

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLMER LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Telford

LEA area: Telford and Wrekin

Unique reference number: 123429

Headteacher: Peter Bailey

Lead inspector: Michael Best

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th October 2003

Inspection number: 256470

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	244
School address:	Brookside Avenue Brookside Telford
Postcode:	TF3 1LD
Telephone number:	01952 598096
Fax number:	01952 591491
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Michael Wilson
Date of previous inspection:	28 th September – 1 st October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holmer Lake Primary School serves a mixture of owner-occupier and rented homes in the Brookside area of Telford. Compared with the rest of England, it is an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. Children enter the reception class in the September or January after their fourth birthday. Simple tests show that, when they start school, many children have limited experiences, particularly in early reading and number skills, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

There are 244 pupils on roll, all of whom attend full-time. The school is similar in size to other primary schools in England. Pupil mobility is high. About 4 per cent of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic groups. All pupils speak English as their first language. About 34 per cent of pupils have free school meals and this figure is rising.

The school provides six full-time places for pupils with physical and other complex disabilities. In addition, some pupils from the adjoining Bridge Special School regularly join in lessons as part of their planned integration into mainstream education. In all, 27 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is above average and 13 pupils have statements, which is also above average. Apart from those with physical disabilities, many pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The local authority looks after two children at present.

The school is a member of the Telford and Wrekin Education Action Zone and belongs to a partnership of local schools. It achieved an Investors in People award in 2002 and an award for improved standards in 2000. The school hosts a number of Family Learning Programmes.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10413	Michael Best	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, science, Information and communication technology, personal, social and health education
10965	Patricia Edwards	Lay inspector	
3751	Trudy Cotton	Team inspector	English, geography, history, religious education, English as an additional language
2423	Susan Leyden	Team inspector	Special educational needs
32136	Christine Weaving	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Holmer Lake Primary is an effective, improving school. Standards are rising as the result of good leadership and management. The commitment to inclusion from all members of the school community is first rate. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Senior managers' perceptive vision for the development of the school and their sense of purpose in putting this into practice
- The excellent provision for pupils with physical disabilities and other complex needs
- Standards in writing in English and across the curriculum are unsatisfactory
- Pupils' independent thinking, research and problem solving skills are not good enough
- Good assessment and monitoring procedures are helping to improve the quality of teaching
- Teachers' use of assessment information is not always sharp enough
- The contribution of high quality classroom support staff
- The accommodation is cramped and the library provision unsatisfactory

Improvement since the last inspection is good.

The effectiveness of the school has improved, particularly in science and information and communication technology. The school has successfully addressed the other issues identified in the last report, including health and safety concerns for pupils with physical disabilities. Overall, standards in other subjects are improving and the quality of teaching is much better than at the time of the last inspection. However, standards in writing are not high enough and many pupils rely too much on the help of adults; these are barriers to improvement. The effective leadership of the senior management team is successfully driving the school forward. Much has been put in place in a short period of time though the impact of the strategies on standards is still working through.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is sound in the Foundation Stage and in both key stages.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools ¹			similar schools ²
	2001	2002	2003 ³	2003
English	E	C	E	D
Mathematics	E	E	D	B
Science	E	C	D	C

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Many children start school with very limited experiences in literacy and numeracy. Their achievement in the Foundation Stage⁴ is **good** in their knowledge and understanding of the world and **sound** in the other areas of learning. By the time they start in Year 1, **the majority of children** are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals⁵ in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their creative and physical development. However, **a substantial number** are unlikely to meet them in language, literacy and communication and in their mathematical development. Although they meet

¹ Year-on-year comparisons of the school's national test results need to be treated with caution as the number of pupils with physical and other complex special needs varies from one year to the next.

² As more than 20 per cent of pupils in this year group joined the school during Key Stage 2 and earlier results are not available, the similar school comparison is based on free school meal entitlement.

³ The 2003 results are, at the time of publication of this report, unvalidated.

⁴ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning.

⁵ The Early Learning Goals are the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

the Goals in many aspects of their personal, social and emotional education, by the time they start in Year 1, a **significant number** still lack the independence and personal initiative expected of children at this age.

Standards in Year 2 are **average** in listening and science and **below average** in reading, speaking, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, standards are **average** in listening, mathematics and science; and **below average** in speaking, reading and writing. Standards in design and technology are **above those expected nationally** in Years 2 and 6. In art and design, geography, history, music and physical education, **standards are in line with national expectations** in Years 2 and 6. In religious education, **standards are similar** to those expected in the locally agreed syllabus in Years 2 and 6.

