

## INSPECTION REPORT

**HESKIN PEMBERTON VOLUNTARY AIDED CHURCH OF  
ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Heskin, Chorley, Lancashire.

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119475

Headteacher: Mrs M S Whitehead

Lead inspector: Mr David Carrington

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 256409

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	73
School address:	Withington Lane Heskin Chorley Lancashire
Postcode:	PR7 5LU
Telephone number:	01257 451365
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Doreen Hoddinott
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Heskin Pemberton Church of England Primary School is a small village school. It has served its predominantly rural locality to the west of Chorley in Lancashire since Elizabethan times as a grammar school then primary school. The mission of the school is to provide a stimulating, caring Christian environment in which pupils progress to their highest achievement. Most of the current 73 pupils (37 boys and 36 girls) live in Heskin and neighbouring villages. All pupils speak English as their main language. There is a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, though the proportion with statements is average. Most special educational needs are for learning difficulties. A very small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Children start school with broadly average levels of skills and knowledge. The school is involved in the *Healthy Schools*, *Improvement in Action Research*, *Keeping up with children* and *Eccleston Green Sensory Garden* initiatives. It was awarded the *Basic Skills Award* and *Investors In People* status in 2003. At present the buildings are being re-modelled and extended.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, geography, history,
9479	Mrs Christine Field	Lay inspector	
8710	Mrs Julie Moore	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, special educational needs.

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

Heskin Pemberton Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School is an effective school and provides a **good** education for its pupils. There is a very warm, sharing, caring, Christian atmosphere in school in which every pupil is treated as an individual and welcomed for the talents they have. Achievement is good and this enables pupils to reach their potential. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and there is a strong team of staff and governors who work hard in the interests of the pupils. The school gives sound and improving value for money.

#### **The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are below average in Year 6.
- Standards are above average overall in Year 2.
- Pupils' overall achievement is good through the school and skills, knowledge and understanding are generally built effectively.
- The headteacher gives very good leadership to the school and has ensured that there is a strong team of staff and governors. The school is governed effectively and management processes work well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- The care, welfare and guidance given to pupils is very effective in creating a learning atmosphere in which everyone is valued and encouraged to do well.
- Pupils' attitudes are good, they behave well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Subject leaders do not yet have enough opportunities for the rigorous checking and evaluation of the quality of education and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils have inconsistent opportunities to self-evaluate their work and to investigate and solve problems in some mathematics, science and ICT work.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for higher attaining pupils is good.
- The school works very effectively with parents and other schools and colleges to enhance the quality of learning.

The school has made good improvement since its previous inspection in 1998. The eight key issues from that time have been completed successfully. The headteacher has made a number of substantial changes to the school since joining three years ago and this has strengthened the quality of educational provision and the achievement of pupils.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

Caution has to be taken when interpreting the results in school because of the small number of pupils in each year group. The variations from year-to-year in standards are often because just one pupil did or did not reach a particular level. Standards in the 2003 SATs<sup>1</sup> were well above average in reading and mathematics in Year 2 and above average in writing. In Year 6, standards were high in English and amongst the top five per cent of schools nationally. They were well above average in mathematics and science.

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<sup>1</sup> Standardised Attainment Tests

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

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

Overall, achievement is **good**.

- Children in reception started with average levels of skills and knowledge and are achieving well. Most are likely to reach or exceed the targets for the six areas of learning before the end of the school year.
- Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and average in ICT.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well. Standards vary from year to year because of the different background of pupils in each class. Standards are average in Year 3, above average in Years 4 and 5, and below average in Year 6. Standards are not high enough in ICT in all junior years because of insufficient use of computers.
- Attendance levels are good, though a few pupils are often late for school. Pupils are interested in their work, they behave well, and develop as mature and sensible learners.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **very good**.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**.

- Teaching quality is **good**. Evidence from both the lessons observed and pupils' past work give clear indication of the good quality of teaching. Expectations and the level of challenge provided are good.
- Pupils learn well. Pupils are well motivated and work productively. Whilst much learning is enjoyable and fun, it is often more successful in the mornings than the afternoons because of the extended length of some lessons.
- Assessment is satisfactory. The school is developing its systems of assessment successfully but pupils do not have consistent opportunities to self-evaluate what they have learned.
- The curriculum is satisfactory. Curriculum provision for English and mathematics is good. There are emerging strengths in science but the curriculum for ICT requires improvement. There is good enrichment of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs work from a good curriculum.
- There is a strong partnership with parents the community and other schools and colleges. This benefits the quality of education significantly.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership, management and governance is **good**.

- The headteacher provides very effective leadership and has very good understanding of school performance.
- Governors are committed, involved and effective in guiding educational provision in school.
- School self-evaluation and monitoring systems and the target setting and tracking process are developing very well.

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

Parents and pupils hold very positive views of the school.

