening.
- The teacher and classroom assistant successfully develop and extend children's language skills.

- Parents are very supportive in helping their child to learn to read.

Commentary

43. The teacher and classroom assistant work effectively together to provide a range of interesting activities for the children to enjoy. They develop the children's language through good questioning, extending children's answers and by encouraging their observations and opinions. Children respond very well and enthusiastically answer, despite some of them having speech difficulties. Children confidently come to the front of the class and read words and act as 'the teacher'. Many of the activities provided promote children's speaking and listening skills and many children speak at length, explaining coherently their thoughts and opinions. Reading diaries show that many parents help their children at home and there is good communication between the teacher and parents regarding children's progress. This good support, together with the teacher's encouragement, results in children attaining good standards in reading. The teacher provides good quality experiences for writing, and the 'writing table' is a motivating resource for children to use independently. By the end of the Reception year, most children exceed the expectations for children of this age.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of mathematical development is good, so children gain a secure understanding of numbers.
- Children develop confidence in counting and sequencing numbers using the computer, but occasionally, higher attaining children are not sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

44. The teacher organises a careful range of practical activities for children to gain confidence in mathematics. Lessons begin with whole-class sessions that include interesting games that reinforce key skills well. The practical group activities are well planned and motivating, and children's involvement and enjoyment is high. The computer is popular with children. Most children sustain a high level of concentration in the programs but, occasionally, higher attaining children finish quickly and are frustrated when they cannot access a game that is more difficult and challenging. There is a suitable programme of work through the year to build systematically on children's mathematical experiences and, by the end of the year, children's mathematical knowledge is above what would be expected for children of this age.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

45. It was not possible to make an overall judgement in this wide area of provision, but children are skilled in using the computer. From the lessons observed and informal talks with children, it is likely that they will reach or exceed the expected goals by the end of the year because the teaching is good.

46. Children are quick in their use of the computer mouse and click and drag icons on the screen very competently because many of them have computers at home, have regular lessons and good access to computer programs. Imaginative activities are provided for children in design and technology and they take great delight in making furniture and equipment for a 'mouse house'. They are helped to achieve well by adults who ask thought-provoking questions, and provide a good range of materials for children to choose. Parent helpers' expertise is well used to support learning in geography and in giving children new experiences. Children bravely tasted squid in ink and other foods new to them, giving considered opinions of what the foods tasted like.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside yard is not big enough for children to engage in physical activities.
- Children manipulate tools and small equipment well.

Commentary

47. Although the school has some wheeled toys and other equipment, there is not enough room in the small courtyard for children to use these safely. The teacher compensates for this by providing lessons in the hall. In a satisfactory lesson, children moved confidently, with good control and co-ordination and used the hall space well. They can imitate the teacher's movements and confidently suggest other movements they can make when moving on the spot. They balance beanbags successfully on different parts of their bodies. Children are given lots of chances to use tools and small equipment and know how to use these sensibly. They concentrate and persevere with tasks when constructing models, cutting out pictures and drawing pictures. They are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's drawings are of good quality.
- The teacher monitors children's work closely and asks good questions to extend their knowledge and understanding of their work.
- Children sing in tune and play percussion instruments well.

Commentary

48. Children are keen to draw, and some of their finished and displayed work is of high quality. Their pictures in pen of animals are enchanting and show a great deal of care and attention to detail. Children enthusiastically make dough to use for modelling and make delightful creatures that they decorate and paint. The teacher gives good support to children, helping them to improve their models through skilled questioning. The 'Three Bears Cottage' provides a good resource for children's imaginative play and this is used well to extend their language skills. Throughout the day, the children sing in tune songs they know well as a break from one activity to another. They play percussion instruments well in musical activities because the teaching is good. They interpret the teacher's instructions well to confidently play 'long' and 'short' sounds as required by songs and rhymes. Most of the children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading at the end of the Infants are well above average and pupils' achievements are good in reading, speaking and listening in all year groups.
- Standards in writing are improving.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- Leadership is good and the subject is well monitored.
- Standards of presentation and handwriting are not good enough and have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.
- Marking does not consistently inform pupils how to improve their work.
- Although pupils can write at length, they do not do so often enough.
- Assessment is good.

Commentary

49. The inspection judges that pupils attain well above average standards in reading and above average standards in writing at the end of Year 2. Pupils at the end of Year 6 attain above average standards in reading and average standards in writing. High standards are attained throughout the school in speaking and listening. Pupils' handwriting and presentation are not as good as they should be. Boys and girls are making similar progress. Pupils with SEN are achieving well because of the good teaching they receive, including that from non-teaching staff. Overall, pupils achieve well in the Infants and in reading in the Juniors. Junior pupils achieve satisfactorily in writing.

