

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HIGHFIELD ST MATTHEW'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Pemberton, Wigan

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106450

Headteacher: Mrs Elaine Tyrrell

Lead inspector: Paula Allison

Dates of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> June - 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004

Inspection number: 256427

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	449
School address:	Billinge Road Pemberton Wigan Lancashire
Postcode:	WN3 6BL
Telephone number:	01942 747818
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Robert Pearson

Date of previous inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large school with 449 girls and boys aged 3 to 11 on roll. The school has increased in size since the time of the last inspection, as it now has a nursery class with 60 children attending part time. Situated on the outskirts of Wigan, the school is over-subscribed and has a wide catchment area. A growing number of pupils come from areas identified as being socially deprived, although free school eligibility at five per cent is below average. Overall, the socio-economic circumstances of pupils are broadly average. Although the pupil population is usually stable, there has been in recent years a significant intake during the school year. For example, of last year's Year 6 only 75 per cent actually started their school career at this school. Virtually all pupils are of white British ethnic background, but currently there are a few from minority ethnic groups, including one for whom English is an additional language. Eleven per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is below average. These needs are mainly moderate or specific learning difficulties, but increasingly the school is catering for a number of pupils with a hearing or visual impairment. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of skills, but currently attainment on entry is below what might be expected of children of this age.

The school is a Church of England voluntary aided school, with close links with St Matthew's Church and its parish. There have been a number of staff changes since the time of the last

inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher. In September 2003 a new nursery building was opened and this also accommodates out-of-school provision. The school has received several awards, including Education Business Partnership School in 2002 and Active Mark Award in 2003 and Eco School Silver Award in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21420	Paula Allison	Lead inspector	Art and design Music Foundation Stage English as an additional language
11077	Janet Harrison	Lay inspector	
31963	Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology History Special educational needs
8864	Peter Clifton	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Geography Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school, which provides effectively for its pupils, enabling them to achieve well and reach standards that are at least in line with the national average. The school has a deservedly good reputation and has extremely good links with the local community. The school is very well led and managed and substantial improvements in teaching and learning have been brought about in recent years. This is a school with ambition and the potential to continue to develop successfully. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very effective leadership; the school is very well managed and governors play a very effective supporting role.
- Consistently good teaching in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Although pupils achieve well overall in Years 3 to 6, the progress they make in different classes is too variable.
- Literacy and numeracy are well taught, but there are weaknesses in provision for other subjects.
- The school has excellent links with the local community and there are very good opportunities for pupils to take part in sport and the performing arts.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development and pupils are confident, interested and willing to take on responsibilities.
- Assessment procedures are developing well, but pupils themselves do not always know how well they are doing and how they can improve.

The school was last inspected in June 1998 and improvement has been very good since then. Identified issues have been addressed. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved and there are now very secure systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Substantial improvements in the quality of teaching and learning have ensured that all pupils achieve well. Significant improvements have also been made to the quality of the learning environment and in the management and efficiency of the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Achievement is good.** Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are usually high. There was a dip in standards in 2002, but by 2003 standards were rising again. Currently standards in Year 6 are average, and above average in mathematics. In the past, standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 have been low and have rarely been as good as those achieved in similar schools. With significantly improved teaching and learning, standards are now much higher, particularly in reading and writing. Standards are above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics.

Attainment as children enter the nursery is below what might be expected for children of this age. They make good progress through the nursery and reception classes and many reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils now make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and they achieve well, which is a big improvement on what was happening in the past. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good. However, the progress pupils make is still variable from class to class.

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.** Pupils have positive attitudes to school and are very keen to take part in all that is offered. Behaviour is good. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good.** Teachers encourage pupils and pupils learn effectively. The quality of teaching is more consistently good in nursery, reception and Years 1 and 2. There are variations in quality in Years 3 to 6. Support staff and other adults make a particularly valuable contribution to the quality of learning. Assessment systems are developing well, but pupils do not themselves sufficiently understand how they can improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory and there are particularly good opportunities for enrichment, for example participation in sport and the performing arts. There are some weaknesses in the progression in skills in subjects other than literacy and numeracy. Pupils are well cared for in a secure environment. The partnership with parents is good and links with the community are excellent.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher has been determined to make improvements to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. She has been the driving force in the school with an outstanding sense of purpose, vision and high aspirations. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other key staff, who have themselves taken an effective lead in important aspects of the school's development. The work of the governing body is very good. Governors are very loyal to the school and its community and they play a very effective role in supporting the headteacher and promoting the aims of the school. All statutory requirements are met. The school is very well managed.

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

The views of most parents are positive and they support the school well. They take a keen interest in their children's learning. A few parents have concerns about how the school is



managed and communication generally. The inspection team does not agree with these views, but the school is looking at ways in which to consult more widely and develop the home-school partnership further. Pupils are happy in school and are particularly confident in the care that is taken of them and the range of activities available to them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that the progress pupils make through Years 3 to 6 is more consistent.
- Improve the curriculum for subjects other than literacy and numeracy, to ensure that pupils gain subject-specific skills through the school.
- Develop ways of involving pupils more in their own learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards overall in Years 2 and 6 are average overall, although in some subjects they are above average. Achievement for all groups of pupils is good.

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

- Standards are improving.
- Achievement is particularly good in reading and writing in Year 2.
- All pupils achieve well.
- There are some variations in the progress pupils make in Years 3 to 6.

#### **Commentary**

1. The school has had a history of high standards in Year 6, so that by the time pupils left the school they could be seen to have achieved well. However, for many years this masked a lack of achievement in Year 2 and through the school generally. Hence, there were low standards in Year 2, often well below average and sometimes very low compared to similar schools. The current headteacher has led a determined effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning through the school, so that pupils can make better progress in all classes and achieve more consistently. The success of this can be seen in the improved standards in Year 2 and in the better achievement of all pupils. There is however, still some variability in progress made in Years 3 to 6. Although a few parents feel that there has been a decline in standards in recent years, most parents are happy that their children make good progress. There has been some concern about the impact of some instability in staffing, particularly in one reception class.
2. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average. The school's own assessments show that there are a number of children with some weaknesses in speech and language,

numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make good progress in the new nursery. Children develop confidence and skills, as a result of meticulous planning, good quality teamwork and valuable support from parents and volunteers from the community. Secure foundations are being laid in literacy and numeracy and children make particularly good progress in personal and social development.