Parents are very pleased with the choice of school for their children. They welcome its small size and family, Christian traditions. They think achievement is good, teaching effective and leadership and management successful. Inspectors agree fully with these views. The pupils like their school immensely and are keen to share their views with visitors. The school values their opinions and strives hard to take them into account when making changes and improvements.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve provision and standards in ICT through the school.
- Further develop learning to allow more time for pupils to self evaluate their work and to investigate and solve problems, especially in mathematics, science and ICT.
- Create additional opportunities for subject leaders to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of provision across the school.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards this year are above average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Achievement is **good** through the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good in all classes.
- Pupils in the reception class are achieving well and standards are average.
- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and average in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 2.
- In Year 6, standards are below average in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- The school has targeted the improvement of standards of writing and science effectively.
- Throughout the school, standards in ICT are generally not as good as those in other subjects because pupils do not have enough opportunities to build knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Boys and girls achieve as well as each other in lessons, though there have been some significant differences in past SATs<sup>2</sup>.
- Higher attaining pupils are challenged well and their achievement is good.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because of effective provision.

#### Commentary

1. Caution. It is important to remember that the small number of pupils in each year group in school may mean that the broad evaluation of standards is misleading. This is because one more or one less pupil achieving a given level will have a profound impact on the results for that year group.
2. Standards in school have varied from year-to-year since the previous inspection in 1998, but the overall trend to rising standards has been above the national average in the infants and similar to the national picture in the juniors. As shown in the following table of the 2003 SATs, pupils in Year 2 attained standards that were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18.1 (16.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.6 (13.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.1 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 7 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. The results for 2003 in Year 6 show that standards were high in English and amongst the top five per cent of schools nationally. They were well above average in mathematics and science. In comparison with the results when this class was in Year 2 in 1999, the improvement to standards was good in English but not as effective in mathematics and science. A smaller proportion than was found nationally achieved the higher level 5 in mathematics and science last year.

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<sup>2</sup> Standardised attainment tests

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.6 (26.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.8 (26.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.0 (28.0)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 10 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Pupils' achievement is good through the school. Lessons are often enjoyed and pupils give an enthusiastic response. Pupils are keen to learn and this ensures that their motivation is maintained. The work is carefully focused on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding and teachers have high expectations of what their pupils will achieve.
5. Children in the reception class started their education with average levels of skill and knowledge in the six areas of learning. They have settled very successfully into school routines and are on course to meet or exceed their targets for learning before they join Year 1.
6. At present, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2. A greater than expected proportion of pupils are working at an average or above average level. Standards are average in ICT in the infant years.
7. This year, the Year 6 pupils have very different backgrounds from the class of 2002-3. A significantly high proportion of pupils have special educational needs in the small year group. Whilst the standards they are attaining at present are below average in English, mathematics and science, these pupils have gained substantially in knowledge, skill and understanding as they have progressed through the school.
8. Standards in the other years also vary because of the background of the pupils. They are generally above average in Years 1, 4 and 5 and average in Year 3.
9. The school has very good systems to check and evaluate standards and achievement. In particular, the headteacher has very good insights into school performance. Recently, the school has targeted writing across the curriculum and science for improved standards. This has been done well and in both instances, standards are moving upward. The overall trend to improvement in standards has been good in infant classes and sound in the juniors over the past few years.
10. Provision in ICT is now the key priority for improved standards. At present standards in ICT are below average in junior classes because pupils do not have enough opportunities to build knowledge, skills and understanding. Computers are not used enough across the curriculum and whilst the work seen in the subject was appropriate and standards were average, inconsistent provision is hampering achievement and capping standards. There has been good improvement to resources for ICT so the school has what it needs to move provision on.
11. It is evident that boys and girls achieve as well as each other in lessons. All pupils show keen interest in their work and staff are adept at maintaining motivation and effort of both boys and girls. There have been some significant differences in past SATs. For example, over 2001-3, girls in Year 6 outperformed the boys in science, a trend that ran counter to the national picture. However, the small number of pupils in the year group may affect the interpretation of the data.
12. A very few parents expressed concern to inspectors that higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough. In fact, there is ample evidence to show that the higher attaining pupils are given work that is well matched to their needs. This enables them to achieve well. Planning

clearly identifies the expectations held of this group of pupils and often focuses on the needs of specific individuals. Questions to extend and probe are targeted at higher attaining pupils and they are set tasks of greater complexity than the other pupils in the class. These pupils rise to the challenges set.

13. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with well-tailored programmes of work that are carefully matched to their learning needs. The quality of support given by teachers and teaching assistants is effective in helping these pupils keep up with the others. In the sample of work seen it was evident that pupils with special educational needs are very productive workers who are proud of their achievements. They are determined to be as successful as their friends.

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

The school positively nurtures family values, and pupils' attitudes to school, behaviour and personal qualities are all **good**. Attendance is **good** and punctuality is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils like coming to school, are interested in their lessons and are keen to learn.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and at playtimes.
- Relationships are very good and a strength.
- Pupils' personal development is good overall, thanks to the school's good provision for their moral and social education.
- A few parents do not give their full support in ensuring that their children arrive at school right on time.

### **Commentary**

14. Parents are very happy with this aspect of the school's provision. Pupils like coming to school, are interested in their lessons and are keen to learn. Even the very youngest pupils are confident learners. They work together cooperatively in small groups, for example when playing with toys that help them re-tell the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Older pupils told inspectors they enjoy most lessons because the teachers make them interesting and fun. Inspectors found alert and responsive learners in all the lessons they observed.
15. Attendance at school is above average, though some pupils are not always punctual at the start of the school day.