50. Many pupils are very articulate speakers, who explain their reasoning and give opinions at length because staff ensure there are many opportunities for them to answer questions and to discuss issues in small groups. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils discussed with a high degree of maturity the arguments for and against fox hunting. They took turns to make points and to build or counterbalance their classmates' views. Teachers promote good listening skills and, as a result, pupils are active, attentive listeners who listen very well to each other and to the staff. Pupils with SEN learn to put forward their views and to contribute to focused discussions because staff and pupils value their contributions.

51. The teacher in the Years 1 and 2 class builds well on the good foundation laid in the Reception class in reading, and sessions where pupils read together in small groups are well managed. Pupils are taught clear strategies to help them to decipher words and to read with expression. All pupils have regular reading times to read to themselves, and reading materials are well matched to their capabilities. Parents are very committed to hearing their child read and reading diaries show there is very good communication between parents and staff. The support parents provide, both with reading and other homework, has a very positive effect on pupils' literacy skills.

52. The school has identified writing as an area to improve and put into place several initiatives to raise standards, which are mostly having a positive effect. Staff recognise that handwriting and presentation are not as good as they could be. Handwriting lessons have been introduced and a greater emphasis placed on pupils' writing at length in a given time. However, although the teaching of handwriting skills is good and pupils' handwriting is usually much neater in their designated books, they do not transfer the skills to their independent writing because the staff do not regularly remind them to do so. Teachers mark work regularly. Recent marking of pupils' work is better than it was and shows pupils how to improve. However, good marking is not consistent through the school and teachers do not refer to pupils' targets often enough in their marking.

53. Teachers' detailed planning ensures that tasks are challenging and relevant to the needs of individual pupils. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are well motivated to write because the teacher promotes writing with enthusiasm and supports pupils well in making plans for their story writing. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a secure understanding of the technical aspects of writing, such as the use of grammar, spelling and punctuation, and they have a good knowledge of the different kinds of writing. Pupils write at length when they have the chance to do so and show that they understand the need to plan a structure and write coherently.

54. Teaching is good. All teachers have good subject knowledge and this leads to interesting, skilled questioning and pupil participation during lessons. The high expectation of pupils' behaviour allows teachers to maintain a brisk and lively pace that promotes good levels of interest and engagement. Teachers skilfully match work to pupils' ability. Higher attaining pupils in all year groups are challenged well, particularly in the oral parts of lessons when the teachers encourage pupils to think deeply. In one lesson, Years 5 and 6 pupils were considerably challenged in producing guidelines for writing a balanced argument so they could improve on their previous work. Additionally, some higher attaining pupils work with others in an older age group. This works well because they benefit from the greater challenge. Teaching assistants are used very well to support the learning of lower attaining pupils and those who have SEN.

55. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching, and notes and evaluations of work are recorded and acted upon. Regular assessments are made of pupils' writing, which is moderated by the staff together. The reading diaries and the teacher's reading records provide good information about pupils' progress.

56. The co-ordinator is very committed and leads the subject well. The subject is well monitored by the co-ordinator who has looked at teachers' planning, observed lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. The school has maintained the generally good provision at the time of the last inspection but has not successfully addressed improving handwriting and presentation, an issue identified at the time of the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. English skills are used satisfactorily across the curriculum to extend learning in subjects such as design and technology and are used well in music. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects of the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good overall.
- Pupils' very good speaking skills have a very positive effect on their ability to explain their work and to learn from others.
- The subject co-ordinator has too little access to pupils' work across the school.
- The regular setting of homework does much to enhance pupils' learning.
- Written work is not always presented as well as it could be.

Commentary

58. Results of statutory assessments at ages seven and eleven have risen year on year since 1999, despite variations in the overall attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Nearly all pupils attain at least the national expectations. Several attain more than the expectations. This is because teachers throughout the school consistently expect pupils to take a full and active part in learning about and practising mathematics, both in lessons and through regular homework activities. Most pupils enjoy doing homework, and parents relish these opportunities to support their children's learning through working with them on projects at home.

