

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HALE CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY  
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hale Village

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111294

Headteacher: Miss H J Priestley

Lead inspector: Mr I Hocking

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> –27<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 256312

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 Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	150
School address:	Hesketh Road Hale Village Liverpool
Postcode:	L24 4AN
Telephone number:	0151 4253023
Fax number:	0151 4254057
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Little
Date of previous inspection:	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hale CE (VC) Primary School serves the area of the 'urban village' of Hale. It provides education for boys and girls between the ages of four and eleven. There are 150 pupils in the school, 72 boys and 78 girls. Most pupils come from the village. A small number of pupils come from the Liverpool and Knowsley area. The school is a Church of England controlled school and has close links with the parish of St Mary's. Since the last inspection the school has had a considerable change of staff.

Nearly all the pupils in the school are white with very few from other ethnic groups. None of the pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. Around 10 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is close to the national average. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are broadly similar to those expected for their age. There are 14 pupils on the special educational needs register, two of whom have a statement of educational need.

There are 16 children who are under five. The school's admission policy is to admit these children, full time, at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

The school aims to create a warm and friendly atmosphere where everyone is welcomed, in which learning is encouraged in a strong Christian environment. It also aims to make children feel safe and secure and give them the confidence to reach their true potential and celebrate all areas of achievement. The school aims to encourage the strongest possible links with the community.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1272	Mr I Hocking	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Citizenship Physical education
13448	Mrs D Lloyd	Lay inspector	
16761	Mr M Hemmings	Team inspector	Science Art and design Geography History Religious education Special educational needs
30362	Mrs J Henshaw	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective and caring school that benefits from very good leadership, management and governance. It has an excellent ethos for learning in which Christian values are fostered and very good relationships exist. Pupils of all abilities are expected to achieve as highly as possible and do so as a result of the good quality education provided. The close partnership amongst headteacher, governors and staff and very good links with parents contribute significantly to the above average standards attained by pupils. **The school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- leadership, management and governance are very good;
- good and often very good teaching enables all pupils to achieve well;
- standards of attainment are above average;
- pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to learning;
- pupils experience a rich curriculum;
- very good provision is made to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety;
- provision for pupils to learn about a diversity of cultures needs improving.

The school has responded very well to the issues raised in the previous inspection. All the major issues have been dealt with successfully. Though there has been satisfactory improvement in the previously identified weakness of pupils' multi-cultural awareness, there remains scope for further improvement. Areas where there has been significant improvement include leadership and management, teaching and learning, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, care of pupils and the school's links with parents and the community.

### 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	D	A	A*
Mathematics	A	E	C	A
Science	A	E	C	A

*Key: A\* - High; 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.*

**Pupils' achievement is good overall.** The above table shows that the Year 6 class performed particularly well in English in the 2003 national tests. Results in mathematics and science are broadly similar to national figures. These results represent very good achievement for this group of pupils when taking into account the relatively poor results they attained in 1999 when they were seven year olds. Apart from the year 2002, the school's results in national tests have been above national averages since 2000. Management rapidly dealt with the dip in performance in 2002 and effective measures were taken before the 2003 tests. The present Year 6 class are on line to attain well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science.

The school's 2003 test results for Year 2 pupils are broadly in line with national results. However, over the previous three years standards were above average and have improved significantly since 2000 when the school governors took the decision and made the financial commitment to provide for a single age Year 2 class. The 2003 results are not as strong as the previous three years' results because the 2003 Year 2 class had a greater number of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties than was previously the case. Standards in the current Year 2 class are similar to those of

2000 to 2002 and are above average. This represents good achievement from the pupils' average standards when they began in Reception.

Children in Reception also achieve well because of good teaching, enabling almost all of them to reach each of the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception, and many exceed them.

Throughout the school, pupils show good skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy and apply these successfully in other subjects.

**Pupils' personal qualities are very good and are promoted through very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Pupils' very good and often exemplary behaviour reflects their positive attitudes to school. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

This school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. All pupils achieve well because they are consistently taught well throughout the school. Teaching and learning are good and in many lessons very good or excellent. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and of their behaviour. Pupils in all classes show great application and commitment to their work because they receive considerable encouragement from teachers and classroom support assistants and have excellent relationships with them. Very good assessment arrangements provide pupils with guidance about how they might improve their work. Pupils experience an enriched curriculum and their learning benefits from strong links with parents and the community. Good quality resources, especially in information and communication technology (ICT), contribute to the quality of education provided.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The very good leadership of the headteacher gives the school a clear sense of direction. She has high aspirations for all who are associated with the school and focuses on ensuring the highest possible standards in the school's work. Her inspiration has led to all staff and governors working successfully as a team that strives to ensure all pupils achieve as well as possible. Of particular note is the way an excellent ethos has been fostered, exemplified by the outstanding teamwork and relationships throughout the school. Governance of the school is also very good, with governors acting purposefully as critical friends of the school.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Overall, parents have positive views of the school. In particular, they are very pleased with the leadership of the school and the quality of teaching. They appreciate the fact that their children are expected to work hard and that staff explain how parents can help children in their learning, for example through mathematics evenings.

Pupils like school and enjoy lessons, especially in practical subjects. They regard their teachers as kind and humorous and say that teachers expect them to work hard.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important thing the school should do to improve is to ensure planning arrangements for curriculum subjects enable pupils to develop greater awareness of the diverse range of cultures in today's society.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards reached by Year 6 pupils are **above average**. All pupils regardless of background or ability **achieve well**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are well above average and are above average in mathematics.
- Pupils also reach above average standards in science, religious education and history.
- All pupils achieve well in almost all subjects.
- Pupils' ability to make evaluative conclusions in science is relatively weak.