- Children continue to make good progress in the reception classes. There has been some instability during the last few years in one reception class, which has had an impact on children's progress. For example, children have gaps in some basic skills, such as letter formation. There is now much more stability and a more structured approach and children are achieving well. Many children reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. However, a significant number do not reach these levels. There are particular weaknesses in literacy and fine motor skills.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.3 (16.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (13.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.9 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are much better than they have been. Standards last year were closer to the national average; the improvement trend was above the national trend. However, boys were achieving less well than girls and the school did not do as well as similar schools. There has been continued and significant improvement during the last year. In particular higher expectations and a more structured approach to teaching literacy skills have resulted in much better standards in reading and writing. Currently standards are average in mathematics, and above average in reading and writing. All pupils, including boys, achieve well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (25.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.8 (27.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.5 (28.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- Standards in English, mathematics and science have been usually high in Year 6. There was a dip in 2002. In 2003 standards were better overall, although not as good in mathematics. This was a year group with a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and a higher than usual mobility rate. Although standards were below average, pupils had made very good progress from Year 2. Currently, standards are average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Achievement overall is good, but there are still some variations in the progress made in Years 3 to 6. This can vary from class to class and subject to subject

and there is still to a certain extent a dependence on some skilled teaching in Years 5 and 6 to ensure that pupils reach expected levels.

6. All pupils achieve well. The school prides itself on being inclusive and ensuring the achievement of all pupils. Pupils with SEN are identified at an early stage. They have individual educational plans that clearly focus on areas for improvement and state targets to be achieved, they are well supported and their progress is tracked. As a result, they achieve well. In a similar way, the school has procedures in place to address the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. They are sensitively supported and achieve alongside their peers. The school has effectively addressed the issue of lower attaining boys in Year 2.
7. Pupils generally reach the levels expected in other subjects and achievement is at least satisfactory. During the inspection there was evidence of some good work in design and technology and much improved standards in ICT. There are some high standards being achieved in aspects of sport and in the performing arts, such as music and drama.

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

Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are attentive and keen to learn.
- Behaviour in lessons is generally good and pupils behave very well around the school.
- Pupils have good opportunities for spiritual, moral, and cultural development and very good opportunities for social development.

## Commentary

8. Pupils have positive views about the school. They are keen to learn and to take part in all that is offered. They are confident and willing to take on responsibility. They show respect for their teachers and for other pupils. Pupils' successes and participation in activities are suitably recognised and celebrated, for example in assemblies and with team points and class rewards. Overall, pupils behave well in lessons but there are a few occasions in Years 3 to 6 when they can be too noisy or distracted. This can be because the work set is dull or the teaching is not effective enough. The school is inclusive in its approach to SEN. Pupils with SEN are fully part of the community that is the school. They have a positive approach to school and work with enthusiasm and commitment. They are capable of working both with the people who support them and independently, and they work well in collaboration with other pupils in their class.
9. Attendance figures at the school have dipped since the last inspection, but have improved in recent years because of better monitoring. Attendance is currently satisfactory. However, during the current year many parents have chosen to take their children on holidays during term time. This is a practice the school tries hard to discourage, but it currently accounts for 1.3 per cent of missed schooling. This is a higher proportion than is usually found nationally and has a disruptive effect on the children's education.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

10. Overall, relationships between pupils and their teachers and their peers are good. A few parents have concerns about some 'fallings out of friendships' and some individuals have a specific concern about bullying. The school takes any such incidences seriously and resolves them appropriately with satisfactory procedures. Pupils do not feel that there is a problem. The school has not had any occasion to exclude any pupils for poor behaviour in the last year. Pupils have a rota of 'buddies' to play with any children who may have been 'left out' at lunchtime. Pupils play harmoniously at lunchtimes and the younger pupils are particularly pleased with their new adventure playground, which makes for exciting and constructive play. Outside lessons and around the school pupils are polite and helpful and a credit to their school.
11. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Parents are very happy with this aspect of the school's work. They are confident with the values and attitudes that are promoted and feel that this is a strength of the school. It is often one of the reasons parents chose the school in the first place. In the nursery and reception classes children's personal and social development is a high priority and most children are well on the way to reaching the goals expected of them by the end of reception. In Years 1 to 6, the programme of personal, social and health education is well planned and helps to foster sensible and considerate attitudes. Assemblies are of good quality and include opportunities for pupils to take a quiet moment to reflect. The attractive flowers planted around the school encourage pupils to appreciate the beauty of the natural world.

However, opportunities for ‘wonder and spirituality’ are more incidental than consciously planned for in lessons.

12. Pupils develop a very good sense of heritage in their local community. The vicar, taking an assembly during the inspection, gave an interesting talk on the background of the mining community and the benefactors who founded the school. Pupils are active in charity work and also help to support a school in South Africa. There are sound opportunities to learn about other cultures. Pupils enjoy learning the samba and through this learn about the culture and traditions in Brazil.
13. Pupils enjoy lots of social activities. Year 5 pupils visit France and Year 6 pupils visit an outward-bound centre in the Lake District. There are plenty of clubs, for instance cheerleading and gardening. The ‘Eco’ group organises recycling projects, bulb and tree planting. All Year 6 pupils take turns in contributing as School Council members to help with duties such as litter picking, the office, the library and helping younger children. The School Captains show visitors around and help run the house point system. These opportunities contribute to the pupils’ sense of ownership and pride in their school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good. The curriculum is satisfactory and there are good opportunities for enrichment in sport and the performing arts. There are some weaknesses in the progression in skills in subjects other than literacy and numeracy. Pupils are well cared for in a secure environment. The partnership with parents is good and links with the community are excellent.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good, but more consistently good in the nursery, reception and Years 1 and 2. Assessment is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and often very good in the nursery, reception classes and Years 1 and 2.
- The quality of teaching and learning varies in Years 3 to 6, but there is some very skilled teaching Years 5 and 6.
- Teachers are very clear about how well pupils are doing, particularly in literacy and numeracy, but pupils themselves are not sufficiently aware of how they can improve.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9 (21%)	20 (48%)	12 (29%)	1 (2%)	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.*

14. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. There is very little that is unsatisfactory and a substantial amount that is good or better. This is good improvement from the time of the last inspection and reflects the amount of effort that has been put recently into improving the quality and the determination of the headteacher that this was the only way to really raise achievement. Parents are generally very happy with the quality of the teaching in school, although a few individuals have specific concerns. Pupils like their teachers and know that they have to work hard. In particular, they are confident that they get help when they find work difficult.
15. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in the nursery and in the reception classes. There is good teamwork, which is getting better all the time as the nursery is established and the nursery and reception classes work more closely together. There has been a period of changes in staffing in one reception class, but there is more stability now. A more structured approach with more emphasis on learning objectives and the teaching of basic skills such as letter formation is already having an impact on children's achievement. There is a particularly effective emphasis on the teaching of phonics and of independent writing. Support staff and other adults make a valuable contribution to the quality of learning throughout the nursery and reception years.
16. Teaching and learning are consistently good or very good in Years 1 and 2. This is a huge improvement from the time of the last inspection. Key features of the teaching in these classes are the very good planning with clear learning objectives, high expectations and very good relationships. Pupils are encouraged and engaged. They work hard and make good progress in lessons.
17. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 3 to 6, but are more variable between classes and in particular lessons. Teaching is at its best when teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have high expectations. Pupils are challenged, respond very well, work hard and make good progress. This is the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, that has helped to raise standards. Where there are weaknesses, it is usually because of a lack of challenge or an unclear focus to the lesson. Some pupils are not engaged with the lesson and they get restless and lose concentration. They do not then learn as well as they could do.
18. Teaching overall is inclusive. All pupils are involved in lessons, often by well-targeted questioning. Work set for pupils is carefully matched to meet their needs. Teachers are involved fully in the writing of individual educational plans for pupils with SEN. The plans clearly set out ways in which the curriculum and ways in which it is to be delivered are to be changed to meet individual needs. Teachers brief teaching assistants well. Teaching assistants and other volunteers, including parents, make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.
19. Some parents have concerns about homework and in particular some inconsistency between classes. There is a clear policy for homework and there are good examples of homework being used to support work in the classroom. However, there is some variability between classes and on the whole parents are not given enough guidance as to how they can help their children.
20. Assessment systems have improved substantially in recent years and there is now good use of assessment for tracking progress, especially in literacy and numeracy. Teachers have a clear idea of how well pupils are doing and they plan well to meet needs. This is one reason why achievement is now better. However, assessment systems are not yet

established in other subjects. There are good examples of pupils in some lessons being very well aware of what it is they are learning and how successful they have been. However, on the whole pupils are not involved in their own learning in this way. They do not always know how well they have done and what they need to do in order to improve. Target-setting is well established in writing and has had a beneficial impact on learning. This is not yet extended to other subjects.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is providing a broad and balanced experience for pupils and meets statutory requirements. Opportunities provided for enrichment of the curriculum are good. The quality of accommodation and resources provided to support learning is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There have been considerable improvements in the accommodation and the overall quality of the learning environment.
- There are weaknesses in how the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to build skills and understanding in science and other subject areas.
- The opportunities to learn skills and develop talents outside the school day are good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

### **Commentary**

21. The curriculum provides a broad range of interesting activities which satisfactorily meet the needs and interests of all pupils. The school has recently concentrated on developing the curriculum for the youngest pupils, particularly with the establishment of a nursery. Provision here is good. Pupils in the reception classes are prepared well for the transition into Year 1. Weaknesses in the curriculum for Years 1 to 6 identified in the previous report have been fully addressed. On a day-to-day basis the curriculum provides strong support for pupils' personal and social development. Pupils are very confident in sharing their views, taking part in discussions and asking questions. Aspects of healthy living are covered well in science and PE. Drugs, sex education and citizenship are covered appropriately. Pupils with SEN have equality of access to all areas of the curriculum including extra-curricular activities. The school successfully adapts its curriculum to meet their needs. There are clear individual education plans, and good planning and effective use of resources enable pupils to work towards the targets set.
22. At the time of the last inspection, aspects of the school's accommodation and resources were weak. Since that time, very good progress has been made in developing the fabric of the building and the learning environment for the pupils. These are now good and they are looked after well. The new play area for younger children is spacious and has a good range of play equipment. Inside the school, the new classrooms are bright and cheerful. Several other areas of the school have also been improved, such as the ICT suite and the corridor areas next to the classrooms for Years 3 to 6. Pupils are appreciative of these changes, and particularly to the improvements made in the toilets. However, classrooms for pupils in Years 4 to 6 in the older part of the school are of limited size given the numbers of pupils in some groups, and this sometimes affects negatively the quality of learning in these classes. There has been a large investment in resources to support learning, for example in reading and reference books and musical instruments, which has enhanced the curriculum in these areas.

23. The curriculum is well structured in English and mathematics and the national strategies for teaching these subjects are well established. This was a priority for the new headteacher and it has been well developed by key staff. There are developing links between subjects such as art and design and design and technology and PE and science and mathematics. A good example of this is the display of graphs from measuring pulse rates after exercise. However, the samples of work seen show that in several subjects skills and ideas are not always sufficiently well developed, because planning in different years does not take account of what has previously been taught. There are several examples in science, such as plant growth, and it is particularly noticeable in investigative science. There are weaknesses in the progression of skills in other subjects, for example art and design.
24. There is considerable enrichment of the curriculum, particularly in sport and the performing arts. Year 5 and 6 pupils appreciate the range of sport, music and drama activities available, but would like more outside activities at lunchtime. Sport activities, such as rugby, are supported well through visiting experts who pass on skills and encourage excellence. Pupils regularly compete against other schools and recently represented Wigan in netball. The 'Learning through Sport' initiative supported skill development in science, ICT, literacy and speaking and listening as well as health education.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils are well cared for at the school. Pupils are given good support and guidance. The school has good procedures to take pupils' views into account.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is friendly and this enables pupils to learn with confidence.
- Child protection and health and safety procedures are good, so that children feel safe.
- Pupils are given good personal guidance. The monitoring and guidance of their academic work are developing, but not fully effective.
- Pupils know their views matter and this makes them feel valued.

### **Commentary**

25. Most parents say that their children are happy, well cared for and treated fairly and equally. Pupils say that their teachers are helpful if they have problems with their work and that they are well looked after. This reassurance has a positive impact on their learning. There are good induction procedures with well-planned preparation visits in the Foundation Stage. The school encourages healthy living effectively. The fruit given to the younger children is very popular and several family health initiatives are organised. The school behaviour policy is effective, so that pupils get along together harmoniously at work and at play.
26. There are comprehensive and effective health and safety procedures. The governors are closely involved with inspections of the school premises and appropriate risk assessments. Supervision levels at breaks and lunch times are good and there are well-organised first aid procedures. The school is well maintained. Staff are considerate of the needs of the children. The premises have been improved by the addition of benches and



flower containers. A teaching assistant works with some of the children to plant bulbs and create excellent flower displays to brighten the school. Child protection procedures are effective. All staff, including non-teaching staff, are regularly trained in the guidelines. Pupils with SEN, including those with a hearing or visual impairment, are well integrated into the school. There are effective systems in place to identify, assess and monitor the needs of pupils with SEN, whether these be physical, behavioural or learning difficulties. Appropriate help is given to all pupils and the school complies fully with the Code of Practice. The school makes good effort to recognise the extra needs that some children may have. In some cases counselling is provided for children and their families. The provision of clubs at lunchtime can also offer a haven and purpose for some of the more vulnerable pupils.