59. Lessons are interesting because teachers plan activities ideally suited to each pupil's level of ability, and teach in a way that consistently makes pupils think. Consequently, pupils across the ability spectrum make good progress and achieve well, from those with SEN to those with a high level of capability. Some high attaining pupils do their work in lessons with pupils in the next class. This is effective because the lessons meet better their need for more challenging work than that which they might otherwise do in their own age group. It also means that teachers can teach the subject more efficiently, so that all pupils benefit from closer attention.

60. The quality of teaching is mainly good, and sometimes very good. Common to all lessons are the high quality relationships that teachers have with their pupils, and the very good level of pupil behaviour. These result in pupils' confidence to take a full part in lessons, to answer questions in the searching discussions at the beginnings of lessons, and to work either independently or co-operatively on tasks, as required by the teachers. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to use their very good speaking skills to discuss the finer points of calculations, and this adds considerably to their learning because they listen intently to their classmates' clear explanations.

61. Teachers' high expectations of pupils to achieve well in their understanding of mathematics is also apparent through their interpretation of National Curriculum guidance in their lesson planning, and through the skilful ways in which they get pupils to think in lessons about how to solve problems. For example, through a range of strategies, including good use of materials, teaching assistants and ICT, a very good lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 clearly developed in pupils their understanding of, and ability to calculate, various angles in triangles and quadrilaterals. Additionally, teachers and their pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good use of special workbooks for recording their methods of working out mathematical problems, such as finding out the area of a patio, and the amount of materials required to build it.

62. However, whilst higher attaining pupils tend to present their written work well, the work of average and lower attaining pupils is sometimes less well organised because teachers do not always insist on pupils doing so. This means that pupils sometimes have difficulty finding their way through the more complicated calculations, and make mistakes.

63. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed, but the co-ordinator is relatively new to the post, and has not had enough time to access work across the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. There is some evidence of mathematical skills being used well in other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make working models of vehicles, and carefully measure the materials before assembly. Similarly, in science in Years 3 and 4, pupils use calibrations and scales when working out differences between 'stretchy' materials.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In discussions with them, the pupils display a good knowledge and understanding of science.
- Principles of scientific investigation are developed well, but pupils do not write enough about their investigations.
- Teaching is good and results in pupils developing well their understanding of and learning about scientific facts.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to science.
- The monitoring of science teaching and of the work that pupils do in the school is not regular enough.

Commentary

65. Due to the small size of the school and the relatively few pupils in each year group, it is impossible to make valid comparisons between the school's statutory test results and national averages. Discussions with pupils in lessons, and an analysis of assessments taken over a number of years show that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, including those with SEN, achieve well in gaining an extensive scientific knowledge and understanding. There is an emphasis in the school on scientific investigation, and even the six and seven-year-old pupils talk with understanding about why it is important to conduct 'fair tests'. Indeed, across the school, pupils' ability to discuss scientific concepts sensibly and in depth is a particular strength, and teachers give them ample opportunities to do so. However, the amount of writing that pupils do about science by Year 6 is too limited to prepare them fully for the national assessments at the end of that year. Consequently, pupils attain average standards overall. The school has already identified this lack of emphasis on recording fully the results of investigations as the main reason for statutory assessments results being lower than they should.

66. The quality of teaching of science is good overall, and some very good teaching was observed. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject and make lessons stimulating and interesting. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in helping to promote pupils' learning and work well in partnership with the teachers. Planning and preparation are very good, with good use made of resources, including computers and an interactive whiteboard where available. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This and the very good relationships ensure that pupils have a very positive attitude to their work. They like science and get fully involved with the discussions and activities. For example, during a Years 5 and 6 lesson to investigate the properties of matter, the discussion that arose from one pupil's questions on whether flour is a liquid or a solid was both stimulating and valuable. Some of the reasoned arguments from both sides showed quite clearly that these pupils have a mature approach to scientific enquiry.

67. Marking of pupils' work is done regularly, but teachers' written comments do not always show pupils how to improve, and are not always followed up later. Assessment of pupils' achievements is undertaken regularly, but the school rightly sees a need for more consistent and rigorous assessment procedures, which though improving are not yet fully in place.

68. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but the co-ordinator has a lot of other important responsibilities in this small school, which makes it difficult to devote the time needed in order to develop the subject fully. The planned three-year cycle of monitoring of all subjects is useful in that it ensures that no subject is neglected. However, the monitoring of teaching and pupils' work in this core subject is not as regular as it should be. As a result, rigorous improvement strategies are not applied as soon as they should be. Nevertheless, improvement overall has been satisfactory since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been good improvements since the last inspection.
- Standards in data logging, musical composition and multi-media presentations are above average in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to ICT.
- Many pupils use a computer at home, which builds on the skills they learn at school.