#### Commentary

1. Pupils do a little better in writing than reading. This is because of the extra attention paid to the teaching of writing in recent years. Pupils attain well in speaking and listening because teachers are very good role models and create many opportunities for pupils to develop these skills. Similarly, because of very good teaching, pupils have above average competence in numeracy, including mental calculations and written computations.
2. Because of good quality of teaching, most pupils in Year 6 show a good knowledge and understanding of key scientific ideas and can carry out a fair test with confidence; in religious education, pupils have a good understanding of the main events in the life of Jesus and of the main characters in the Bible. Pupils discuss Christian values and beliefs and talk in an informed way about the Islamic and Hindu religions.
3. All pupils achieve well in all subjects, apart from physical education where achievement is satisfactory and standards match those expected nationally. In all other subjects, pupils of all abilities achieve well because of the determined and very effective way that teachers meet individual needs, for example in their questioning techniques and in the work set for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional and effective support to enable them to make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Similarly, those pupils who are particularly able are presented with additional challenges that ensure they are extended in their learning. Attainment in Reception is above average because almost all children attain the levels expected in each of the Early Learning Goals for children in Reception, and many children exceed them. This represents good achievement relative to their average attainment when they begin school in Reception.
4. Pupils' ability to draw conclusions from the findings of their scientific experiments is relatively weak. Pupils' conclusions tend to be merely descriptions of what they have done rather than evaluative conclusions derived from their prior knowledge of the subject.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.4 (17.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.9 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.3 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

The above table shows that the school's results in national tests are broadly in line with national results. However, over the previous three years standards were above average and have improved significantly since 2000 when the school governors took the decision and made the financial commitment to provide for a single Year 2 class. The 2003 results are not as strong as the previous three years' results because the 2003 Year 2 class had a greater number of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties than was previously the case. Standards in the current Year 2 class are similar to those of 2000 to 2002 and are above average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (26.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.4 (24.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.2 (27.0)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

The above table shows that the Year 6 class performed particularly well in English in the 2003 national tests. Results in mathematics and science are broadly similar to national figures. These results, nevertheless, represent very good achievement for this group of pupils taking into account the relatively poor results they attained in 1999 when they were seven year olds. Apart from 2002, the school's results in national tests have been above national averages since 2000. Management rapidly dealt with the dip in performance in 2002 and additional effective measures were taken to boost pupils' learning in the run-up to the tests in 2003. The present Year 6 class are judged to be on course to attain well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to school. Their behaviour is almost always **very good** and often **excellent**. They are growing in maturity, because the school fosters their personal development **very well**. Arrangements for promoting the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils are **very good**; cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' attendance is **satisfactory**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour help them to learn effectively.
- Very good relationships help pupils develop confidence and self-esteem.
- Very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development helps them become mature and responsible.
- Holidays taken in term time mean that attendance is slightly below that found in most primary schools.

**Commentary**

5. Pupils enjoy their schoolwork and are eager to learn. They say that they particularly enjoy the practical subjects, such as art and physical education. Teachers challenge pupils to do their best, accepting only the highest standards of effort and behaviour, and pupils respond very well to these consistently high expectations. Pupils with special educational needs also have positive attitudes towards their work and show interest and enjoyment in what they are doing. Both in lessons and around the school, pupils' behaviour is unfailingly good and on many occasions pupils are so absorbed in their activities, so well motivated to learn and to please their teachers, that their conduct is faultless. Such positive attitudes and behaviour are significant contributors to pupils' good achievements.

6. Because of the very good relationships that exist throughout the school, pupils have the confidence to answer questions and to try out new ideas. Even the youngest are not afraid to stand up in front of the whole school to show off their achievements in the weekly celebration assembly. They are proud of what they have done and keen to do even better. Their care and consideration for one another create a happy learning environment, where there is hardly any bullying and everyone has a sense of belonging to one large family.
7. A range of strategies, many of them with a competitive slant, such as the award of house points, inspires pupils to behave well and try hard, but the excellent ethos of the school that values being good for its own sake permeates everything the pupils do and is a more important factor in securing their co-operation. Through helping to formulate class rules, which supplement the school's Golden Rules, and through discussions in circle time and personal and social education lessons, pupils are learning moral principles and are beginning to apply them to their everyday lives. They have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and always try to do what they know is right. Needless to say, there have been no exclusions.
8. Pupils' growing maturity is clearly seen as they move through the school. Almost all children in Reception reach the Early Learning Goals for personal, social and emotional development. Reception children begin to learn how to follow classroom routines independently, gradually undertaking more responsibility until Year 6, when they act as role models for the younger children. Looking after the little ones in assembly, training in play leadership and covering a range of jobs around the school, help considerably to enhance the self-esteem of the older pupils, as well as teaching them the basic responsibilities of living in a community.
9. Spiritual development is a natural and integral part of the curriculum in this Christian school. Assemblies are planned around themes that pupils find relevant. They are held in an atmosphere of reverence and calm that helps pupils to reflect upon their personal feelings, values and beliefs. Class discussions give opportunities for pupils to listen to varied opinions that may not match theirs and they have learned to show respect for the differing views of others. Each day's lessons end with a prayer, giving pupils a moment of quiet contemplation before they go home.
10. Although most pupils attend school regularly, too many holidays are taken in term time so that the overall attendance figures have not improved since the time of the last inspection. In spite of the school's best efforts, some parents still do not understand the importance of regular attendance to ensuring that children achieve as well as they can.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence	
School data	6.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.5

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

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
145	0	0
2	0	0

Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
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*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

This school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. All pupils **achieve well** because they are consistently **taught well** throughout the school. Pupils are offered an **enriched** curriculum and pupils' learning benefits from **strong** links with parents and the community. **Good** quality resources, especially in ICT, contribute to the quality of education provided.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good and in many lessons very good and excellent. This represents a significant improvement in teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and of their behaviour. All pupils are encouraged to work hard and, through very good assessment arrangements, are given clear guidance about how they might improve their work.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils.
- Pupils apply themselves wholeheartedly to their learning.
- Teachers' explanations and questioning are very good.
- Assessment procedures are very good for English, mathematics, science and ICT and for children in the Reception class.
- Much of the teaching in Year 3 is excellent.
- Assessment procedures in some subjects need improvement.

### Commentary

11. Teachers consistently require pupils to show high standards of behaviour. Pupils are set clear guidelines and know that they will be rewarded, usually by praise when it is justified. Conversely, on the rare occasions when behaviour falls below the high level expected, pupils know what actions will follow, for example, loss of 'golden time'. Sanctions are rarely needed because there is an excellent ethos for learning. As a result, maximum use is made of lesson time because interruptions are minimal. In turn, this enables pupils to work uninterrupted for sustained periods of time and promotes pupils' perseverance and productivity in their learning.
12. Pupils in all classes show great application and commitment to their work. They take pride in their work, as seen in the way they neatly present their written work. Pupils receive considerable encouragement from teachers and classroom support assistants and have excellent relationships with them. These are notable features that underpin the good and very good learning that takes place.
13. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and understand how to engage pupils' interest. Therefore, teachers' explanations are pitched at the right level to meet individual needs. Similarly, when teachers question pupils they often adjust their questioning or vocabulary to meet the diverse needs of pupils. As a result, teachers ensure that those who find learning difficult are suitably supported, often through the effective work of classroom support assistants, to meet the targets on their individual education plans. Teachers plan work that is well matched to pupils' abilities, so that they are able to make good progress in their learning. Equally, pupils who show high ability are given additional challenge, as seen invariably in literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers give close attention to the development of pupils' understanding of new concepts as well as teaching them facts and skills. Pupils comment that the work they are given is set at the right level for them and that teachers will always explain if work is not understood.