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

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.1
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.6
National data:	0.4

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

16. Behaviour is good in lessons and at playtimes. Everyone in school knows one another as friends and although there are the occasional squabbles and fallings out, relationships stand out as very good. The school takes a firm stand against any bullying or aggressive behaviour and there have been no recorded instances for some time. Neither have there been any exclusions from school. Pupils from different classes spoke very confidently in telling inspectors that any adult in school will help sort problems out immediately. There is a clear system of rewards and sanctions used in class, and pupils are proud of their successes. Pupils told inspectors that they are highly motivated by the opportunity to share their

achievements in assembly, and are very proud of the recognition given to hard work, effort and citizenship aspects at the annual *Waring Treat*. Pupils also praise the house point system, which promotes corporate endeavour and a sense of pride in belonging to one of three houses - *Heskin, Nelson or Pemberton*.

17. Pupils' personal development is good overall, thanks to the school's good provision for their moral and social education. Pupils demonstrate an open, honest understanding of the difference between right and wrong and a very matter-of-fact awareness of life. Pupils are very articulate in discussion about the opportunities they are given to take on roles of responsibility including fund-raising for charities, running the school library or as house captains. The opportunities for spiritual development are woven very effectively into the daily life of the school and pupils' spiritual growth is fostered in a climate of trust and friendship. Assemblies, which all staff and pupils attend, have a very positive impact on the pupils, providing a good opportunity for prayer and reflection. Displays around the buildings also make a valuable contribution to promoting the Christian ethos of the school and enables pupils to share their thoughts, for example through the prayers that pupils have written and hung on the branches of a tree or those fixed to the wings of paper white doves they have made. Through experiences such as when Bishop Philip came to talk about life in Haiti, pupils are made suitably aware of cultural diversity; however, still more could be done to raise pupils' awareness of multi-racial Britain.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Pupils are well taught and they learn effectively. The curriculum is sound with good enrichment activities provided. The school has developed some very good partnerships with parents and other schools and colleges. The care, guidance and support given to pupils is very good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching quality is **good** and pupils learn well. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching, as shown in lessons and by pupils' past work, is good.
- Most pupils are interested in their tasks and work productively. They become mature, sensible and independent learners by the age of eleven.
- The school is working hard to develop effective assessment systems. However, assessment is not yet fully linked to the target setting and tracking process.

### Commentary

18. During the inspection, 17 lessons or part lessons were observed. These were all at least of satisfactory quality and the majority were of good teaching quality. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The evidence for good teaching, as summarised in the following table, is underpinned by the evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' past work.

## Overall evaluation

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	12	5	0	0	0

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

19. The overall quality of teaching is good in all classes. The most significant factors in the good quality of teaching are the high expectations of staff and the challenging nature of the work provided for different attainment groups. Another key factor that works to the advantage of the pupils is the consistency of experiences provided from reception through to the end of Year 6. The overall quality of planning is good and there is a good mix of activities in lessons.
20. There are other good features to teaching. The pace of work is usually brisk and the pupils know clearly what they have to achieve. Teachers and other adults support each group effectively. Pupils set about their work with enthusiasm and enjoyment, work hard and learn well. They are often keen to return for more at the end of lessons.
21. Support staff are included in all aspects of planning and preparation of lessons and know their roles well. They give valuable and effective support to pupils with special educational needs. Support staff were often observed to give quiet reinforcement and encouragement to their pupils, which kept their motivation high.
22. Pupils learn well. They are interested and work productively. As they start their individual or group work they know what they have to do and set about their tasks in an enthusiastic manner. The pupils become mature and sensible learners by Year 6 and they work well independently and show good skills of collaboration. Whilst pupils generally build skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate, learning is often more successful in the mornings than the afternoons because of the extended length of some lessons.
23. Assessment is satisfactory. The school is developing some effective systems of assessment, especially for English and mathematics. It has begun the process of setting targets for individual pupils and tracking the rate at which these are met. However, the target setting and tracking system is not yet embedded consistently and there are not as many references to targets in pupils' books as is necessary. Nonetheless, the targets are well linked to homework, which is frequently set to help pupils improve in key areas of knowledge and skill. Whilst the learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start of most lessons, there are not consistent opportunities for pupils to self-evaluate what they have learned at the end of the session.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. It is broad and reasonably balanced but ICT does not support pupils' learning well enough, and there are gaps in pupils' experiences in the subject. The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is a good programme of enhancement of the curriculum. Religious education will be inspected separately, as this is a church school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is interesting and challenging, with a good range of extra-curricular activities that extend pupils' learning well.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT to support their learning across the whole curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs get good support and this helps them to achieve well.

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is good. It is carefully and successfully planned to meet the wide-ranging needs of the reception group.
- There are some limits on the time available for other subjects because of the length of some sessions for English and mathematics.