27. Pupils have trust in their teachers and this helps them learn with confidence. In 'circle time', where pupils get together to talk about things that are important to them, and in personal, social and health education lessons, pupils have opportunities to discuss their feelings and explore emotions. Pupils are soundly guided in their work through their teacher's comments. However, pupils are not yet fully aware of what they need to improve, nor are they actively involved in setting targets for improvement in their work.
28. Pupils are pleased that the school listens to their views and proud of the changes that they have helped to bring about. Pupils were involved in designing improvements to their playground and say this has made their lunch times more fun. Pupils have also chosen the colours for the refurbishment of their toilets. The active and willing involvement of pupils in the running of their school makes a good contribution to their personal development.

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

The school has effective links with parents, very good links with other schools and excellent links with the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents give good support to the school and their children's learning.
- Although communications are generally effective, a few parents feel that they are not consulted sufficiently.
- Excellent community links enrich pupils' learning and personal development.

## Commentary

29. Parents have positive views about the school, which is a popular choice in the local area. Most parents say that their children enjoy school, are well taught and behave well. A few parents have more mixed views about the information they get on their child's progress, the homework and the extent of consultation. Parents take a keen interest in their children's education. There are very good levels of attendance at the two meetings a year with teachers to discuss their child's progress. Every class in the school has help from parent volunteers, grandparents or local community members. This valuable help is welcomed by the teachers and helps to raise pupils' attainment. Parents enjoy the many opportunities they have to visit the school, including the annual Open Day when they can watch or join in sample lessons with their child. During the inspection week the school held a showcase evening. Pupils performed the samba, played in the orchestra, sang in the choir or acted in the drama production. Over 200 parents enjoyed the high quality performance and lovely atmosphere, which spontaneously celebrated the pupils' all round skills.
30. Communications between school and home are generally effective. The school has an Internet site, which enables some parents to check on the latest school news or email queries. The prospectus is well written and informative. There are regular newsletters to keep parents informed and the school holds occasional and informative curriculum evenings. Parents of pupils with SEN are regularly and well informed about the progress their children make and are involved as and when appropriate in the review process. The annual written progress reports on the pupils' progress meet statutory requirements. However, the quality of these reports is variable and some do not give a clear enough evaluation of progress and attainment in all subjects or outline ways in which parents can help at home. A few parents have indicated that they would like better channels of communication with the school. Although communication is effective, this does identify a need for the school to consult more widely with parents to establish exactly what these parents would like to know and how to satisfy these requirements to make for a closer educational partnership. The school is currently looking at ways to consult more widely and develop the home-school partnership further.
31. There are very good links with local schools. For example, some pupils from nearby special schools join part-time with pupils at the school and are successfully integrated. Their presence also helps to make pupils considerate of the needs of others. In the inspection week Year 10 girls from the local sports college visited to organise outside games with the younger children, who enjoyed the activities and made good gains in physical skills.
32. There is in the school a real sense of belonging to and contributing to the local community. The school is regularly used for popular evening classes, such as 'Keep Fit'. There are excellent links with the local church. Classes visit the local church for Thursday communion and the vicar leads a weekly assembly at the school. Day-to-day support from the church, parish, governors and PTFA provides significant and generous funding, expertise and regular adult support. Ex-pupils, teachers and people from the community often help in the school. The school regularly joins in community activities such as 'Walking Day', Summer and Christmas Fairs. The community links provide a supportive, caring environment, which helps the pupils at the school flourish.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of key staff is good. The work of the governing body is very good. Management is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership.
- Governors are committed to the school and the values it promotes.
- The school is very effectively managed.

### **Commentary**

33. The headteacher has had a determined approach to improvement; the key aim being higher achievement for all. With the focus on improving teaching and learning, she has resolutely addressed some difficult staffing issues. She has an outstanding sense of purpose, drive and vision and has very high aspirations for the school. She has shared this vision with staff and governors and they strongly support her in what she is trying to do. It has not been easy and there are still a few parents who are not confident in her leadership style. However, it has been successful. The quality of education is better, achievement has improved and standards are rising. This is a school with ambition and the potential to continue to develop and improve.
34. The deputy headteacher provides very strong support for the headteacher. They make a good team and have dealt with key issues effectively. They have inspired and empowered key staff, who have effectively taken on central roles in moving the school forward, for example in English, ICT, assessment and Key Stage 1 development. Subject managers and coordinators have clear job descriptions and work hard and effectively. Monitoring and evaluating systems are very secure, which is a big improvement from the time of the last inspection. The provision for pupils with SEN is well managed. Procedures to identify, assess and monitor SEN are effective.
35. Governors are very effective. They are closely involved with the school in a range of different capacities and are very knowledgeable about its work. They are determined to maintain the aims of the school and fulfil the mission statement, providing particularly strong support for the school's inclusion policies. They have provided good support for the headteacher and have not been afraid to make difficult decisions. They work effectively in committees and fulfil their statutory duties.
36. This is a very well managed school. It is highly organised with efficient systems in place. Everyone knows their roles and responsibilities and communications are effective. The school improvement plan is well thought through and is the instrument that drives the school forward. A high priority is placed on appointing the right staff, developing their skills and deploying them to best effect. Many changes have been made over the last few years, in order to build on strengths and support weaknesses. This has had a major impact on provision and standards in the reception year and in Years 1 and 2. Currently the focus is on Years 3 to 6, and particularly Years 3 and 4. Although substantial improvements have been made, the management is fully aware of a few weaknesses that remain. These are being supported very effectively.
37. Financial planning, control and administration are very good and the school makes very good use of best value principles. The bursar knows to the last penny what money is available and how it is spent. Financial planning is very good. All spending is planned to

support the educational aims of the school. For example, the substantial investment in refurbishment and resources has significantly improved the quality of the learning environment, is appreciated by pupils and parents and has a positive effect on attitudes.