14. The procedures for assessing and recording individual pupils' attainment and monitoring the progress that they make have been improved since the previous inspection and are now very good for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. There is now an effective whole-school system of assessment and record keeping used by teachers to decide pupils' levels of attainment and to set targets for improvement in English and mathematics. There is a rigorous system for identifying pupils whose performance in basic skills such as reading, spelling and numeracy causes concern. Teachers make very good use of assessment information in order to plan future work accordingly, based on how well pupils have progressed in lessons. The arrangements for checking the attainment and progress of children in the Reception class are also very good, and are an important factor in the good progress that they make. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and positively, often including written comments that help strengthen pupils' understanding, for example, "You cannot leave electricity on the floor 'C', do you mean wires?" Pupils testify that they know how well they are doing from the marks they receive and from teachers' comments.
15. Much of the teaching in the Year 3 class is of an excellent standard and leads to pupils making outstanding gains in their learning. Such high quality was seen in mathematics lessons and involved imaginative teaching methods, for example, in incorporating pupils' tuneful singing of multiplication tables facts. Another striking feature of these lessons is the highly effective use being made of the ICT smartboard as a teaching tool. Pupils are often engrossed in their work and make significant strides in understanding, for example that subtraction is the inverse operation of addition.
16. Assessment procedures in some other subjects such as religious education, physical education, history and art are based on teachers' individual systems of recording. Though this represents a relatively minor weakness that is not restricting pupils' learning, these procedures are not formalised into a whole-school approach that will provide simple and effective records of pupils' progress.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

#### **A Year 3 music lesson taught by the subject co-ordinator**

The simple practice of playing two notes A and C resulted in a joyous and polished performance by pupils. The teacher used inspired teaching methods to motivate pupils. In this lesson all the class played either a recorder or a glockenspiel. Using a CD arrangement for recorders, the teacher enthusiastically and very skilfully conducted and supported the pupils in their accompaniment of the music, using only these two notes in a variety of arrangements and simple tempo. He pointed to the notes on score posters and played his own recorder along with the pupils

The very brisk pace of the lesson challenged pupils to continuously improve and to keep in time with the music and each other. When the music played between the pupils' musical parts, he encouraged them to mime 'big band style' moving their recorders in time to the music. The pupils showed great enjoyment and this helped them to remain in time with the music in readiness for their next part.

The teacher set up competitions for the groups of pupils on each bench, challenging them to keep in time. Pupils were heard urging each other to do well and relationships were excellent. On the final performance the pupils played so well that they were directed, as they were playing, to a final score sheet that they had not practised. This resulted in a very impressive performance, which justifiably received very positive feedback from the teacher.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (8%)	14 (35%)	22 (55%)	1 (2%)	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 school offers a **rich** curriculum, which develops pupils' knowledge, experience and learning skills beyond the school day and within the community. The wide range of interesting activities provides **good** opportunities for pupils to develop and use their skills and knowledge in different ways. Lessons are planned well and suitably challenge pupils of different abilities, including those with special educational needs. **Good** quality accommodation and resources contribute significantly to the school's curriculum.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Many of these activities are particularly successful in the promotion of personal, social and health education.
- The national literacy and numeracy strategies are used well and result in improved standards of attainment in English and mathematics.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are developed and used well within other subjects.
- Resources and accommodation are generally good. Resources for ICT are very good and have helped to improve standards of attainment.
- There is insufficient planning, within some subjects, to develop pupils' understanding of living in a multi-cultural society.
- There is insufficient use of investigation within science lessons.

### Commentary

17. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 participate in residential visits to Wales and Cumbria and are planning a visit to Yorkshire. These opportunities contribute very well to the pupils' experience and learning in music, dance and drama and to the development of their moral, social and personal skills. The success of such activities is clearly shown in all pupils' well-developed sense of care and responsibility. For example, pupils in Year 6 have recently and very proudly become fully trained playleaders for Reception children. Other visits support subjects such as literacy and religious education. For example, pupils interviewed employees at Halton Stadium and visited Liverpool Cathedral. The school's strong links with the community, local industry and the church all make a very good contribution to learning.
18. Teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies flexibly and well. The curriculum enables pupils to make good use of literacy and numeracy skills within other subjects. Pupils are encouraged to use their speaking and listening skills in a variety of contexts. As a result, pupils in Year 5, for example, used suggestion, evaluation, challenge and negotiation well in their discussions about school grounds' improvements. The school provides good

opportunities for pupils to use investigative skills and problem solving within mathematics and in other subjects such as design and technology. This has resulted in a noticeable confidence in pupils' contributions to lessons.

19. The quality and range of resources have a positive impact on learning and on improvements in standards of attainment. There are very good resources for ICT. Two interactive whiteboards and an ICT suite are used to good effect, particularly in teaching specific skills.
20. Accommodation is enhanced by pupils' work that is attractive and presented well. There is a large field and pleasant playground. The open-plan design of the school occasionally causes an intrusion of noise between classes. The size of the classrooms limits teaching styles for older pupils. However, although the design of the school is not ideal, good use has been made of the available space, and pupils and staff show great mutual respect so there is a minimum of disturbance to other classes.
21. The pupils have participated in a multi-cultural week, which incorporated dance, music and art and they learn about other faiths. The school has made a satisfactory improvement in this provision since the most recent inspection report. However, there is insufficient inclusion of a multi-cultural element within planning for resources and lesson content in other subjects. For example, the use and evaluation of products from other cultures are not included enough within design and technology.
22. There are insufficient opportunities for investigation within science. Sometimes, these lessons are not planned to fully challenge pupils' investigative skills or to develop their sense of enquiry.

### Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors are **very good**. Staff provide **very good** support and guidance for pupils, both pastoral and academic, and the newly formed school council provides a **good** opportunity for pupils to contribute their views.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for the personal welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- Very good arrangements to help pupils improve their work and very good support for their personal development.
- Very good relationships between pupils and adults in school.

### Commentary

23. Comprehensive arrangements exist to ensure the safety and security of everyone in school. Risk assessments are prepared meticulously, so that both the school building and grounds and the activities carried out in them are safe, while careful preparations are made when pupils go out on trips. Staff ensure that pupils are very well supervised at all times and a number are qualified in first aid. During lessons, particularly in subjects such as physical education, design and technology and science, teachers pay special attention to safe practices. Pupils are encouraged to follow a healthy lifestyle, through fresh air and exercise, fruit snacks and the provision of drinking water throughout the day. A senior teacher is responsible for child protection issues, and all staff are aware of procedures to be followed should they have any concerns. The school keeps a register of pupils who may have specific medical needs, for example food allergies, so that all staff can keep a watchful eye on them. Pupils with special educational needs are very well cared for and fully integrated into the daily life of the school.
24. Because staff know pupils so well in this small school, teachers are able to cater particularly well for their individual needs. Ongoing advice helps pupils understand what they need to

concentrate on to improve their schoolwork. The oldest pupils have specific targets to work towards and know what they must do to reach them. The procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are well ordered and enable the school to identify those pupils at an early stage. The school liaises well with outside agencies when extra support is required to meet their needs. Their teachers, on an informal basis, routinely monitor pupils' personal development. Circle time gives teachers an opportunity to deal with sensitive issues and to help pupils explore their feelings in a safe, warm environment. For example, pupils in Year 1 were sufficiently confident to describe their own feelings when they felt that someone had been unkind to them and this led to a thoughtful discussion on how to treat other people.

25. Because relationships throughout the school are so strong, pupils know that if they need help of any kind it will be readily available. They trust the adults who work with them and have no hesitation in approaching them with problems or queries, or simply to share their pleasures. This means that the school environment is a secure and happy place, in which everyone feels valued equally. The corporate feeling of the school was particularly apparent in a celebration assembly, when children and adults joined to share their pride and delight in what they had achieved together.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has **very good** links with parents, who are pleased with what it offers to their children and who support its work in practical ways. There are **very effective** links with the local community, which provide enrichment for pupils. Educational support programmes for parents and local people are developing well and links with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very effective partnership with parents contributes positively to pupils' learning.
- The quality and range of information for parents are good.
- Very strong links with the local community have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and personal development.

### **Commentary**

26. Leadership and management of the school have established a very effective partnership with parents, who in turn rate the school's leadership, management and teaching highly. Parents are closely involved in the daily life of the school. As well as helping in classrooms and accompanying pupils on school trips, they take a serious interest in what their children are learning and make a conscious effort to support that learning at home. Special courses for parents to explain current approaches to teaching subjects such as mathematics have been much appreciated, so that parents now understand the work their children are doing and can give them good support. Most parents listen to pupils read and help them with spellings, and many contribute in other ways. For example, parents send in artefacts that relate to pupils' current studies, such as pre-decimal coins, and parents of children in the Reception class go to a lot of trouble to add imaginative stories and photographs to the daily adventure diary of the class teddy, who goes home to a different family each night. Parents of pupils with special educational needs always attend review meetings, while nearly all parents come to the termly consultation evenings. A small core of very dedicated parents runs the thriving Parents, Teachers and Friends Association, which, as a registered charity, organises fund-raising and social events to provide extra resources for the pupils. These events are well supported by other parents.
27. A good range of written information is provided for parents, including the detailed and useful prospectus, monthly newsletters keeping parents up-to-date on school events and a helpful booklet, provided for the parents of new pupils, which gives suggestions of how they can help their children learn. Annual reports tell parents what pupils have been studying, concentrating



mainly on the positive aspects of their progress but often setting specific targets for improvement. The 'general comments' sections of the reports are personal to each child, showing teachers' good knowledge of each pupil's development. In addition to the written information that parents receive, they have regular opportunities, both formal and informal, to talk to staff. Parents are particularly pleased to see the headteacher and deputy on the yard each morning, ready to talk to any parent who wishes to approach them. The Monday evening 'drop-in' session, when parents may look at pupils' work and talk to the class teacher, is an imaginative and useful facility.

28. The school lives up to its aim of encouraging the closest possible links with the local community by forming close bonds with the church, the village and local industry. Pupils take part in church services and festivals and treat local people to their music and songs at Christmas. They explore the village as part of their studies in subjects such as geography and history, often attracting compliments about their very good behaviour and thereby acting as very good ambassadors for their school. Because of the high profile the school has in the community, local businesses are always pleased to support events that are run for the benefit of the children, to the extent of helping with science and environmental projects and sponsoring the provision of CCTV to protect the building. A more personal involvement was the willingness of two local residents to be questioned about their memories of World War II, bringing history to life for the pupils. These strong, fruitful links with the community help to extend and enhance pupils' learning experiences and personal development.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school have been improved since the last inspection and are now **very good**. Of particular note is the way an **excellent** ethos has been fostered, exemplified by the **outstanding** teamwork and relationships throughout the school. Governance of the school is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are fully involved in the life of the school.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- There is perceptive evaluation of the school's performance.
- There is a strong commitment to high standards.
- Staff, governors, pupils and parents work well together.
- Financial management is thoughtful and effective.
- The leadership expertise of some of the subject co-ordinators requires further development.

### Commentary

#### Governance

29. This is now very good, with the governors acting well as critical friends. They are supportive of the work of the school but also willing to challenge the proposals of the senior management team, such as during the development of the school improvement plan. This is helped by the fact that some governors have an educational background and so have a thorough understanding of the processes involved in the running of a school. They share the headteacher's vision of all pupils achieving as well as they can by being developed as independent learners in a very caring, Christian community.
30. The chair of governors and the headteacher work closely together, with a strong commitment to involving pupils and their parents closely in the school's development. The high regard in which the parents and their children hold the school is testimony to the success of this vision. The governors are regular visitors to school and through their monitoring procedures are fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses. This ensures that their discussions are well informed and their decisions based on firm evidence. They fulfil their statutory duties well.