## **Commentary**

24. The curriculum is firmly anchored in the National Curriculum and all the requirements are met. There were significant weaknesses in the curriculum at the time of the last inspection, and good progress has been made in overcoming them. Planning for the mixed-age classes is now good, and is pitched at the right levels. Pupils of all capabilities progress well and their learning moves forward at a good pace. Curriculum policies are in place across the board, and the provision for special educational needs is now a strength of the school.
25. Learning is brought alive in a number of ways. Residential visits and visits out of school provide good opportunities for pupils' personal development, which has a high profile in school. Health issues, including sex, drugs and relationship issues, are tackled with sensitivity and thoroughness. The wide range of clubs and activities that take place outside the normal school day enrich the basic curriculum successfully. These include sporting activities, music, as well as a good range of other interesting activities including the gardening club.
26. The school is strongly committed to ensuring that every pupil is included in all aspects of its work. It is successful. This success is achieved by the creation of a positive ethos, alongside its small family atmosphere, where all the adults know the pupils and their families very well. Pupils of all capabilities, as well as those with special educational needs, are challenged and extended by the teaching as well as the curriculum on offer. No one is left out.
27. Two issues still need further work:-
  - ICT is not fully integrated into the day-to-day life of the school. For example, there is only limited use in subjects such as English, mathematics and science. This can hold back pupils' learning as well as limiting how well pupils develop their ICT skills.
  - Time. The school has, rightly, had a strong focus since the last inspection on literacy and numeracy in order to boost pupils' performance in these subjects. Teaching is now good, pupils are achieving well, and the literacy and numeracy curricula are wide-ranging, stimulating and interesting. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills successfully, to support learning in other subjects. Much time has been directed towards achieving these successes. This means that all the other subjects have a smaller proportion of the school's overall time and this limits developments in subjects such as geography and history.
28. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and is a strength. Stimulating and challenging activities engage and interest the children in all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs are identified straight away, and suitable tasks are planned for them. This helps their learning to speed up, as well as ensuring that they achieve well.
29. The school is well staffed with teachers and learning support assistants, all of whom work together effectively. Good support is given in lessons, especially for those pupils who find learning hard, and this improves their achievement. The accommodation is satisfactory at present and is being improved. The current hall is not large enough for the full range of physical education activities, especially with older pupils. This will change when the current building programme is completed. The older pupils will also have a new classroom, and this will significantly enhance their current classroom space, which is too small. Resources are satisfactory, and they meet the needs of the curriculum fully.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The provision made to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Child protection and health and safety procedures are highly effective.

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

- Pupils receive very good personal support, advice and guidance because staff know them and their families so well.
- Relationships are trusting and supportive and help pupils feel confident to take full advantage of the good education being provided.
- The information given to pupils so they know what they have to do to reach better standards in their work in all subjects needs increasing.

#### **Commentary**

30. Pupils are very well looked after during the school day; child protection and health and safety procedures are comprehensive. Links with external agencies are close and enable the school to offer very good personal support to pupils who are facing particular difficulties, for example those with special educational needs who have individual education plans. The progress of these individuals is carefully tracked and this helps them to achieve successfully. Parents have a hundred per cent confidence in the school to care for their children. Pupils told inspectors they find school a safe and happy place to be.
31. The monitoring of achievement in English and mathematics is good but there is less assessment of pupils' achievement in other subjects. In addition, the setting of academic targets has usefully been introduced in English, mathematics and personal skills, but not yet extended to other subjects. There is currently no system for enabling pupils to reflect on their progress and to play a full role in pursuing their academic targets. There is a need for subject leaders to have greater involvement in tracking the progress of pupils in the subject for which they hold responsibility and for reviewing and revising targets in the light of what they find. The report on pupil progress sent home to parents in the summer term could usefully include such targets to further strengthen the very good home-school partnership.
32. The school actively seeks pupils' views about wider school issues and, wherever possible, acts upon them. Pupils' views are taken on board, for example in considering the new buildings development, but there is no school council.

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

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents and has forged strong links with its community.

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

- The school has developed a very good partnership with parents that has a positive effect on learning.
- There are good links with the community.
- Links with other schools and colleges are very good.

#### **Commentary**

33. The school has developed very good links with parents. For their part, parents have very positive views of the school and they are very pleased that they chose it for their children. Parents aired very few concerns with inspectors and they think the school works hard to develop an effective partnership with them.
34. The quality of information provided to parents is very good. In part this is because the staff have good knowledge of the individual needs of the pupils and also because care, welfare and support systems are very good. The annual written reports give much useful information about

the pupils' learning and parents welcome the targets that are shared with them via the report and at meetings with staff. Parents feel very well informed and have confidence that any concerns that they raise will be dealt with thoroughly.