Commentary

69. Good improvements have taken place since the previous inspection, and standards for most pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 match those expected for their age. In several aspects of the ICT curriculum pupils' attainment is above average by the time they leave the school and pupils achieve well.

70. The school now has a number of laptops to supplement the 'stand alone' computers in the classrooms, which means that the whole class can be taught together. The new interactive whiteboard is used very well by the Years 5 and 6 teacher, and all staff are now confident in the teaching of ICT. Pupils now have regular lessons and reasonable opportunities to use computers to support other subjects, such as mathematics.

71. The curriculum has broadened to include some aspects that were previously not taught, and these are taught well. As a result of the good teaching, pupils attain good standards in data logging, musical composition and multi-media presentations. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use sensors to record temperatures and to test materials to find out which absorbs most or least light. In one lesson they remembered previous learning well and were quick to tell the teacher what steps to take next when demonstrating the program on the whiteboard. By the end of the lesson, because of the good teaching pupils had learned a great deal about using sensors and interpreting the graphs they had produced. Pupils are very quick to demonstrate their skills at setting up multi-media presentations, which are of high quality and incorporate animation, research from the Internet and the scanning of information and pictures from other sources. The ICT club provides extra opportunities for pupils to improve their skills. Pupils are enthusiastic and excited about their musical compositions, which they improve to a good standard with practice.

72. Pupils are keen and eager to use computers, the Internet and digital cameras, and work very well together in pairs or small groups. They willingly help each other to solve problems and are keen to share ideas with each other. When there is a breakdown in the hardware pupils are not fazed, and behave sensibly. Many of the pupils have computers at home and say they use these for homework and to practise what they have learnt at school. Most pupils are quick in their use of the keyboard and in accessing information and different programs. The use of computers at home makes a positive contribution to their skills.

73. Few lessons were seen during the inspection but, from the lessons observed, the work produced, talking to pupils and their demonstrations, the quality of teaching is judged as good. Teachers are skilled in their questioning of pupils to extend their understanding. Lessons are challenging and the work set is motivating and relevant to all pupils' needs. Pupils with SEN are given extra support by staff or by other pupils. Teachers manage pupils very well, encouraging good behaviour and, when hardware systems fail, adapt their lesson accordingly so that learning is seamless. New assessment procedures are good. Pupils are used to self-evaluating their work and are honest in their appraisal of it.

74. The subject has been well led and managed since the last inspection, as seen by the good improvement in standards and in monitoring. ICT is not currently a priority on the school's rolling programme for improvement so monitoring is limited. However, the school has plans to replace some of its ageing laptops and improve the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. ICT is used satisfactorily to support teaching in English, art, science and mathematics. It is used well in music.

HUMANITIES

Only one lesson was seen in **geography** and two in **history**, so it was not possible to inspect these subjects in detail.

76. There was a limited amount of written work available because a significant amount of work is done through discussions and role-play. Work seen and talking to pupils indicates that standards through the school are satisfactory. A review of teachers' planning shows that both subjects are covered in lessons, over the two-year rolling programme, in accordance with National Curriculum requirements. Discussions with pupils in lessons show that they have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects and that they are learning research skills as well as geographical and historical facts. This was observed in lessons in Years 1 and 2 where, even at that age, pupils were able to look at evidence and make deductions. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learnt to ask geographical questions and were fully engaged in helping to 'plan' someone's holiday destination. When asked why he had chosen to send a customer to France one boy replied, 'She likes historical things but is scared of flying. I'd sent her to France because you can travel through the Eurotunnel, and it's warm there and there are lots of old churches and things'.

77. Too few lessons were observed to be able to make secure overall judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. However, in the three lessons seen, teaching was never less than good and some very good teaching was observed. Pupils have very positive attitudes to both history and geography.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in **art and design**, in the Years 5 and 6 class, but there were no lessons seen in **design and technology** or in **physical education**. Evidence is taken from an evaluation of the curriculum, discussions with subject co-ordinators, pupils' work and discussions with pupils.

Music lessons were observed in three classes, from which it is possible to judge that pupils exceed expectations in this subject at age seven and eleven.

Art and design

Commentary

78. The school's commitment to developing pupils' creativity is exemplified in the good standard of artwork displayed around the building, and in the way teachers plan work that links ideas and skills development across subjects. For example, linking art with a topic on the Aztecs or the Tudors significantly enhances pupils' learning in geography and history, as well as promoting their creative skills. It is apparent from the evidence of work seen that music, art and design, as well as dance, and design and technology, are important elements of the school's creative achievement and the ethos it seeks to encourage.