## Leadership

31. The very good leadership of the headteacher gives the school a clear sense of direction so that all staff know what they are working towards. She has high aspirations for all who are associated with the school and is focused on ensuring the highest possible standards in the school's work. Her inspiration has led to all staff and governors working successfully as a team that strives to ensure all pupils achieve as well as possible.
32. The headteacher has delegated responsibilities wisely so that effective teams have been developed. Members of the senior management team provide very good role models for other staff and pupils and play an important role in the leadership of the curriculum and teaching. Some of the subject co-ordinators are relatively new and their leadership expertise is, understandably, in need of further development.
33. The reflection of the school's aims, values and policies in its work is very good. The commitment to ensuring that pupils feel valued and develop positive self-esteem underpins its life and strongly contributes to standards of attainment and achievement. There are very good relationships at all levels throughout the school, with all pupils having equal access to the full range of opportunities provided and their achievements being recognised and warmly celebrated. The ethos for learning is excellent and underpins the good quality learning found in all classes.

## Management

34. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work and then using the information gained to make improvements, are very good. Teachers' performance management is well linked to school improvement priorities and their own professional needs. The management of provision for those pupils with special educational needs is good, so that their particular requirements are well met. Assessment procedures in the core subjects are very good and enable teachers to have a clear view of the progress and attainment of their pupils.
35. Recent high turnover of staff has been handled very well, with governors, headteacher and senior managers working successfully to ensure it has not adversely affected standards. In fact, the expertise of the teachers appointed has had a beneficial effect on the quality of teaching.
36. The headteacher, bursar and the finance committee of the governing body manage the school budget very well. There are efficient systems in place to make sure that the finances are carefully controlled and expenditure regularly reviewed. There is a good grasp of the principles of best value, which helps the school to achieve educational priorities. This is shown by the decision to maintain current teaching levels to avoid having pupils of different ages in one class. Day-to-day administration is very good, as are the systems of financial control.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	361,594
Total expenditure	378,776
Expenditure per pupil	2525

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	41,178
Balance carried forward to the next	23,996

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

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

37. There has been a good improvement in provision for children in the Reception class since the previous inspection. Teaching was judged to be satisfactory and has since improved to a good standard. When children begin the Foundation Stage, their attainment is about average. As a result of good teaching and improvements in provision, children progress well; almost all achieve and many exceed, the Early Learning Goals in all areas by the time they begin Year 1.
38. The Foundation Stage leader has good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses and checks the children's knowledge and understanding in a manageable and useful way. This has led to improvements in attainment.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of attainment are above average.
- The excellent relationships and ethos of the class make a considerable contribution to learning.
- Teaching and learning are very good and lead to very good achievement.

#### **Commentary**

39. Children begin school with standards of attainment that are in line with expectations for children of this age. By the time they reach Year 1 almost all children achieve the Early Learning Goal and a considerable number exceed this expectation.
40. Relationships within the class are excellent. All children behave very well and have excellent attitudes to learning. As a result, they are able to listen carefully and learn very well. They have settled well and consequently share well and understand all school routines. The calm and friendly atmosphere in the class results in a growing confidence by the children, who are willing to contribute and do their best.
41. Teaching and learning are very good. Provision for the development of this area of learning underpins the approach to all learning. Children are given opportunities to become responsible, such as giving out fruit at snack time and learning to say 'please' and 'thank you'. All adults are excellent role models; they show the greatest respect and care to children and to each other. Children are encouraged to express opinions and are given first hand experiences to develop their understanding of others' feelings.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good and result in very good achievement.
- Speaking and listening skills are given priority.
- High expectations result in good presentation of work.

#### **Commentary**

42. Standards of attainment are about average when children first start school. By the time they reach Year 1 almost all of the children have attained the Early Learning Goal for communication, language and literacy and some are attaining beyond this.
43. Teaching is very good. Staff have high expectations and relationships are excellent. As a result, children achieve very well. Children quickly learn to read because they are supported at home by weekly homework and have regular reading practice. Writing is neat and emphasis is given to spellings and correct letter formation. Children are taught how to act as readers and writers. For example, one little girl 'read poems' from an old diary using the structure of rhythm and rhymes from an imagined poem.
44. Speaking and listening skills are developed well and staff act as very good role models. They clearly enunciate words and encourage children to explain processes carefully, such as how to make biscuits. Correct vocabulary is taught in context.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's attitudes to mathematical development are excellent.
- Teaching and learning are good and result in good achievement.
- Very good use is made of the teaching assistant and parental help.

### **Commentary**

45. Standards of attainment in mathematical development are average when children start school. When they reach Year 1 they have made good progress and almost all have achieved the Early Learning Goal. Children's attitudes to mathematics are excellent. They enjoy learning about shape and number and use correct vocabulary. A variety of opportunities allow children to practise skills within the classroom.
46. Teaching and learning are good. Well-planned activities such as those organised for 'shapes day' reinforce the importance of knowledge of mathematics within everyday lives. Children made shaped sandwiches and biscuits for a shapes party and played games involving using their knowledge of shapes.
47. The teaching assistant and parents offer good support to the children and this allows effective group work to take place. They have a very good relationship with the children and continually check their level of understanding. As a result, children are confident about answering questions and trying activities for themselves.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well.
- A variety of well-planned activities support learning.
- There are insufficient opportunities for children investigate and explore outside formal teaching sessions.

### **Commentary**

48. Standards of attainment are a little below expectations when children first start school. However, very good teaching soon allows children to fulfil their potential and almost all achieve the Early Learning Goal by Year 1.
49. Teaching and learning are very good because lessons are very well planned and organised. The teacher and teaching assistant ensure that children fully understand new ideas and associated vocabulary. For example, children tested materials to check whether they were 'waterproof' before making a coat for their teddy. To develop the concept of 'waterproof', they used the outdoor environment to test the effectiveness of their Wellington boots. The children are usually given time and good adult support to investigate and to ask questions. Very occasionally, staff miss opportunities to allow children to hypothesise about what they encounter.
50. There are insufficient opportunities for children to develop the explorative aspects of their learning in this area. Microscopes and a range of materials were provided in the class for children to examine and relate to their learning. However, there are few other opportunities for children to investigate, for example, natural or made objects, to test materials for themselves using water, or to experiment with fixings and fastening in preparation for making teddy's coat.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

51. Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning. Standards of attainment in physical development are about average when children start school. By the time they enter Year 1 almost all children attain the Early Learning Goal and many exceed it. The children are confident and play with the older pupils at playtimes in the main playground. They know a number of playground games and can organise and play these with some skill. Children show good ability in fine motor skills, such as preparing food, completing jigsaws, lacing shoes and using tools.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and result in good achievement.
- Children use the work of other artists to create their own.
- There are insufficient opportunities for children to develop creative skills outside the formal teaching sessions.