35. Parents also have very positive views of the homework provision in school. Inspectors found homework to be well planned and well related to the ongoing work in school. It is also linked well to the targets set for pupils. Parents play a successful part in their children's learning at home and also in school. There is a willing and able body of parents who help in school and managers value and appreciate this assistance.
36. There is a good partnership with the community. This benefits learning as pupils are given additional opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills when visitors share their experiences. The vicar is a regular visitor and he makes a good contribution to assemblies. Elderly people are invited to share in school events and a very successful garden party, to which villagers were invited, strengthened the community links considerably.
37. The school has developed very good links with other schools, especially the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. This has been influential in making improvements to the curriculum. For example, the design and technology day at the secondary school gave Year 5 and 6 pupils opportunities to use tools, equipment and material not available in school and to sharpen their skills successfully. The transfer of pupils to secondary school is assisted considerably by such links being made as early as Year 5. Induction from pre-school experience is also a strength and encourages the children in reception to settle quickly and achieve well during their first taste of full-time education.
38. The partnership with initial teacher training institutions is very good. The students receive a thorough grounding in the art of teaching when working in school. The school benefits much from their time in school as smaller teaching groups can be arranged and new ideas for curriculum development introduced.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **good**. The headteacher has made many positive changes since her appointment three years ago. This has been accomplished with good support from the whole school community who share a common aim of striving to provide the best education possible for the pupils at the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is leading from the front. She provides very good leadership, has ensured good progress since the 1998 inspection and has set a clear agenda for sustained future improvement.
- The very good team spirit and unity amongst staff is supporting good improvement.
- Performance management and professional development are particularly positive features in assisting the school's growing effectiveness.
- Subject management is satisfactory but leadership aspects require a boost.
- Governors are developing their role of critical friends in a climate of mutual respect and trust; they hold the school to account well.

### Commentary

39. The headteacher gives very good leadership and has set a clear plan to continue to improve the quality of education and raise standards. She has worked decisively to manage the necessary changes over the last three years and to make sure that the issues identified by the previous inspection have been addressed effectively. She is motivational and upbeat in her style and has built a high performing team who are all involved in promoting the school's mission and equally keen to do their best for the pupils. Through the monitoring she has



personally carried out, and with the considerable involvement of consultants and advisers from the local education authority, she has a very good grasp of where strengths and areas for improvement lie.

40. The headteacher and chair of governors meet regularly to discuss school matters and both are as one in the drive to make the school more effective. The governors have usefully enabled the headteacher to be released from her class teaching role for two thirds of the week to enable her to have time for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the school's overall provision as well as seeking to support best practice in teaching and learning. The school improvement planning process is comprehensive and involves all stakeholders in its production. The targets included are the right ones to help bring improvement. Through the very good performance management process, the key priorities for everyone to work towards are set explicitly in the bid for excellence. The school's successful accreditation of Investors in People and The Edge Hill Award for Initial Teacher Training in 2002 are key indicators of the high commitment to staff development.
41. The staff team are hardworking and between them carry all the posts of responsibility for subjects and major aspects of the school's work. Job descriptions make it quite clear what the class and management roles are but are less explicit about the responsibilities they must shoulder as leaders of the subjects for which they are responsible. For example, the management of resources stands out in the job descriptions but not the expectations for the key tasks of leadership- those that will have more direct impact on raising achievement, for example the monitoring of teaching, learning and standards.
42. The governing body are supportive of the school and committed to playing a full role in its daily life and development. A positive feature is the growing curriculum links that are being built with staff. Financial controls are good as shown in the most recent external audit. Governors manage the budget effectively and apply the principles of best value securely to their decisions when purchasing goods and services. They use a range of indicators to check that the quality of education meets the expectations of the parents and in so doing identify the family, friendly, caring, sharing ethos and the thorough knowledge that staff have of pupils' needs as being very high on the list. Good attention is being given to the work/life balance agenda as part of their thinking about future staffing arrangements in the light of the forecast reduction in pupil numbers in the infant stage in September.
43. The school clearly adds value to pupils' education and standards are showing a rising trend. The school provides sound and improving value for money.

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

## AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because teaching and learning are good.
- Children are on course to meet their targets by the end of the reception year.

### Commentary

44. Provision is good for the reception children in the Foundation Stage. The school has no nursery provision. When children join the reception class, each September, most of them have broadly average skills and understanding, but there is a wide range of ability within the small group of seven. Most of the children have experienced some form of pre-school education, and this has prepared them well for school life.
45. Children are taught in a small reception group during the morning session. The very generous staffing level is the main reason that the needs of children of all capabilities are met very well. In the afternoon, children are taught in the same class as Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. They have good support from their nursery nurse, and their previous experiences mean that they are confident and assured. Their achievement is good. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, especially in the curriculum and the quality of teaching, which are good.

## Personal, social and emotional development

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and emotional development underpins all aspects of the day-to-day life and work of the reception children. This gives them a good start to school life.
- Relationships are very good, ensuring that the children are happy, confident and secure. They want to come to school, and all of them are eager to learn and to do their best.

### Commentary

46. Children achieve well because their teachers and the nursery nurse give them good support. Teaching in this area of learning is good in both the morning and afternoon sessions. The small morning group have the individual support of their teacher and they speedily settle into school routines, responding positively to learning. Adults provide good role models for behaviour toward others. They have high expectations of the children, who behave well as a result. Children wait their turn and they willingly share their toys and games together, demonstrating their growing independence as they tidy up at the end of a session. A range of activities promotes children's social skills well, such as when they were choosing which bowls and cups matched daddy, mummy and baby bear. Their teacher successfully encouraged them to solve the problem together, which they did. Starting points are about average in this area of learning. Children make good progress and they achieve well. They are on course to exceed their targets<sup>3</sup> by the end of the reception year.