***Financial information for the year April 02 to March 03***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	895,503
Total expenditure	912,516
Expenditure per pupil	2,231

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	52,475
Balance carried forward to the next	35,462

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

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

38. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good. Improvement in provision from the time of the last inspection has been very good and there is the clear potential for it to become even better. After a couple of years of staffing instability in one reception class, which concerned parents and had a detrimental effect on children's progress, the situation is now stable. A nursery opened in its new building in September 2003, new and extensive outdoor facilities have been developed and a new Foundation Stage manager was appointed in February 2004. The quality of teaching and learning is much improved, children are now achieving well and things look good for the future. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Until recently, the deputy headteacher has overseen the provision and has been the key person in development and improvement. Now an overall manager has been appointed and she has a clear vision for its future development.
39. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below what might be expected for children of this age, with many children having weak skills, for example, in speech and language and mathematical development. They make good progress through the nursery and reception classes and many reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Currently however, a number do still have difficulties in some areas of learning, such as literacy and fine motor skills, and do not reach the expected goals.
40. The very good links with parents are a strong feature of the provision throughout the Foundation Stage. Relationships between teachers and other adults and parents are positive and this helps children to feel confident and make progress. The curriculum is well planned, both long term and on a daily basis. A wide range of exciting activities is provided, making very good use of all available resources, and in both the nursery and reception classes there is an appropriate balance between adult focused activities and opportunities for children to make choices and be independent. Throughout the Foundation Stage, supporting adults, including volunteer parents and grandparents, make a valuable contribution to the quality of learning.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well and most reach the goals expected by the end of reception.
- Teaching is good; well-established routines and high expectations encourage children to behave responsibly and become independent.
- Even by the end of reception, a few children find it difficult to concentrate and listen to others.

#### **Commentary**

41. Many children enter the nursery with weak social and personal skills. They find it difficult to relate to others, to sit still or to concentrate for any length of time. In the nursery there are well-established routines, for example for taking the register, which help children order

their day and know what is expected of them. All adults have high expectations of behaviour and they maintain a firm but supportive approach, which encourages children to behave responsibly. They are also helped to become independent; for example by helping themselves to their own snacks, choosing their own activities and helping to tidy up. They make good and often very good progress. By the end of their time in nursery, most are confident, feel valued and are able to persist for a length of time at an activity.

42. In the reception classes there are also clear guidelines and expectations and children continue to make progress. They are given opportunities to talk to each other and listen; for example in a 'circle time' in one class children shared their happy memories. However, even at the end of the reception year there are still some children who find it hard to sit still and listen for any length of time. Most children understand what is right and wrong and have a growing respect for others and their needs. They form good relationships with other and can cooperate and take turns. For example, in one lesson a group of children worked together as they built a 'zoo' with crates and acted out the story 'Dear Zoo'. Most children are confident to try out new activities and can work independently. Because children have gained these skills, teachers can organise the classes to have some focused teaching groups, knowing that the other children can get on on their own for a length of time.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well, but many do not reach the goals expected by the end of reception.
- Literacy skills are well taught.
- Children are effectively encouraged to write independently.

### **Commentary**

43. Most children in the nursery listen to adults and answer questions, but a number have limited language skills and are quite reticent. They enjoy listening to stories, although some find it quite difficult to sit still for any length of time, especially when in a large group. The teacher's lively reading and the encouragement of other adults help them to concentrate and to take part in discussions. They join in with rhymes on a regular basis and some begin to recognise sounds in words and link them with letters. In some well-focused activities children are taught to form letters in order to write their name. They are given opportunities to 'write' independently and most have a good idea of writing as a means of communication.
44. Literacy skills are well taught in the reception classes. In particular, there is a strong emphasis on phonics, which shows in children's independent writing, as they make plausible attempts at spelling the words they need. The level of independent writing is impressive for the age of the children. Letter formation is now being well taught but some children have suffered from some gaps in teaching in the past and a number struggle to even write their name correctly. Children become confident readers, many able to read familiar words and simple texts by the time they are ready to move into Year 1. Some good support given during group reading sessions ensures that children get the opportunity to talk about their reading and as a result they gain understanding.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well, but many do not reach the goals expected by the end of reception.
- Numeracy skills are well taught and children gain confidence with numbers.

### **Commentary**

45. In the nursery, there are regular opportunities for children to take part in number games and rhymes. With the constant repetition that these entail, children become confident and are soon able to count to 10 and beyond. The teacher makes the most of every situation in order to promote number skills. For example, during registration every day children help to find out how many children are present by counting backwards. Some children are beginning to recognise numerals and in small group activities can count objects and match with the correct numeral. Many find this very difficult and still have a long way to go with number recognition. Most have an awareness of patterns and can, for example, copy and continue a sequence of shells.
46. Numeracy skills are well taught in reception. There is now more structure to what is taught and children are gaining confident skills. Most count to 20 and beyond and many recognise number patterns and count, for example, in twos or tens. Some well thought out activities help children to think and gain an understanding of how numbers work. For example, in one lesson the class worked together to order a set of numbers and then they had to identify and write missing numbers from the sequence. They worked in twos to do this and a lot of learning took place as they counted and recounted to find out what was missing. Most children recognise numerals, but they do not all form them correctly when they write them down. Most are at an early stage of combining and working with numbers in a more formal way.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well and most reach the goals expected by the end of reception.
- Teaching is good; a range of interesting activities is provided.
- Resources, including the outdoor area, are well used by teachers to extend children's experiences.

### **Commentary**

47. A wide range of activities is provided in the nursery to encourage children to take an interest in the world about them and to talk about what they notice. Adults are deployed particularly well in order to support children and encourage their exploration and develop

their language. For example, during the inspection a role play area had been set up with all the resources needed for enacting events in a church. Support staff and volunteers interacted with children and encouraged them as they experienced taking part in a communion service or a wedding. Children use computers and a range of construction toys, although their concentration is often limited and models or activities are not completed. For example, one boy confidently created a picture on the computer and asked an adult to print it out for him, but a succession of other children needed a lot of support in order to get some control with the 'mouse' over events on the screen.

48. Activities in the reception classes are very well planned and the outdoor area is imaginatively used to extend children's experiences. Children find out about features of living things and they talk about what they have observed. For example, a class talked about the caterpillars they had collected, the cocoons they had watched being made and they were obviously excited by the butterflies that emerged. A 'bug hunt' followed and children eagerly investigated likely places to find them. By this time children can use computers independently, can select construction and other activities to work with and they show a good level of concentration when working alone or in a group.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well, and most reach the goals expected by the end of reception.
- Teaching is good; the new outdoor area is used imaginatively to help children develop their physical skills.