79. There is too little evidence on which to base a secure judgement about standards across the school. Nevertheless, the pupils in the one art and design lesson seen achieved good standards, essentially because the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject successfully transmitted to the pupils, who explored and applied their own ideas in constructing attractive head dresses.

80. Work on display and in pupils' own art books shows that they explore and experience a wide range of ideas in their art, including work with visiting artists. They study the styles of some famous artists, and often work together on creating visual representations of concepts explored in other subjects. For example, an abstract but interesting whole-class display on water came from pupils listening to a piece of music, and then combining written words, shapes and colour techniques. It was as a result of co-operative work that some of the pupils' work was recently exhibited in the National Gallery.

Design and technology

The work seen in the Years 1 and 2, and the Years 5 and 6 classes was of a good standard. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and make good use of their workbooks to plan, evaluate and redesign their models. Models of cars under construction in Years 1 and 2 show that pupils use measuring skills well to make models that are strong, balanced and that fulfil the set task. Similarly, in the Years 5 and 6 class, large, working models of fairground rides show that pupils work co-operatively. They make good use of mechanical devices, such as electric motors, pulleys and winding handles, to ensure that their models function. Notably, pupils creatively finish their models in attractive and carefully applied colours, in the style of a fairground.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above expectations because the teaching is very good overall
- The music curriculum combines skills development and integration with other subjects very well.

Commentary

81. Pupils do well in music because the teaching is skilled, their learning is fun, and they take a pride in their performance. This is especially so in singing, in which all pupils enthusiastically take part, such as in assemblies. Singing is of a high standard because teaching is lively, so that it motivates and engages pupils from across the age range. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in lessons when they use percussion instruments to follow a graphic score and recorded music. They perform well together, and their playing improves as they increasingly play together in rhythm.

82. By Year 6, pupils have a distinctive ability to discern style, mood and emotion in the music that they hear and compose. They compare modern forms of music with that of the Middle Ages. They use a computer skilfully to compose Tudor style music, and have a mature ability to select appropriate phrasing. They listen to and appreciate music by a range of composers, such as Borodin, Bach and Copeland.

83. Standards in music are higher than they were at the previous inspection because the teaching is better. The fact that the co-ordinator is a music specialist, who brings great enthusiasm to lessons, has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. In the Years 5 and 6 lesson, for example, she fully engaged all pupils through her arrangements for grouping, questioning and encouragement to offer opinion and pursuit of high quality discussion with the pupils about the features of their computer compositions.

84. The leadership and management of the subject are very good, especially because the co-ordinator takes every opportunity to combine National Curriculum music skills and knowledge development with enhancing learning in other subjects, such as history and geography. For example, pupils still remember a visiting Indian dance group, and carry out the dances they learnt when they hear the music of the Sitar.

Physical education

No lessons were seen in physical education. It is, therefore, not possible to make judgements about the provision in the subject. The school works hard to overcome the limitations imposed by its accommodation. Pupils have lessons in dance and gymnastics in the small hall and join in out-of-school clubs for football. They compete against other schools in football and netball. Pupils in the Juniors visit the swimming baths each week for ten weeks and, by the time they leave can swim 25 metres. Older pupils attend a residential centre, where they do adventurous activities, such as abseiling and canoeing. The large, fixed apparatus in the playground gives pupils regular opportunities for climbing and balancing. The co-ordinator is a specialist in the subject and takes classes other than her own. The planning for the subject is good. When the building work is completed the school will be in a better position to offer pupils an improved indoor curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in PSHE and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes a strong stance on the inclusion of all pupils in all its work.
- The school successfully fosters very good relationships and respect for others.

Commentary

85. As a result of the many occasions when pupils are encouraged to respect each other and understand the impact of their actions, relationships between pupils are very good. Values are strongly promoted through the school's programme for PSHE and citizenship, where pupils learn about citizenship through regular discussion times in each class. Topics covered include the dangers of drugs, and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, assemblies are special times when pupils carefully consider their place in the world, and the influences they can have on others. These occasions take place in an atmosphere of respect, and often include discussion about important aspects concerning moral values. The staff consistently encourage pupils to voice their opinions in whole-class discussions, so that all learn to understand that each person has their own point of view. Because of this provision, pupils develop very well personally and socially. They learn that each individual is important, and that each has the right to be fully involved in what life has to offer.

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 | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 1 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 3 |

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