Achievement is **sound**. Children in the Foundation Stage make **sound** progress; in some aspects of their learning, many achieve well because of their low starting point. In Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) and Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2), pupils achieve **well** in listening, design and technology, and in their personal, social and health education and **soundly** across the rest of the curriculum, other than in writing where achievement is **unsatisfactory**. There are two barriers to higher achievement: neither pupils' independent thinking and problem solving skills nor their writing skills in English and across the curriculum are good enough. Throughout the school, pupils with physical and complex difficulties **achieve very well** and other pupils with special educational needs **achieve well** in relation to the targets in their individual education plans. More able pupils achieve **satisfactorily**. Pupils from traveller families also **achieve well** in relation to their attainment when they started at the school. Those for whom English is an additional language **achieve well**.

Pupils' **attitudes and values are good** and their **behaviour is good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good overall** and attendance is **in line with the national average**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching is **good**. Senior managers have successfully identified shortcomings in teaching and learning and taken effective steps to address them. Well-focused learning objectives and good quality planning for different groups of pupils are raising standards. However, the quality of most pupils' learning is **sound**; although pupils apply themselves well to the work they are set, they lack the necessary capacity to independently think and find solutions to problems. This affects the amount of work they complete. Assessment procedures are **good** but the use of the information gathered, although **satisfactory overall**, is not sharp enough for some groups of pupils. The **high quality** work of support staff makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs.

The school provides a **sound** range of worthwhile curricular opportunities for its pupils. Opportunities for them to participate in activities outside the school day are **good**. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is **very good** overall and **excellent** for those with physical disabilities. Pupils' individual education plans are examples of **outstanding practice**. The quality and quantity of learning resources are **satisfactory overall**. There are **some important shortcomings** in the accommodation, which are affecting pupils' learning and the school's capacity to realise its plans for the closer involvement of parents and the community in its work. The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils throughout the school is **good** and contributes well to the school's very welcoming and supportive ethos. The school's partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are **good**. The school's provision is **good** for pupils from traveller families.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good.

The governance of the school is **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **good**. His vision for the school's development and his leadership of the curriculum and teaching are all **very good** and this is spearheading the school's improvement. The effectiveness of the management of the school is **good**. The leadership and management of special educational needs are **very good** overall and **excellent** for pupils with physical disabilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents are **well satisfied** with what the school offers. They are pleased with the way in which the school is developing. Pupils' satisfaction with the school is **good**. They enjoy good relationships with staff and appreciate the opportunities they have to influence changes and improvements.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in writing in English and in other subjects;
- ensure that the work for pupils of broadly average attainment is more sharply matched to their needs;
- make better provision for the development and application of pupils' independent thinking, problem-solving, research and study skills;
- work with the local education authority to address and resolve the accommodation issues facing the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is sound.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good for many more able pupils and those with special educational needs; pupils with physical disabilities achieve very well
- Pupils make uneven progress through the school, particularly those of average and just below average ability
- Overall standards in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 were below average but pupils achieved similar standards to those in similar schools⁶
- Standards in design and technology are above those expected nationally at the end of both Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve well
- Pupils' independent thinking, research and problem-solving skills are not high enough

Commentary

The Foundation Stage⁷

1. Most children have limited experiences in communication, language and number work when they start in the reception class. Overall, their achievement in all areas of learning is sound. Boys and girls make similar progress. Many pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, make good progress, especially when they are working in small groups with adults. Although the majority of children meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year, a significant number are still working towards them, particularly in language, communication and literacy, and in their mathematical development. Many children are too reliant on adults to direct them in their work and they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop independent work habits or their initiative.

Key Stages 1 and 2⁸

2. National Curriculum test results for children at the end of Year 2⁹ (the end of Key Stage 1) in 2003 show that, compared with all schools, standards were average in writing, below average in mathematics and well below average in reading. Compared with other Year 2 pupils in similar schools¹⁰, standards were above average in writing and average in mathematics and reading. Teacher assessments indicated that standards in science were very low (in the bottom 5 per cent nationally).

⁶ On the basis of free school meal entitlement.