### **Commentary**

49. The newly created and resourced outdoor area is being used imaginatively by teachers in the nursery and reception classes and they provide a lot of opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. This is a big improvement from the time of the last inspection when outdoor facilities were very limited. Nursery children move around a course laid out for them with hoops and tyres. They balance, jump and land with a good degree of control. Indoor opportunities are also good. In a very good dance lesson, the nursery teacher used music very well to inspire creative movement. Children moved freely with pleasure and confidence. Some experimented with different ways of moving, but most were still at the stage of copying adults or other children. The full participation of all supporting adults in this lesson made a valuable contribution to the learning, as children were encouraged and supported. In particular it was a good example of how a boy with a hearing impairment was included and helped to take a full part in the lesson alongside his peers.
50. Reception children use wheeled vehicles confidently and in a controlled manner. They are aware of the space around them and the needs of other children. They throw bean bags into hoops with a good degree of success. Fine motor skills such as those used in cutting and pencil work are quite weak and many children still need a lot of practice.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well, and most reach the goals expected by the end of reception.
- Teaching is good; a wide range of materials and media is provided.

## **Commentary**

51. Creative development is particularly well provided for in the nursery, the teacher showing a high level of enthusiasm and skill in this area. Her own work is often the starting point for children's own explorations. Children use a range of materials such as paint, crayons, and fabrics, and techniques such as rubbings, printing and drawing. They have the opportunity to work in a more focused way with an adult, but also the chance to explore by themselves. They develop their imagination in different contexts, such as when 'exploring' a 'rock pool' or acting out a wedding. They take part enthusiastically in musical activities, such as when singing with the teacher or when being shown how to use big samba drums.
52. Reception children have regular opportunities to take part in creative activities. They are provided with a wide range of materials and shown how to use different techniques. They draw, paint and model with increasing control and imagination. For example, children chose from a selection of materials to create patterns. The most learning from this activity came when children were given the opportunity to explore and experiment freely until they came up the patterns they liked and were happy with. Children take part in role play and use their imagination in creating stories. In one episode, two children took 'dogs' from the 'pet shop' for a 'walk' and one left his at the 'vets'. The nursery nurse entered into this play very effectively and encouraged the boy to continue with his narrative. Children in the reception classes enjoy music. During a regular singing session they showed that they had a growing repertoire of known songs, recognised opening bars and were immediately able to join in with words, tunes and actions. They sing with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement in standards over the past three years, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- The teaching of English is good and has improved since the last inspection.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

#### Commentary

53. Pupils in Year 2 listen and speak well. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and achievement is good for these pupils. Teachers make sure pupils know that their personal responses are valued and will be carefully considered. This encourages them to offer extended answers to questions. This was so in a session about nonsense poetry when pupils were asked to choose their favourite poems. They did so with great enthusiasm and delighted in the supportive and playful approach taken by the teacher. Standards in speaking and listening are around average in Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 listen well to teachers. Their responses to direct questions are usually appropriate but they often lack the confidence to make more extended comments. In some situations such as drama productions pupils feel more confident and speak well. Achievement in speaking and listening in Year 6 is satisfactory.
54. Standards of reading are above average in Year 2, but average in Year 6. Achievement is good in both Year 2 and Year 6. The school places a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' reading skills and has successfully instituted a range of measures that ensure that all pupils have both encouragement and, where necessary, targeted support. The school library is well stocked and pupils have time allocated for the changing of books. By Year 2, most pupils read and understand a range of challenging texts. They talk about the main characters and accurately recall the main events. They use a good range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. In Year 6 standards of reading are in line with the national average. More effective teaching of reading is evident in all years. This has had an immediate impact on standards in Years 1 and 2, where improvements in standards are good, but will take longer to affect standards in reading in Year 6.
55. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Achievement is good in both years. The school has identified writing, especially by boys, as a relative weakness and has put into place a range of measures to improve it. For example, there are frequent and regular writing periods. Emphasis is placed on planning and structure in writing and the use of interesting vocabulary. Younger pupils are encouraged to write regular diaries, a measure that builds on the confidence children have in writing about things that are close to them. The better teaching of writing will take time to fully affect standards in Year 6. By Year 6, standards are average, but pupils are now writing in a good range and variety of styles and genre. Their writing is often interesting and engages the reader's attention well. More use could be made of ICT to develop writing in all years. There was little evidence of ICT in use in the work sample made available to inspectors.

56. Teaching and learning are good in all years. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, as is clear from planning. They teach well to the National Literacy Strategy and so learning builds progressively on what has gone before. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. They benefit from the more structured approach and achieve well. The structure of lessons is good. Introductions are clear and set out what is to be covered. Closing sessions are well used to recap on the progress that has been made and to celebrate what has been learnt. Teachers single out work that reflects the good progress of individuals and share the work with the rest of the class. This motivates the individual and reinforces the message that progress is important. Teachers' marking is good and the information they gain from careful scrutiny of pupils' work means that the range of activities offered in lessons is closely matched to the ability of pupils. Marking often gives pupils clear messages as to improvement. This is backed up by a scheme for setting targets that is being developed by teachers. The relationships between teachers and pupils are good and result in behaviour that is the basis for good learning. Teachers have to spend little time in enforcing classroom conventions like holding up hands to speak as pupils do so as a matter of course.
57. The subject is well coordinated. There has been much improvement over the past three years since the coordinator was appointed and recent results in national tests indicate an improving picture. Teaching is improved and this is evident in the planning and delivery of lessons. A good programme of monitoring and evaluation has revealed a number of weaknesses that are being actively and appropriately addressed.

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

58. Teachers use a range of strategies to support the development of language and literacy across the curriculum. They make use of role play in subjects such as history to encourage the development of speaking and listening. The drama club is popular and contributes well to this. Teachers often provide word banks for subjects such as design and technology, giving pupils the terminology that will allow them to discuss, for example, aspects of the design process. Pupils are asked to share the results of their research into mountain ranges in geography, for instance, with the rest of the class. In most lessons question and answer is used well to encourage pupils' oral responses. More use could be made, however, of ICT to enhance pupils' literacy skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are rising, with a good foundation being established in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils' understanding of number is developed well through the school.
- Pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics are developing well.
- Although teaching is good, there is some inconsistency in teaching which is affecting pupils' progress in some Year 3 to 6 classes.
- The overall strategy for school improvement is supporting mathematical development well.