### **Commentary**

52. Standards of attainment in this area are average when children start school. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children have achieved the Early Learning Goal.
53. Teaching and learning are good. Children explore pattern and learn to apply paint with a variety of tools. They are encouraged to use their senses in the outside environment. For example, they touch wet branches and describe the feel of 'soggy grass', and listen to birds chattering. In the play areas children adopt roles, using their imagination to re-enact familiar scenes.
54. Children have looked at the work of the artist Jackson Pollock and used different tools to create marks and patterns in paint. The quality of the resulting pictures is above average for children of this age.

55. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to independently develop their creative skills further, for example in painting or model making. Although children enjoy music and use instruments regularly there are none readily available for them to use on a day-to-day basis.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above average at seven years of age and well above average by eleven years of age.
- Teaching is good, with very good teaching for older pupils.
- The assessment of pupils' work is very good.
- There are very good relationships in all classes.
- Literacy is used well in other subjects.

#### Commentary

56. Pupils start school with about average attainment for their age. They achieve very well in the Foundation Stage and almost all achieve the Early Learning Goal for communication, language and literacy. As a result of good teaching the pupils continue to improve and usually reach standards in English that are above national expectations by the age of seven. Very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 results in further improvement and standards of attainment at eleven years of age are well above expectations. The national test results reveal a weaker picture for the 2003 Year 2 pupils but this group has shown good progress since Reception. Assessments and formal testing show that pupils are likely to achieve much better than last year at seven years of age and pupils in Year 6 are on line to achieve very well.
57. Pupils do a little better in writing than in reading. This is because of the extra attention paid to the teaching of writing in recent years. Pupils attain well in speaking and listening because teachers are very good role models and create many opportunities for pupils to develop these skills.
58. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes, particularly in Years 5 and 6, it is very good. This indicates a good improvement in teaching since the previous inspection. Teachers have high expectations and challenge all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to their limit. Lessons are very well planned and the National Literacy Strategy is used flexibly and well. All teachers have good subject knowledge and are very enthusiastic about the subject. Teachers' enthusiasm motivates pupils, who work hard and achieve well.
59. Basic skills, such as spelling and handwriting, are emphasised. This results in pupils' increased confidence and very good presentation of work. For example, in Year 6 the teacher's own very good model of joined handwriting results in pupils producing very neat work and very good attempts at personal styles. Pupils in this class were asked to explain why certain punctuation was used within their biography writing and this led to increased understanding. Teachers also model the behaviour of writers and readers. For example, in Year 2, pupils retold the story *The Boy who cried 'Wolf'* and consequently modelled this behaviour by re-reading their own written stories to check for punctuation. Teachers place very good emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. Pupils are given opportunities to work in various groups and to use speech for different purposes.

60. Teachers very carefully check how pupils are doing and not only use the very good systems in place for formal assessment but check pupils' understanding throughout lessons. This leads to changes to subsequent lesson planning that ensure every pupil is challenged and successful. Pupils are given extra support when it is needed and this results in good achievement. Pupils' work is marked very well, which supports their learning through positive and constructive comments. Pupils have their own well-chosen targets for improvement; they understand what they need to do to improve and older pupils know the basis of their targets.
61. Relationships in classes are very good. All pupils are very well behaved and listen attentively; consequently no time is wasted. Staff and pupils show great respect for each other. Teachers value pupils' contributions and the pupils have the confidence to ask questions and to make mistakes without fear of rebuke. Pupils are good humoured and friendly because they have high self-esteem. This atmosphere has a considerable effect on the standards reached by the pupils.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

62. Language and literacy are promoted well across other subjects. The particular emphasis on speaking and listening skills is apparent in many subjects. For example, Year 5 pupils use historical texts to discuss the features of a recounted text and use this knowledge to develop their writing of 'A day in the life of a Roman soldier'. In personal development discussions, pupils use all their skills to discuss and evaluate ideas for improving the school grounds. Pupils learn to research information on the Internet and to link this to their research from books. English is well organised by the enthusiastic subject leader, who has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses and ensures the right priorities are met.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standard of pupils' work is above average.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well because of consistently good and sometimes excellent teaching.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and work very hard in lessons.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- Numeracy skills are applied well in other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

63. The 2003 national test results for Year 6 pupils were average compared to all schools and better than those of similar schools. The 2003 national test results for Year 2 pupils matched those nationally and those of similar schools.
64. Standards of work seen during the inspection are higher than those achieved in the most recent national tests. Several reasons account for these higher standards, including improved teaching and the significant differences that exist each year between the groups of pupils. For example, there was a higher proportion of pupils with behavioural and learning difficulties in last year's Year 2 class than is the case this year. Pupils throughout the infants and juniors are currently showing above average competence in numeracy, both in mental calculations and in written computations.
65. Teaching throughout the school is almost invariably very good and in the case of Year 3 it is excellent. The result of this high quality teaching is that pupils are making very good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Notable strengths in teaching, in all classes, include teachers' clear explanations that enable pupils to systematically develop their knowledge and

skills and skilful questioning techniques that enable teachers both to judge the extent of pupils' learning and to deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers hold high expectations of pupils. They are encouraged to work hard, listen attentively, behave well and to show respect for others, for example on the many occasions when pupils are called upon to explain their thinking. Teachers' high commitment to all pupils, regardless of ability or background, and their very good knowledge of individual needs is shown in the well-pitched demands made of pupils. This results in all pupils, including those who find learning difficult and those who are particularly able in mathematics, achieving well. This reflects the school's good response to a criticism reported in the previous inspection that those of higher ability in Year 2 were not being sufficiently challenged.