⁷ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. The areas of learning mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

⁸ Key Stage 1 refers to Years 1 and 2; Key Stage 2 refers to Years 3 to 6.

⁹ The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils are expected to reach Level 2 at the end of Year 2. If a pupil is attaining Level 3 then he or she is reaching standards above those expected for a child of his or her age.

¹⁰ On the basis of free school meal entitlement

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003¹¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.65 (13.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.76 (13.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.57 (14.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. National Curriculum test results for children at the end of Year 6¹² (the end of Key Stage 2) in 2003 show that, compared with all schools, standards were below average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. Compared with other Year 6 pupils in similar schools¹³, standards were above average in mathematics, average in science and below average in English.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.94 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.47 (25.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.86 (28.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Year-on-year comparisons of the school's national test results require caution as the number of pupils with physical and other complex special needs varies from one year to the next. Although the school modifies the curriculum to meet the needs of these individual pupils, none are disapplied from taking the tests. Instead, it provides them with help in taking the tests. It is not, however, always possible for pupils to complete their papers. A like-for-like comparison of the Year 6 results for 2003 with those for 2002 shows that standards rose significantly in mathematics and steadily in science. In English, overall standards declined because of pupils' lower results in writing.
5. At both key stages, teachers' assessments tend to underestimate pupils' performances in the tests. Inspection evidence indicates that science assessments at the end of Year 2 failed to reflect abler pupils' skills and understanding. In conjunction with the local education authority, the school set targets for Year 6 pupils to reach in English and mathematics in 2003. These targets, which could not be altered once set in 2001, were not achieved primarily because of high pupil mobility.
6. Over time, the standards achieved by pupils in the National Curriculum tests are rising at the end of both key stages. The school is keeping abreast of the national trend. Rigorous analysis of test results and other assessment information by the senior management team is making an important contribution to raising standards. Teachers are now focusing on identified areas of weakness. Analysis has also identified that standards tend to rise in Years 2 and 6 because of *booster* arrangements. This is particularly apparent in the 2003 test results in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Although the school intends to continue this provision, senior managers are rightly focusing current developments in teaching

¹¹ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. The level attained by each pupil for each test is given a points score. The average points score is worked out by adding up the points based on the levels attained by pupils and then dividing this by the number of pupils who took the test.

¹² The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils are expected to reach Level 4 by the end of Year 6. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

¹³ On the basis of free school meal entitlement.

and learning on ensuring that pupils make more even progress as they move through the school.

7. The school has successfully addressed the unsatisfactory standards in science and information and communication technology reported at the time of the last inspection. Analysis of test results over time shows that boys and girls achieve similar results at Key Stage 1 but that boys do better than girls in Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence indicates that, with better analysis of pupils' performance in these tests and assessments, the school is starting to close this gap.
8. The proportion of above average pupils is lower than found in most schools and the proportions of average and below average pupils proportionally higher. From when they start in the Foundation Stage to when they leave at the end of Year 6, pupils make sound progress. Many pupils have difficulty in applying their knowledge and skills in different contexts and subjects. They lack confidence in trying out different ways to solve a mathematical problem or in thinking about alternative ways of planning an investigation in science. Many have difficulty in making choices or in taking initiative, and look to adults to re-assure them. Their thinking and research skills are not good enough and they find difficulty in working independently; this prevents them from making faster progress. Although the proportion of abler pupils is smaller, such pupils demonstrate greater independence and are capable of working without close supervision. Most are effectively challenged because teachers are demanding higher standards as the result of the school's analyses of test and other assessment information.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress during their time in school. High quality individual education plans, drawn up in conjunction with pupils and parents, clearly outline achievable yet challenging targets. Work is carefully planned and well-matched to pupils' needs. Those with physical and other complex difficulties make very good progress; in providing high quality support for pupils, staff successfully develop their independence and perseverance. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress; none are at the early stages of language acquisition and they take a full part in lessons. Pupils from traveller backgrounds make good progress, particularly in adjusting to the routines of the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are **good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good overall**. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and taking part in the activities provided
- Relationships between all members of the school community are particularly good
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their own learning
- Pupils' behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground in response to the school's high expectations for behaviour
- Pupils successfully learn to respect others and develop values of honesty and fairness
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to study other cultures and relate it to their own experience

Commentary

10. Pupils' attitudes to school have improved since the time of the previous inspection. They are proud of their school and enjoy being part of the school community. They know they need to work hard in lessons in order to do well. They get on well with each other and adults working in the school. They think staff treat them fairly.
11. Pupils with special educational needs and those with physical disabilities have very good attitudes to learning. They concentrate well and pay close attention to the teachers and to support assistants and are eager to learn. Pupils develop very good relationships with other

pupils and with staff. The presence of pupils with complex individual needs in the school has a positive influence on the behaviour and attitudes of other children. They enjoy offering help, where necessary, in lessons and around school and include their friends in all their activities.

12. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at break and lunchtimes is good. Pupils know and discuss the school rules. They know the behaviour expected of them. A number of parents expressed concern about bullying in their responses to the questionnaire distributed before the inspection. This view was not shared by parents who attended a meeting with inspectors and, in discussions, pupils are adamant that this is no longer an issue. They say that staff deal promptly with any reported incidents of bullying or harassment. All adults working in the school apply the agreed behaviour policy consistently.
13. Teachers value pupils' ideas but do not provide enough occasions for pupils to reflect, use their imaginations and develop self-awareness. Staff provide good role models in their dealings with pupils and each other, and provide worthwhile opportunities to discuss and develop matters of behaviour and relationships. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The behaviour policy is effective in promoting pupils' understanding of the behaviour expected of them. Staff successfully encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility as helpers but there are too few opportunities provided in lessons for pupils to develop independence in their work and improve their learning. Pupils have a good knowledge of their own cultural background through visits to local museums and places of interest but their understanding of the wider world is more limited. The school is starting to address this with visits further afield.
14. The following table shows that the school excluded two pupils for fixed periods in the last academic year. The incidence of exclusions in the school is low, reflecting the success of its behaviour policy.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	235	2	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

15. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Teachers call registers promptly at the beginning of every session. Staff monitor attendance carefully and follow up absence on the first day where necessary. Parents are familiar with the school's policy regarding absence. Most parents support the home/school agreement, which details the school's policy on attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.3%	School data	0.3%

National data	5.4%
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National data	0.5%
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The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** and learning **sound**. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is evident throughout the school and across the curriculum
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with physical disabilities is very good
- Although pupils work well with each other, many lack the necessary skills to work independently of adults
- Teachers work hard to encourage and interest their pupils
- Assessment procedures are good but teachers' use of the information available, whilst satisfactory, is not sharp enough for all groups of pupils
- Teachers make good use of information and communication technology in their lessons

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	6 (11%)	32 (61%)	15 (28%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' command of what they teach is good. They make good use of interactive whiteboards to successfully engage and encourage pupils to take a full and active part in lessons. An effective, common format for teachers' planning successfully addresses previous issues to do with mixed aged classes. Clear and specific targets in pupils' individual education plans help teachers to plan, monitor and review the progress of those with special educational needs. Teachers make sure that pupils with physical disabilities are fully included in all class discussions and that everyone is aware of, and respects, their views and opinions. Skilled and sensitive support from support assistants ensures that pupils take a full part in lessons whilst at the same time encouraging them to be as independent as possible. Staff make good provision for pupils from the adjoining Bridge Special School who join mainstream lessons.
- Teachers identify learning objectives for the majority of their lessons and share these effectively with pupils in their introductions. They make good use of the closing section of the lesson (the plenary). The pace of learning in the middle section of lessons is often slower because many pupils find it difficult to work independently. Many pupils lack both confidence and practice in making choices, thinking and working things out for themselves. This is something that is evident from when they start school and is not sufficiently resolved as they move through the school. One reason is that teachers do not consistently challenge pupils to think of, and use, different ways to approach and solve problems. At the start of Key Stage 2, where teaching is of a consistently high standard, teachers are making this a priority; pupils are working hard to meet the challenging but achievable demands made of them.

18. Rigorous analysis of test results and other assessments now provides teachers with a good picture of what pupils can achieve, particularly in the older classes in Key Stage 2. Historically, teachers' assessments have not been accurate enough and they have tended to err on the side of caution. They are now using this much more detailed information more effectively to plan what they want different groups of pupils to achieve in lessons. This is why the introductions and endings of lessons are good. In those parts of lessons where abler or special needs pupils are working independently or under the direction of support staff, assessment information is being used effectively to tailor activities to their next steps in learning. There is, however, still some way to go in using such information to plan more precisely for the diverse needs of the unusually large middle ability group of pupils, especially those on the cusp of average.
19. The quality of marking, although satisfactory overall, lacks consistency. However, pupils' monthly target books demonstrate developing good practice. These help both teachers and pupils to develop a much better understanding of how to improve work. Target setting is developing soundly and teachers are becoming more secure in their assessments of pupils' work and what they need to do to improve. As a result, pupils' application and productivity are improving and the gap between the quality of teaching and learning is closing.