## Commentary

59. Standards are average in Year 2, and well above average in Year 6. Pupils start in the school with below average standards. Over the past four years results have been below the national average in Year 2. There is a newly-established team of teachers in Years 1 and 2 who work well together, and plan jointly. They have established a good learning environment for mathematics through good quality displays and common approaches. Much of the time, teachers utilise practical approaches which encourage good thinking. As a result of consistently good teaching, standards in Years 1 and 2 are rising and achievement of the pupils is good. In Year 6, standards are well above average as a large proportion of the pupils are working at the higher level of attainment. Year 5 standards are average. These results reflect fluctuations that have taken place over the past 4 years. In Years 3 to 6, the progress that pupils make in different classes and year groups is too variable. Overall, pupil achievement is good. Pupils with SEN achieve well throughout the school. The careful planning meets their needs and teachers make sure that they are able to take part in lessons alongside their peers.
60. The significant strength in mathematics in the school is in the development of number. Understanding of place value is established early on in the school and pupils' skills are developed well through good mental mathematics sessions. The sessions are greatly enjoyed by the pupils because the teachers make these fun and set class challenges. The pupils are gaining confidence and accuracy in adding together numbers up to 1000 and looking at different number patterns. In Year 5, pupils very confidently add up sets of numbers and explain the most efficient ways of reaching an answer. During follow-up written work they used these skills well to simplify problems or check answers. Samples of work in Year 6 show a good range of methods being accurately used to multiply and divide numbers.
61. At the time of the previous inspection the pupils had insufficient opportunities to use and apply mathematics. The school has made good progress in developing this across the school. For example, in Year 1 pupils add up money and work out the change needed. By Year 6 the pupils have moved onto problems which require two or three different calculations to get to the answer and they estimate and check their answers well. However, there are few examples of pupils deriving or using a formula to obtain answers. Therefore the range of opportunities to apply their mathematics is too narrow.
62. The overall quality of teaching is good. Some inconsistency in teaching in Years 3 to 6 is affecting the progress that pupils make. In Year 2, pupils try hard, work hard and listen to each other well. They confidently 'have a go' at answering difficult questions. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils' work rate is similarly good and the samples of work show good development of skills. The school currently uses one teacher to teach across both Year 4 and Year 5 because of good subject expertise. This arrangement is successfully promoting good learning. In Year 4, the teaching assistant helped pupils with SEN to work through a range of problems involving fractions orally, using a good range of visual resources. This supported their learning well and they made good progress. On a few occasions, planning is not sufficiently precise to meet the needs of all pupils because work is either too easy or difficult. Book exercises are sometimes overused and this is inhibiting pupils' independence and creativity.
63. Overall, the leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject is carefully monitored and there is a very large amount of data collected about standards in each year. This has yet to be analysed in a way which helps teachers focus on weaknesses in pupils' understanding. The co-ordinator relies on individual teachers to develop the subject. However, the overall strategy for school improvement being driven by

the headteacher is supporting the subject well. The school has made good progress since the time of the previous inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. The use of number across the curriculum is satisfactory. There are several opportunities for measuring and recording results in tables in science. ICT is used well in Year 2 to support pupils' understanding of number. The use of graphs to present data is satisfactory.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards are improving in Years 1 and 2.
- There are weaknesses in how the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to build skills and understanding.
- Teaching in Year 1 and 2, and in several other classes, is securely based on providing pupils with worthwhile practical experiences.
- ICT is underused as a research tool or as a curriculum resource.

#### **Commentary**

65. Standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Overall pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory. Standards are improving in Years 1 and 2, where good teaching is laying a secure foundation for further progress. In most classes, good practical experiences are provided by a 'hands-on' practical approach. This is a strong feature of the curriculum in Years 1 and 2. Coverage of health education through the subject is good. In Year 6, pupils have benefited from a well-planned revision programme. Pupils with SEN are making satisfactory progress.
66. Although the subject has not been a priority for development, the coordinator has provided a clear direction for the subject. Coverage of the subject is secure across the school. However, planning on a year-to-year basis to develop skills and understanding is weak. The samples of work seen show that some key scientific ideas are being taught at a similar level to pupils in different years. This is inhibiting their progress as they move through the school, particularly when teachers are unsure about what the pupils already know and understand. This is particularly evident in investigative science, although there are other examples such as the growth of plants. This has already been identified by the school as a key area for development. The subject action plan correctly identifies other areas that need to be improved. This includes developing assessment systems so that pupils' progress can be tracked as they move through the school. Significant improvement has recently been made to resources following an audit of the subject. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and the capacity for further development is good.
67. The overall quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory. In Year 1, very good teaching enabled pupils to identify the properties of different materials such as wool, wood and plastic. The pupils discussed their ideas confidently and knew, for example, that fabric for

an umbrella needed to be waterproof. The key elements of this very good teaching are very good subject knowledge, well-established work routines and 'hands-on' practical approaches. In Year 2, pupils test out the idea that 'taller pupils have the largest hand span'. They collect data and use it well to decide whether this is true or not. In Years 3 to 6 several lessons have a strong practical basis and this enables pupils to apply understanding, as in Year 5, when they construct switches to simulate a burglar alarm. The weaknesses in teaching occur when teachers are unsure about the science that underpins the lesson or when they rely too heavily on worksheets which are not well matched to pupils' needs.

68. Pupils have positive attitudes to science and they co-operate well together. Good relationships between teachers and pupils are evident in all classes. There are some examples of ICT being used but this remains an area for further development. Opportunities are being missed, for example, to draw on information available on the Internet, or present information in charts tables and graphs. The school has made satisfactory progress in attending to the issues identified in the previous report.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good.
- Resources and accommodation are good.
- Schemes of work for ICT are good and provide teachers with opportunities to use ICT as a tool for learning in the range of subjects.