66. Outstanding use of ICT in two Year 3 lessons resulted in remarkable gains being made in pupils' knowledge and understanding that subtraction and addition are 'inverse operations'. Similarly, very good teaching in the Year 2 class enabled all pupils to make significant progress in learning how to program a robotic turtle in order to find 'hidden treasure'.
67. Pupils' enjoyment of mathematics reflects the excellent climate for learning that exists in all classrooms. Pupils' consistently very good and often exemplary behaviour provides a measure of the mutual respect between adults and pupils. Pupils work enthusiastically, co-operating fully with staff and with each other and take obvious pride in their achievements. They are well aware how to improve their work because teachers take care to give them clear guidance, verbally and in written comments. Pupils' very positive attitudes contribute greatly to their learning.
68. The subject is led very well. The co-ordinator makes very good use of assessment data to determine where improvements are needed and his high quality teaching provides an excellent role model for colleagues. Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection, for example in the checking on teaching quality throughout the school.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

69. Good use is made of mathematics in other subjects. For example, the close links made between mathematics and ICT help develop pupils' numeracy and computer skills. Similarly, pupils' skills in measuring are applied well in science and design and technology, for example in measuring time and liquid capacity and when weighing ingredients.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good quality teaching and learning enable all pupils to achieve well.
- Curriculum planning is good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- Pupils' skills in making scientific conclusions and in interpreting their findings are not good enough.



## Commentary

70. Over the last few years, pupils have maintained high standards in the national tests for eleven year olds in science. This is reflected in the work of pupils currently in Year 6 and is a result of the consistently good quality teaching that they receive. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
71. Teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly and share the intended learning outcomes with the pupils so that they are clear about what they are to learn and what is expected of them. Teachers set challenging and interesting activities that build well on previous work, so that pupils can use previously gained scientific knowledge and understanding to support their learning. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to explain ideas and demonstrate methods for pupils to use. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 6, in which they investigated how the extent that an elastic band stretches depends on the force exerted upon it. Teachers use class and group discussions well as a means of extending pupils' scientific vocabulary. For example, during a lesson for pupils in Year 4, on investigating how solids dissolved, the teacher introduced the word 'variables' and ensured the pupils pronounced it correctly. Because of the quality of teaching, most pupils in Year 6 show good knowledge and understanding of key scientific ideas and can carry out a fair test with confidence.
72. The curriculum is well planned to provide many exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills by being involved in structured, practical scientific investigations. Within these activities, pupils are given the opportunity to show initiative, take responsibility and work collaboratively, which makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development. Many activities are based on science in everyday life, which enables pupils to use their own experiences to support their learning. There are planned opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills during their investigations. In Year 6, the pupils make careful measurements of time and temperature when exploring if solids dissolve more quickly in warm water than cold water. They write detailed accounts of their work, with accurately-labelled scientific diagrams.
73. Because the activities are interesting and learning is made fun, pupils respond very positively, showing a great deal of enjoyment in their work. Their behaviour is very good, which enables them to concentrate well and have a high work rate. The pride they take in their work is shown in the high standards of presentation in their books.
74. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve standards. This has enabled her to identify the need to further develop the pupils' investigational skills, for example to enable them to reach evaluative conclusions following practical experiments, based on prior scientific knowledge, rather than merely describing what they have done. Pupils' skills in identifying patterns and interpreting their findings also require development.
75. Very good assessment procedures enable teachers to have a clear view of pupils' progress and attainment so that future work can be tailored to their individual needs. Teachers use marking well to advise pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of pupils' attainment are improving and are at least average.
- Teaching is good and results in good learning for all pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.

- Subject leadership is good.

## Commentary

76. Since the previous inspection the school has considerably improved its facilities for ICT, for example by introducing a suite of computer equipment. This has resulted in pupils having far greater opportunity to learn new skills and to apply them in their work in other subjects. Standards attained by the current Year 6 pupils are at least average, for example in their use of computers to deliver multi-media presentations. Younger pupils, for example in Years 2 and 3, are demonstrating standards that are above average, in the work seen during inspection. For example, Year 3 pupils are adept at introducing clip-art images into their work when combining text with graphics. The very good improvements in resources and staff expertise made since the previous inspection are improving standards in pupils' attainment.
77. Good quality teaching is based upon teachers' secure, and in some cases very good, subject knowledge. When pupils are learning new techniques on the computers, teachers strike a good balance between intervening too quickly and leaving pupils too long without support. Teachers' crystal clear instructions enable pupils to acquire new skills quickly and the teachers reinforce pupils' understanding of new techniques with skilful questioning. This was seen, for example, when Year 2 pupils explained the function of the 'clear memory' key on a programmable robot. An excellent ethos of teamwork results in teachers offering support to each other on the rare occasions whenever technical difficulties arise.
78. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic in their use of ICT. They show good skills of co-operation when they work in pairs at a computer. Their very good behaviour is a significant contributor to the good learning that takes place. Year 5 pupils, for example, sustained high levels of concentration when using graphics software to generate their version of Matisse's snail picture and were justifiably proud of their achievements.
79. Subject leadership is good. Though she has only recently taken on this responsibility the co-ordinator has a clear picture of the subject across the school and her enthusiasm provides a very good example for her colleagues.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. Teachers make good use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects, especially in English and mathematics. Teachers also use ICT to enhance their teaching; for example, outstanding use is made of an interactive smartboard in many Year 3 lessons. Another very good example was seen within the opening phase of a Year 6 mathematics lesson that culminated in pupils making well-judged estimations of angles.

## HUMANITIES

In humanities, work was sampled in religious education with only one lesson seen, and in geography no lessons were seen. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.

### Religious education

81. Most pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, which shows they have achieved well in their time in school.
82. The curriculum is well planned to deepen the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. This enables pupils to have a good understanding of the main events in the life of Jesus and of the main characters in the Bible. Strong emphasis is given to using the pupils' own experiences as the basis for discussion. This makes a positive contribution to their

spiritual development. Due emphasis is also placed on learning about the beliefs and traditions of other faiths and cultures. This is shown by the way that pupils in Year 6 talk in an informed way about the Islamic and Hindu religions.

83. In the one lesson observed, the expertise of the teacher enabled pupils in Year 4 to make good progress in their understanding of the meaning of Advent. She let them practise their literacy skills by requiring them to follow a set of written instructions to make a Christingle.
84. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator's good subject knowledge means that she can give effective advice and support to her colleagues. Assessment procedures are informal and the school recognises the need to improve them to give a more consistent view of pupils' progress and attainment.
85. A very caring, Christian ethos pervades the whole life of the school. Pupils pray reverently and there are very good relationships to be found throughout the school. There are many visual stimuli to act as a focus for pupils' quiet personal reflection. These include a cross in a circular window in the hall, along with a model of Praying Hands and a set of large candles placed outside the hall. Pupils also have opportunities to visit the local church to take part in a variety of Christian services and celebrations.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and so pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes.
- Visits and visitors are used well to extend learning.
- Assessment procedures require development.