The curriculum

The school provides a **sound** range of worthwhile curricular opportunities for its pupils. Opportunities for pupils to participate in activities outside the school day are **good**. The quantity and quality of learning resources is **satisfactory** but there are some **important weaknesses** in the accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is **very good** overall and **excellent** for those with physical disabilities.
- The match of support staff to the curriculum is **very good**.
- The good provision for extra curricular activities is a strength of the school
- Opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in real life situations are not fully developed
- The library provision is unsatisfactory
- The accommodation is cramped, especially for the number of wheelchairs in use
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good

Commentary

20. The school's curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage covers all the areas of learning leading to the Early Learning Goals. The curriculum in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 meets statutory guidelines and includes religious education, which follows the locally agreed syllabus. The school makes suitable arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education, which include sex education and drug awareness. The planned curriculum follows national guidelines and is suitably adapted to meet the needs of the mixed age classes. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are fully established. Resources for information and communication technology are good; both staff and pupils make good use of the interactive whiteboards recently installed in five of the classrooms.
21. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all learning activities. Work set at different levels and high quality support from staff ensures that pupils with special educational needs have equal and full access to the curriculum. Teachers effectively address the needs of the more able pupils. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities, particularly for average and just below average pupils, to apply and develop their problem-solving, investigative and thinking skills across the curriculum.

Example of outstanding practice

Individual Education Plans are of very high quality and actively involve pupils and parents.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) give very clear indications of strengths and areas to be developed:

- *N is a very independent young man. He tries very hard with his spelling and reading. He needs to improve handwriting, punctuation and ability to self-correct.*
- *B has achieved full marks in the 100 word test and is good at mental maths. He needs to develop his comprehension skills, be more willing to initiate communication, and to improve his self-editing skills.*

Targets are specific, manageable and can be readily monitored and evaluated:

- *To be able to initiate conversation with peers and adults during group work.*
- *To be able to self-correct work for obvious mistakes, such as missing words.*

Strategies are closely linked to targets and include what teachers and pupils will do. Success criteria are specific as to what will have been achieved and by when, allowing progress to be clearly evaluated.

Parental contribution is clearly specified:

- *Encourage N to write in neat joined up script.*

Pupils' views about their targets are always included:

- *Sounds fair enough for me. I am going to try to achieve them.*

22. Pupils are enthusiastic about taking part in the good range of extra-curricular sporting and arts activities the school provides during the week and at weekends. A variety of visits successfully enrich the curriculum, including a residential visit for Year 5 and 6 pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in these activities and visits.
23. The school was originally built for children up to the age of eight years. The accommodation is very cramped and teaching regularly takes place in thoroughfares. Staff make the best use of what is available. As the library area is also a teaching room, there are few opportunities for pupils to independently access the books. Many of the fiction books are in poor condition and there are too few books for the older pupils. In religious education, there are insufficient resources to support pupils' understanding of different religions. There is a good changing facility for the physically disabled children but many external doors are barely wide enough for wheelchairs to pass through. Despite the best efforts of the caretaking staff, the Key Stage 2 boys' toilets are unpleasant because the facilities have not been upgraded to cater for the needs of older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **good quality** care, guidance and support for pupils throughout the school. The involvement of pupils in the work and development of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their pupils well and are supportive and caring of them
- Pupils are aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve
- Parents are happy with the school's induction programme
- Provision for pupils who are unwell is good
- The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to contribute to improvements