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<sup>3</sup> These are called the Early Learning Goals and are the targets children are expected to achieve by the end of the reception year.

## Communication, language and literacy

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's good achievements in developing their communication, speaking and listening skills are the result of very good planning and effective teaching.
- Children with special educational needs are identified early on and given very good support. This helps them to achieve well and to become confident learners.

### Commentary

47. Children are given many well-planned opportunities to talk and to listen. Adults are genuinely interested in what the children have to say, and the very good relationships mean that children talk confidently and at length about themselves and what they are doing. Teaching is good. Children take part in role-play, putting good expression in their voices when joining in the story of *Goldilocks and the three bears*. In one example a group were reading the story using a magic house. They took it in turns to choose a card and to read the story to each other, showing much excitement as the bears discovered Goldilocks had been in their beds. Children have growing confidence as early writers when they practise writing their name or write a caption for their picture. Letter sounds and names are taught systematically and this helps the children to have a good grasp of how words are built up, helping them to achieve the first stages in reading successfully. Parents are keen to support their children by reading with them at home, and they enjoy this time together, helping the children to become confident in their love of books and reading. Achievement is good and the children are on course to exceed their targets by the end of the school year.

## Mathematical development

The provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of effective activities that enable the children to achieve well.

### Commentary

48. The strong focus on developing mathematical language through songs, rhymes and games means that children enjoy numbers and understand them right from the start of their time in school. Tasks are pitched at the right level because good assessment means that the staff know how well children are learning. Their progress and achievement is rigorously tracked and charted. Teaching is good. The class topic of *Goldilocks and the three bears* is a good vehicle for developing mathematical language, counting and ordering number, as well as providing many opportunities to develop the comparative language – 'bigger than', 'smaller than', 'the same as'. This makes learning much more meaningful for young children, as evidenced by the involvement of the lower attaining group in counting out how many spoons of porridge were needed to fill Daddy bear's big bowl, Mummy bear's middle sized bowl and baby bear's small bowl. In addition to developing their counting skills, the children were also developing an awareness of capacity as they made sure that all their spoonfuls were the same size. Children are well on course to exceed their targets by the end of the school year.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world, Creative development and Physical development

49. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development as no lessons were seen during the inspection. Planning is good for these areas of learning, tasks are suitably matched to the children's needs and their progress and achievement is well tracked. General observations of

the children at playtime and lunchtime indicate that their movements are well co-ordinated. They joined in enthusiastically when the mixed-age class had a music lesson, playing their instruments with excitement. The large group meant that this session was noisy, making it difficult for the children to listen to the beat of the music.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and speaking and listening are above average in Years 1 to 5. In Year 6, standards are below average but pupils' achievement is good, as it is in all the classes.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. They get good support from their teachers and teaching assistants and this helps them to achieve well.
- Good use is made of targets to push pupils' learning forward.
- ICT does not support pupils' learning as much as it could.
- Pupils' work is marked and annotated thoroughly. Pupils know what they have to do to improve their work.

#### Commentary

50. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in standards, achievement, the curriculum, teaching, the provision for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Standards in English are above average at the end of Year 2, and in all the other year groups with the exception of Year 6, where standards are below average. This is because there is a significantly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the small year group. Across the school, higher, average and lower attaining pupils achieve well, as do those pupils with special educational needs. The small numbers in some year groups mean that overall results must be treated with caution.
51. Boys' and girls' listening, speaking and reading skills are good. Their writing skills are satisfactory, and are improving due to a strong focus across the school. All staff are working hard to push up writing standards, and they are successful. In Year 6, however, for the reasons outlined above, pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are broadly average and writing skills are below average.
52. In every class teachers have a strong focus on developing pupils' spoken language and their vocabulary, providing many well-planned opportunities for pupils to speak confidently to each other, the whole class, or to the school. Teaching is good. A good example occurred in a 'sharing and celebrating' assembly, when the entire assembly was planned and led by the pupils, giving them many opportunities to share ideas, explain their work, and to celebrate achievement. Parents were pleased to share in this event, which gave them a good insight into the school's work. In one lesson, pupils in Year 1 and 2 portrayed a range of feelings very well when they dramatised the main roles in the story of *Goldilocks and the three bears*, interpreting feelings of anger, worry and surprise very effectively. Teachers make sure that all pupils have many opportunities, across the full range of national curriculum subjects, to engage in discussions, use effective questions, and respond to questions. These varied opportunities all contribute effectively towards pupils' good achievement.
53. There is a strong focus on reading, which is why standards are above average in almost all year groups. Starting in the reception class, pupils are taught the full range of reading skills that enable them to develop into confident and fluent readers. Learning is good, and pupils make good progress, due to good teaching. One strength is the daily focus on letter sounds and

blends. Pupils are in ability groups, and a wide range of challenging and interesting tasks are pitched at the right levels, enabling learning to move forward at a good pace. In one example, younger pupils worked in the hall, playing games and activities that were all based on words, sounds and letter blends. They enjoyed the physical activity, which consolidated their previous learning very well. Parents are well pleased with reading standards, and they complete their child's reading diary at regular intervals. This keeps them informed and up-to-date about how well their children are doing, and is appreciated by parents.