### Commentary

86. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good understanding of the past and of famous people. They are adept in recognising similarities and differences through the years, as was evident in the work of Year 2 pupils who were able to say how holidays in the past have changed to the present day. Teachers place due emphasis on pupils understanding the significance of historical artefacts and the need to study them in order to find out about times gone by. Consequently, most pupils in Year 6 achieve standards above those expected for their age. For instance, they have a good knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in Ancient Egypt. They talk with much enthusiasm about their studies into the life and times of Tudor England and clearly enjoy their work in history.
87. There are good links made with other subjects. Pupils in Year 5 make good use of their art skills to further their knowledge of life in Roman Britain, for example by making printing blocks to make Roman mosaics and by using clay to make representations of Roman coins.
88. Good use is made of visits and visitors to extend learning in the subject. A good example of this was seen when a visitor told pupils about his experiences in World War II. Pupils had prepared questions in advance of his visit and showed courtesy and great interest in the manner in which he answered them.
89. The co-ordinator leads the subject well, knowing the improvements needed. These include formal assessment procedures to track more consistently the progress that pupils make.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons were seen in music, one in Year 1 and one in Year 3. Only one design and technology lesson was seen and no art lessons were seen. Therefore, it is not possible to form overall judgements about provision in these subjects.

### Art and design

90. Pupils use a wide range of materials to develop their skills in different artistic techniques. In doing so, good use is made of a study of famous artists as a stimulus for their work. There are good links to other subjects, such as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 make pen portraits of Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler as part of their studies into the history of World War II. The subject also makes a positive contribution to the pupils' cultural development. This is evident in the work of pupils in Year 5 who, after studying patterns in Indian art, produced good quality batik panels in a similar style. The displays of artwork around the school are of good quality and reflect both the care that pupils take in their activities, and the way that staff value their efforts.

### Design and technology

91. In design and technology, pupils study three units a year, which cover the requirements of the National Curriculum and ensure that pupils make progress in skills and knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 6 evaluate, design and make their own biscuits. The small amount of written work available for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 was neatly presented and well marked. This indicates good recording skills.
92. It was not possible to judge standards from the written work or from the very limited number of products available. However, the school judges standards by Year 6 to be average. In the one lesson observed, pupils in Year 6 were achieving above expectations, and teaching and learning were good. The teacher's good subject knowledge enabled her to build upon pupils' prior learning. Good use was made of ICT and the interactive smartboard. Opportunities were taken well to link numeracy skills through measuring.
93. There is insufficient consideration of the evaluation of products from other cultures.

### Music

94. Music has an important place in the life of the school and pupils can be heard singing multiplication tables in perfect harmony or singing very tunefully in assembly. They enjoy a variety of music and learn to appreciate music from other cultures, such as Africa. The school has hosted a visiting Indian dance teacher who has developed pupils' interest in the music and dance of her country. During residential visits, pupils participate in dance, drama and music. Pupils are invited to sing at the local church during special services and they sing carols at Runcorn Town Hall. School productions and pantomime feature music strongly and provide a good opportunity for developing links with parents and the community.
95. The scheme of work is adapted to suit the classes and the expertise of the teachers. In the one lesson seen in Year 1, teaching was very good because the teacher had high expectations; there were very good relationships and a good link to literacy. Pupils created sound effects for a favourite story *Peace at Last*. One lesson in Year 3, led by the music subject leader, was judged to be excellent and is described in a previous section of this report.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes.
- Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Subject leadership is good.

### Commentary

96. Because it was not possible to observe Year 6 pupils, and Year 2 pupils were seen only for one lesson of gymnastics, there is insufficient evidence to judge standards attained by seven and eleven year olds. However, in the lessons seen, standards are in line with those expected nationally and pupils are achieving satisfactorily.
97. Good quality teaching results in pupils making good gains in physical skills and in their ability to observe and learn from the performance of others. This represents an improvement in teaching since the previous inspection, when teaching was judged to be only satisfactory because pupils were given insufficient opportunities to develop their judgements about their own and others' performance. Teachers rightly have high expectations of pupils' ability to behave sensibly and they take great care to involve pupils in establishing a safe working environment for physical education. Teachers' warm relationships with pupils underpin their very good control of classes and ensure that good use is made of lesson time. Pupils are given interesting tasks that challenge them physically and intellectually. For example, in a Year 4 dance lesson, the pupils were encouraged to respond sensitively and dramatically to the stimulus of Aboriginal music. Teachers give clear instructions and well-timed demonstrations of skills; for example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils noticeably improved their catching skills as a result of the teacher's well-delivered coaching points.
98. Pupils have positive attitudes to physical education. They co-operate fully with their teachers and behave in a sensible and mature way, for example, by taking considerable care to avoid collisions when moving around the hall. They are keen to develop new skills, and persevere in their attempts.
99. Physical education offers many opportunities for pupils to develop socially and morally, for example, in Year 3, when pairs combined in attempting to outwit an opponent in a ball game. Similarly, the dance lesson referred to above contributed to pupils' awareness of cultures beyond their own. Enhancements to the curriculum, such as visits from professional rugby players, judo instruction, netball and residential visits, contribute significantly to pupils' personal development and their physical skills.
100. Subject leadership is good. The recently appointed co-ordinator has already identified areas for development, such as improving the provision made for dance and the need to formalise the systems for recording pupils' progress. She is an enthusiastic role model for others and has mapped out a clear sense of direction for the subject.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

101. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop in the above areas. Teachers gather pupils together (circle time) to engage in structured discussions about issues such as good listening skills, kindness to others, and, in the case of older pupils, how to improve the school's grounds. All of these sessions are well directed and skilfully managed by teachers and result in pupils, and children in Reception, expressing themselves in a sensible and mature way.

Such positive attitudes contribute greatly to the successful outcomes of circle time. In a similar way, the recently introduced school council provides a relevant and interesting context for class representatives to make the views of their peers known. Though at an early stage, there are clear signs that this will be a very worthwhile venture. Each of the Year 6 pupils has recently been successfully trained and assessed as Junior Playleaders. The serious and effective way they carry out their responsibilities reflects their commitment to their role. This represents an excellent preparation for citizenship.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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