Commentary

24. The school has maintained, and in some areas improved, the quality of the care and support it provides for its pupils since the time of the previous inspection. Teachers know their pupils well and value their contributions in lessons. Pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their work. Achievements in and out of school are consistently celebrated. Staff effectively monitor the personal development of pupils mainly through individual and class discussions. The school provides good support and care for pupils with special educational needs. The school makes smooth and well planned arrangements for welcoming and supporting pupils from the Bridge Special School who attend for certain lessons each week.
25. Child protection procedures are fully in place and training is regularly undertaken. Parents, in reply to the questionnaire, say they are happy with the school's induction arrangements for those children entering the reception class. These allow the children to settle quickly and feel secure in their new surroundings. Pupils have trusting relationships with staff. They feel that staff treat them fairly in any situations that arise. A school council has been recently established and pupils are successfully contributing to plans for the future. The school has improved its health and safety procedures and redeveloped the playground. Governors carry out regular risk assessments and all safety checks are up to date.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information parents receive in newsletters and at consultation meetings is good
- The Friends' Association is very supportive of the school
- The school serves the community well
- The headteacher and staff are very approachable
- Pupils' annual progress reports do not give parents enough information as to how they can help their children to improve

Commentary

26. The school continues to provide good information for parents in regular newsletters. The majority of parents are pleased with what the school provides and feel comfortable about talking to staff regarding any worries or concerns. Parents and pupils are satisfied with the amount of homework received and feel it successfully reinforces and builds on work undertaken in lessons. The school encourages parents to help in school, particularly with reading and pottery. Staff appreciate the regular, reliable help they receive in class and on trips.
27. Pupils' annual progress reports are particularly clear about what pupils can do and how they have improved during the school year. However, there is limited information as to what pupils need to improve and ways in which their parents or carers can help them to do this. Teachers provide parents with useful information about the topics studied each term. The prospectus provides a useful, practical guide to the school. The school has consulted parents about its homework policy and the format of annual progress reports. Relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good. The school actively considers parents' views when planning targets and reviewing progress.
28. The school, together with the local adult education service, provides classes in numeracy skills for parents. Parents with children in the reception and Year 1 classes work alongside their children in some lessons. These classes effectively help parents to better support their children's learning. The school also hosts family support group meetings and welcomes community use of its facilities for family craft and cooking clubs. A barrier to the school realising its future plans for more active links with parents and the community is its lack of accommodation for holding meetings and workshops during the school day.

29. The school has developed useful links with Brookside Partnership and the local church. Pupils visit the nearby medical centre, library, supermarket and town park to enrich their learning. The school invites parents to special lunches in school to celebrate Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day. Parents and the community actively support the Friends' Association's fundraising and social events.
30. Good links with Abraham Darby Comprehensive School include music tuition for pupils interested in woodwind and brass instruments. There are productive links for pupils with special needs with the Bridge Special School and good transition arrangements with all local comprehensive schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **well led and managed**. The commitment of governors and staff to inclusion is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads the school well
- All members of staff share a strong sense of purpose in moving the school on
- Effective monitoring of teaching and test results is helping identify areas for improvement
- The governing body is successfully developing its role as the school's critical friend
- The day-to-day management of the school is good
- The school gives good value for money

Commentary

31. There have been many staff changes since the last inspection, including the entire senior management team. The headteacher has a very good vision for the future development of the school and a strong grasp of how to raise standards. The deputy headteacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator give able support. As a team, they provide very good models for other staff and pupils. The headteacher's management of the school is quiet but effective. He enjoys the active support of staff and governors and the confidence of parents and pupils. Although there is still much to do, the school is on the right tracks. The good teaching seen during the inspection stems from the leadership's sharper focus on raising standards.
32. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work closely with the headteacher and bring a range of valuable skills and experience to their work. Arrangements for ensuring that the school meets all relevant statutory requirements are satisfactory. The governors and staff regularly review the school's aims and objectives and these feature strongly in its daily life and work. The school's very inclusive ethos ensures that pupils with special educational needs and those with physical disabilities feel fully involved in all the school does and receive the support they need. The management and organisation of the school's special needs provision is very good. Support staff are well qualified and effectively deployed and provide first-rate support for pupils in lessons.
33. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is good. Planning for improvement is thorough and involves all members of staff and governors. Priorities are well thought out, realistically costed and clear criteria for success are laid down together with clear lines of responsibility. Staff work closely as a team to introduce changes and bring about improvement. The headteacher has rightly focused attention on raising standards through improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum. A systematic programme of lesson observations is in place, together with regular scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Thorough arrangements for monitoring statutory and non-statutory test results and other assessment information are enabling the headteacher and his team to identify, and address, areas of strength and weakness. This is a key feature in the management's effectiveness.