## Commentary

69. Standards in ICT are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2, but are below by the end of Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well in acquiring the skills to direct the movements of a robotic vehicle along a course laid out on the floor. They learn also to write simple procedures to draw shapes on the computer screen. They learn to use computers to model events such as when they dress a teddy bear or design the layout of a room. They construct a database of the physical characteristics of their classes and learn how to present the information in chart form so that they and others can make more sense of the information it contains. They combine text and graphics successfully in a number of contexts.
70. In Years 3 to 6, the progress pupils make across the full range of National Curriculum requirements is satisfactory. Substantial progress in ICT has been made only over the last two or so years and so many pupils are still adversely affected by a historical lack of quality ICT teaching, which is now being addressed. Pupils acquire the skills needed to produce a range of documents that creatively combine text and graphics such as holiday brochures. They research topics in geography using the Internet. They are able to work with spreadsheets to model information and produce databases for example that contain information about the food preferences of their class.
71. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2, it is good. Teachers plan well and extend their planning for ICT to the other subjects of the curriculum. When using the computer suite they use the interactive whiteboard well to introduce lessons and to show what progress has been made. This was so, for example, in a Year 5 lesson on Logo. The teacher asked pupils to write procedures and then try them out on the whiteboard. This allowed for immediate feedback. Pupils were able to build their understanding of the programming language from trial and error and from sharing the process with the rest of the class. The teacher made sure that there was no sense of failure and that tasks were exciting and engaging. He used question and answer well to extend thinking. Lessons have good structure and final sessions are well used to share and celebrate progress.
72. The subject is well coordinated. Good schemes of work have been developed by the coordinator that cover appropriate techniques and progressively build on pupils' skills. The computer suite and its overflow area are good working areas though there are times during the week that they are unused. Overall there has been good improvement in the provision of ICT since the last inspection.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. The use of ICT to aid teaching and learning in subjects other than ICT is not developed sufficiently well by all teachers though some examples of good use were seen during the inspection. In Year 6, pupils were using the Internet to research mountain ranges. In Year 1, pupils used a program to label the parts of a flower in science. However, analysis of the work of pupils across subjects revealed little use being made of ICT in English or history, for example.

## HUMANITIES

*There was not enough evidence to report on history and geography individually, because not enough teaching was seen or there was not enough evidence of achievement. However,*

*work was sampled in these subjects. Religious education was not inspected, as that was the subject of a separately organised Section 23 inspection.*

74. Teachers' planning in **history** enables pupils to develop appropriate knowledge and skills and pupils attain broadly average standards. Teachers take pupils out on visits to a number of historical locations to deepen their understanding of the past. History makes an important contribution to the development of literacy skills. The sample of work contains many examples of history supporting literacy in the school. This includes some diary work around the historical figure of Samuel Pepys. Planning shows a good number of examples of role play that encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills.
75. There are some effective **geographical** displays in the school from the work done by the pupils. For example, Year 4 pupils are studying the village of Chembakolli as a contrasting place to Wigan. The displays of work show similarities and differences in climate and education. Pupils have considered different types of clothing linked to the climate in India. In Year 6, pupils research mountain ranges using a good range of texts. They consider different aspects such as climate, habitat and associated leisure activities and attain broadly average standards.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

*There was not enough evidence to report on these subjects individually, because not enough teaching was seen or there was not enough evidence of achievement. However, work was sampled in these subjects.*

76. In **design and technology** by Year 2, pupils attain average standards, producing well-annotated drawings that clearly communicate their design ideas. They describe their designs of vehicles well in words and sketches. This develops their communication skills. They write lists of things they will need for making their products and this helps them to think about the process of making. Practical outcomes show good attention to finish.
77. By Year 6 pupils attain at least average standards. They are disassembling products to find out how they are put together. They are increasingly aware of the need to consider the properties of materials when they are designing things such as slippers. They are using templates to ensure consistency in their making. They develop their understanding of construction when they look at Second World War air raid shelters and build models of them. This also helps to deepen their understanding of historical issues.
78. The coordination of design and technology is good. There has been substantial improvement in provision and standards in the subject since the last inspection. Teachers now have good schemes of work to follow and are much more confident in their teaching. The subject is well led and managed.
79. In **physical education** there is a very good range of sporting activities to support the curriculum and pupils attain at least average standards. The coordinator is very active in promoting sport in the local area and has recently been on training linked to the School Sport Co-ordinator programme. There is a high level of pupil participation in sport. The pupils are very competitive and do well in a range of sports such as netball, football and athletics, against other schools. In Year 6, several of the boys have very good batting and bowling skills. The links with the local sport college are used well; students from the college come in to work with children in the reception class.



80. Some good work was seen in **art and design**, which indicates that pupils attain at least average standards. For example, in one lesson Year 1 pupils quickly learnt how to weave strips of paper or fabric and they confidently explored this technique whilst creating their own weavings. In another lesson, Year 3 pupils explored ideas based on examples of Aboriginal art that they had been studying. They worked boldly with a range of media, materials and techniques.
81. It is obvious from work seen that there is adequate coverage of all aspects of art and design. Pupils have opportunities to use a range of different media and they learn techniques. They use colour confidently and draw with a keen eye for detail. Although the subject is reasonably planned, skill development is not secure. The quality of the work tends to reflect the subject confidence of individual teachers. The new coordinator is aware of this and has plans for a more skill-based curriculum.
82. The school is a thriving **musical** environment and indications are that pupils attain at least average standards. There are lots of opportunities for participation. For example, the investment with other schools into samba drums and other instruments enables all classes to have the experience of exploring and creating rhythms and the opportunity to work together in performance. During a very good Year 6 lesson taken by a specialist teacher, pupils practised rhythms until they were confidently playing them with control and accuracy. They made remarkable progress during the session and, after the final performance, there was a real sense of achievement. Pupils learn about music of different cultures and this makes a significant contribution to their cultural development. In a Year 5 lesson, the coordinator played a range of examples of world music and pupils showed skill as they made good attempts at identifying the country of origin.
83. Pupils are very keen on musical activities and their singing is enthusiastic. Very good use is made of available resources, including adult expertise. For example, the vice chair of governors is a talented pianist and leads effective singing sessions. The school has brought in a very skilled musician to help with the orchestra and productions. The coordinator has worked hard to establish music in the school and has been effective. It is a major part of school life and has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

*Few lessons were seen in this area of the school's work, therefore no judgements can be made about overall provision.*

84. The school has a developing programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship. The strongest areas of this part of the curriculum are the personal and social aspects which permeate all areas of school life. The central theme of 'every child is valued' is developed through specific planned activities, as well as the way teachers and pupils relate to each other in lessons. The school is successful in promoting respect, co-operation, tolerance, compassion and care for others. There is a good range of extension activities to support citizenship and in particular, the pupils' understanding of the world of work. Environmental aspects are taught effectively in Year 3 through the consideration of the need to conserve water. Health aspects are covered well through the science and PE curriculum. The programme includes work on keeping safe, medicines and drugs and sex education.

## 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	3
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>3</b>
Attendance	4
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<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).*