54. Writing has been identified as an area for development and standards are improving. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' work shows good improvement over time. Higher and average attaining pupils are adept at writing stories with a clear structure, and Year 2 pupils are starting to develop aspects of the different characters in their stories. Full stops and capital letters are used correctly and work is well presented. Lower attaining pupils are not at this level, but their work shows good improvement in letter formation, writing simple sentences unaided. Across the school, individual targets guide pupils forward so they have clear goals and they know what is expected of them. Work in Year 6 is below the level expected, but achievement is good. Pupils write in a range of genres, sustaining and developing their ideas well, at the level they are working. Handwriting is satisfactory, but spelling and punctuation fall short of expectations for the age group. Good progress is made in lessons and over longer periods of time as well. What is missing, in all classes, is a sustained and cohesive approach in using ICT. This means that pupils' skills are not developed systematically, and it is a weakness.
55. The quality of teaching is good. The school has devoted much time and effort into improving literacy standards, with good success. Planning is detailed and effective in moving pupils' learning forward at a good pace. Teachers' high expectations mean that pupils rise to the challenges set for them. There are good systems for tracking pupils' progress and achievement in English, and the effective use of targets moves learning on successfully. Pupils with special educational needs get the right support that enables them to achieve their targets. The subject leader has moved the subject forward successfully, teamwork is good and everyone understands what has to be done to continue improvements.

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

56. Pupils successfully use their language and literacy skills across the curriculum. Speaking, listening, reading and writing, support achievement well in other subjects such as history, geography and science. Different writing styles contribute to pupils' successes in other subjects, for example when writing about a science investigation or a letter to Father Christmas, developing a plan for making a slipper in design technology, or researching a history topic. The main area for development is to extend the use of ICT to support work in literacy.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics.
- Standards are below average for the current year 6 pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- There is a good curriculum for mathematics that includes some good investigation and problem solving activities.
- Mathematics is well led and managed.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems are a strength.
- Whilst there are some good cross-curricular links, ICT is not used sufficiently to develop mathematics skills and knowledge.

## Commentary

57. Past SATs results in both Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated from year-to-year. Each year group is substantially different from those on either side and because numbers are small, just one pupil more or less achieving the expected level can have a big impact on final results in the SATs. In 2003, the results in Year 6, for example, were well above average. This year's results are likely to fall below average because the pupils are different in academic background and a high proportion has special educational needs. Similarly, last year the pupils in Year 2 also achieved well above average results. This year, the pupils in the Year 2 class are likely to achieve above average results. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards in Year 3 are broadly average, but they are above average in Years 4 and 5.
58. These different levels of attainment hide the fact that achievement in mathematics is good. The work is well focused on the development of knowledge and skills; as much in problem solving and investigation as in number and arithmetic. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that new skills and knowledge are built effectively across time. In some lessons there is very clear evidence to show the growth of knowledge and skill during the session. Pupils with special educational needs and the higher attainers show good achievement. The work is well matched to needs and different work is usually set for pupils in different attainment bands. There are good levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils and staff hold high expectations generally. This is a strength of the school.
59. The quality of teaching is good. There is a briskness to lessons that ensures interest levels do not wane. There is also good variety in the activities provided. In general, support staff and other adults provide good support to enable particular groups of pupils, such as those with learning difficulties, succeed. Pupils themselves are interested; they work hard and produce good amounts of work. Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic about mathematics and they achieve at similar good rates.
60. The curriculum for mathematics has been adapted well out of the original numeracy strategy. There is good breadth and balance to it and all strands are covered thoroughly.
61. In all, provision for mathematics is good. This is due to good leadership and management for the subject. The subject leader understands the strengths and areas for development thoroughly. The system of monitoring and evaluation in mathematics works well and effective action is taken to follow up the issues that are identified. Good improvement has been made to provision since the 1998 inspection and mathematics is in a good position to improve further in the future.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

62. There are good links between mathematics and most subjects, with some good work done in science and design and technology, for example that reinforces and extends pupils' measurement and graphing skills. Basic numeracy skills are served well in other subjects and in other activities such as registration periods. Links to ICT could be stronger. Some good work is done, such as the use of spreadsheets to process data and produce more complex graphs, as in a Year 5/6 lesson in which the pupils were planning a party and calculating the cost. However, such examples are not as widespread as in some primary schools.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily in science.

- Teaching and learning are of good quality.
- Assessment is not yet sufficiently focused on setting and tracking of targets for individual pupils.
- The curriculum is sound but there could be more independence in learning.
- Science is led well.