34. The school uses performance management well to develop teachers' knowledge and effectiveness. The arrangements for the induction of new staff, teachers and support staff alike are good, as are the arrangements for their continuing professional development. The school makes an effective contribution to initial teacher training through placements; it also makes a good contribution to training programmes for childcare and other courses allied to education. Many curriculum responsibilities have changed in the last year and co-ordinators are working hard to provide support, guidance and direction for their colleagues. Senior managers are successfully delegating to subject leaders the responsibility for carrying through planned developments. It is a strength of the school's leadership that problems are openly discussed, different solutions explored and action agreed. Although challenging, the leadership's demands on staff are achievable and their workload manageable; in this positive spirit, staff are positively inspired and motivated.
35. Administrative routines are well established and the school runs smoothly. All staff are valued and willingly give of their best. Financial procedures are well established. The amount of money the school receives from public funds is below the national average. The income and expenditure shown in the table includes specific funding for pupils with physical disabilities. Reserves are well within recommended limits and the school successfully embraces the principles of *best value* in its purchases.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	571,595
Total expenditure	567,296
Expenditure per pupil	2,391

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	450
Balance carried forward to the next	4,299

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

What is the effectiveness of the provision for pupils with physical disabilities?

The provision for pupils with physical and other complex special needs is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent ethos and inclusive nature of the school
- The high level of skilled, specialist support that pupils receive which helps them achieve well
- The very high quality leadership and management of the provision
- Teaching and learning are very good
- The range of additional specialist teaching sessions which help pupils overcome learning, communication and mobility difficulties

36. Pupils with physical disabilities make very good, and sometimes excellent, progress because of the very good teaching and support they receive in lessons. By the end of Year 6, despite their difficulties, some achieve results similar to those of others in the year group. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They concentrate well, are eager to learn and try hard. They enjoy very good relationships with other pupils and with staff.
37. Teaching is well matched to individual pupils' learning needs. Clear and specific targets in pupils' individual education plans help teachers to monitor and review the pupils' progress. Teachers make sure that pupils are fully included in all class discussions and that everyone is aware of, and respects, their views and opinions. Skilled and sensitive support from support assistants ensures that these pupils take a full part in lessons. The curricular provision for them is very good. All pupils take part in class lessons and follow the full range of National Curriculum subjects. Additional specialist teaching sessions, designed to meet the pupils'

individual needs, help them to overcome particular difficulties with their learning, communication or mobility. As a result, they become more independent and confident in their work and relationships. Facilities for the personal care of pupils with physical disabilities are good.

38. The special needs co-ordinator leads and manages the provision extremely well. The school takes very good care of pupils, both in lessons and around the school. Teachers and support assistants closely monitor pupils' progress and welfare throughout the day, and keep very careful records. Relationships with parents are very good. The school makes very effective links with local schools and specialist support services. The well-established inclusion project with the Bridge Special School has resulted in the successful transfer and inclusion of a number of children, some of whom have significant and complex learning and physical difficulties.

What is the effectiveness of the provision for traveller pupils?

The provision for pupils from travelling families is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are sensitive to pupils' needs and circumstances
 - When support staff are available to help them, pupils made good progress
 - Specialist help makes an important contribution to pupils' achievements
39. The school takes good care of traveller pupils who join the school at different times of the year. The inclusive ethos and practice, which characterises every aspect of school life, ensures that the children feel welcome and that they have the help they need to settle quickly into school routines. Teachers take care to involve them in class discussions and treat their views with respect. Those who have difficulties in recording their work take a full part in lessons where a support assistant is available to work with them. However, when such support is not available, and pupils have had no prior experience of schooling, they have difficulty in working independently. The Traveller Advisory Service provides valuable additional teaching sessions in school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **sound**.