### **Commentary**

63. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of provision in science and has met with much success. The subject is now more practically based compared to the situation in 1998 and pupils have a broader knowledge and skill base when they leave school. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and also through most of the junior years, though standards in the current Year 6 are below average because of the background of the pupils and their prior attainment.
64. The more practical basis to learning attracts the pupils and makes the subject motivating for boys and girls alike. There are some good opportunities for pupils to work independently and to use their initiative, though this could be broadened by the provision of further opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems with less teacher direction. There are generally good levels of concentration, positive attitudes and good behaviour in lessons. Thus, pupils achieve well in the best lessons. However, this is not consistent in all sessions. Whilst the curriculum is well planned to cover the different aspects of science, the work is often the same for pupils of different attainment levels. This results in achievement that is satisfactory, rather than good. The school understands this situation and recent steps have been taken to improve the identification of expected levels of attainment by different groups in lesson planning.
65. Notwithstanding the areas for improvement, science is taught well. Staff have good expertise and teach confidently and with good pace. The work set is generally thought provoking and challenging and staff have good expectations. Learning is frequently a productive, pleasant experience for the pupils and many talk of their like for the subject.
66. Assessment has not been developed to the same good quality in science as it has in English and mathematics. The current system meets minimum requirements but is not tied to a target setting and tracking process that charts achievement rigorously and consistently. School managers recognise that this is an area for improvement and have concrete plans for the development of science assessment.
67. Science has good potential for further improvement because it is a well-led subject. The areas for improvement are known and understood and a continuous programme of development is under way. There is shared determination and effort amongst staff to raise standards further and to further improve the quality of provision.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

It is not possible to judge the quality of provision in ICT because there were few opportunities during the inspection to observe computers in use or to examine pupils' past work. However, ICT is a key issue for improvement.

### **Commentary**

68. There is relatively little use made of ICT compared to most primary schools. The school has improved the level of resourcing over the last two years and staff knowledge and confidence has been raised. However, pupils have inconsistent experiences in ICT and the development of skills and knowledge cannot be assured. Where teaching and learning were observed, they were satisfactory. The planned curriculum is appropriate. In all, ICT is a key issue for the school. Managers and governors accept this and an action plan to fill the gaps is in draft.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. Relatively little use of ICT was observed in other subjects or shown in pupils' past work. This confirms the key issue that ICT has become.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography and history

Not enough work was observed in either geography or history to make reliable judgements about provision.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curricula for geography and history are planned carefully and meet the requirements of the National Curriculum
- ICT is not used enough to broaden pupils' geographical and historical knowledge and skills.

#### Commentary

70. It is not possible to judge standards, achievement or the quality of education in geography and history as work in these subjects was sampled rather than the focus of intensive inspection. It is, however, possible to evaluate the curriculum, as planning and some past work was available to assist this process. In all, it is evident that the curricula for both subjects are planned to give appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop new knowledge, skills and understanding. Links to ICT to develop pupils' geographical and historical knowledge are unsatisfactory.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Not enough work was observed in art and design, design and technology, music or physical education to make reliable judgements about provision.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for these subjects is appropriate.
- Restrictions of space limit skills development in some aspects.
- Very good links with parents, other schools and the community enhance provision effectively.

#### Commentary

71. The school has appropriate provision for foundation subjects in general and the creative, aesthetic and physical subjects have a sound curriculum. In general, resourcing levels are sound, though the accommodation places some restrictions on the development of skills and knowledge. For example, work in physical education is hampered by the small size of the hall and lack of large equipment. Thus, not all skills in gymnastics and dance can be developed as successfully as the school would like. Nonetheless, staff work hard to overcome such limitations and they are adept at providing experiences in other aspects that enhance the curriculum well. The very good links with parents and the community are especially valuable in this respect. An infant art and design lesson was observed where pupils carefully drew two open-top cars, one brand new and the other a car with heritage, whilst their owners talked to them and encouraged careful observation. Some of the results were of a good standard with close attention to detail. Links with other schools, particularly the local secondary school, do much to enhance provision in subjects such as design and technology as pupils then have access to facilities they otherwise would not enjoy.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP



Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is **good**.

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

- The use of individual targets for the development of personal, social, health and citizenship education is effective.
- Citizenship education is becoming a strength.
- Pupils have good opportunities to share their views.

#### **Commentary**

72. The school provides very effectively for pupils' personal, social and health education. All pupils are set an individual targets to support their personal development and to help raise confidence and self esteem, as shown in one set for a Year 2 pupil that stated *Remember I am special*.
73. Policy and practice are successfully promoting a range of experiences geared towards assisting pupils' growth as responsible future citizens. For example, pupils have represented the school at Young People's Conferences that have considered the effects of drugs, alcohol and tobacco on health and happiness. Sensitive and effective attention is paid to sex and relationships education. Specific lessons are organised for pupils to reflect on social and moral issues, for example bullying and what it feels like to be picked on or left out. Circle times are used effectively for pupils to voice opinions and share thoughts about things troubling them. The school has arranged for *drop in* sessions run by the nurse to take place from the end of the month as a place for pupils (and parents) to go to if they have a concern or problem they need to discuss.
74. Pupils have a good awareness of environmental matters and have designed posters to stop people dropping litter. The school is doing much to raise awareness about healthy eating through providing breakfast snacks such as toast and fruit and the need for exercise, through walking to school days.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*