40. Children enter reception class in the September or January after their fourth birthday. Most, but by no means all, attend pre-school groups. Children enter the school with a very wide range of experiences. Early skills in language, literacy and the mathematical area of learning are often well below average and many children lack the level of independence expected at this age. By the time they move to Year 1, many children have yet to reach the Early Learning Goals. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 children in the reception class, all attending full-time. For certain sessions each week, children and support staff from the neighbouring Bridge Special School join the class. In January, a number of children will move to the predominantly Year 1 class to make room for the new intake.
41. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, particularly when there are a good number of staff, because they make an effective contribution by helping individuals and small groups. Children make good gains in their learning in these lessons, particularly from their low starting point, because of the favourable adult/child ratio and the good attention to planning. Staff make good use of the interactive whiteboard for teaching and this contributes effectively to their learning. All the areas of learning and activities are suitably matched to children's needs, especially for those with special educational needs, and they are therefore able to take a full part in lessons. Staff have good expectations of children's behaviour and manage them effectively. Overall, achievement is sound. In some lessons children spend too long sitting and listening to their teachers rather than taking an active part in discussions. In activities, they do not always have enough opportunity to independently make choices and try things out for themselves. They do not make fast enough progress in developing independence or in taking the initiative in their learning.
42. The school has maintained the overall quality of its provision. Shortcomings in the outside provision have been recently addressed. Staff are starting to develop the use of this secure area and the provision of large, wheeled vehicles and other equipment has improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children settle well into school routines and enjoy coming to school
- They follow instructions, take turns and help each other
- There are insufficient opportunities for children to show initiative and make choices

Commentary

43. Children settle quickly at the start of each day because they are familiar with daily routines, welcomed by staff and keen to learn. They ask for help from adults and each other. Children, including those with complex needs, get on well together. Staff explain clearly what they expect of them and deal firmly but fairly with any issues. Children are familiar with the class rules and staff make good use of opportunities to demonstrate their application in everyday events.
44. Many children lack independence when they start school. Many still need help and encouragement when dealing with their outdoor clothes or when changing for sessions in the hall. Most manage their personal care successfully although some still require encouragement in the dining room at lunchtime where there are many distractions. Children with special needs are well supported and encouraged to do things for themselves as far as they possibly can.

Teaching and achievement are sound. A number of children are reluctant to have a go or make choices independently when faced with slightly different activities from those with which they are familiar. Staff do not always make the most of opportunities to develop these skills. Although the majority of children reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they start in Year 1, a significant number still lack the independent skills expected at this age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy handling books and follow well-known stories carefully
- Children listen well and make steady progress with their early writing skills
- Children's vocabulary is limited and they do not speak at length

Commentary

45. By the time they start in Year 1, many children have yet to reach the Early Learning Goals. Achievement is sound. Children listen carefully to instructions and concentrate well for short periods of time; they respond positively, although briefly, to questions. Most children take turns in speaking. When required to sit and listen for longer periods of time, many find it hard to maintain the focus of their concentration. When asked to comment or talk about what they have heard, many find difficulty in talking independently at length and their vocabulary is limited. When staff prompt and help them to think about and develop their answers, children often make good progress and show that they have a better understanding than first appeared. Occasionally, the questions asked of children can be answered in a single word and do not give them the opportunity to share and expand their thinking.
46. Teaching is good overall. Teachers' good use of the interactive whiteboard to share the text and illustrations of the class big book successfully captures the children's attention and positively benefits their learning. Children accurately recall the order of events. The good quality of support for small groups of children successfully helps them to focus on particular skills. However, many children have a limited understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds. In their writing, most hold pencils, crayons and markers correctly, and copy patterns with increasing accuracy. Those who are ready, trace adult writing accurately. Staff have a good awareness of the needs of left-handed children and make suitable provision for them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good use of the interactive whiteboard helps to make mathematics come alive
- Children's confidence in basic number skills is developing well
- Children's choices are often influenced by adults

Commentary

47. Good teaching by staff is successfully helping children to make effective progress in lessons from a low starting point in their mathematical development. Their use of shadow on the interactive whiteboard to teach children about the different parts of shapes is particularly effective in capturing the children's imagination and helping them spot patterns. Similarly, using the whiteboard to create a number line to illustrate the number rhyme *Ten Little Elephants* helps children to develop their understanding and application of "one more". Achievement is sound. Staff show children alternative strategies for solving simple problems but do not provide enough opportunities for children to independently choose which one they will try. By the time they enter Year 1, many children are still working towards the Early Learning Goals.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use computers, particularly the interactive whiteboard, confidently
- Staff plan a good range of activities to capture children's interest
- Children make the best progress when they take an active part in activities

Commentary

48. By the time they start in Year 1, the majority of children reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Many achieve well from a low starting point because teachers make good use of the local area to develop children's learning through visits to the shops, library and church. Teaching is good overall. A timely lesson on road and rail safety effectively highlighted potential dangers in the immediate vicinity of the school and linked well to an earlier discussion of rules. In planting bulbs in the class garden, children know that bulbs need the warmth of the soil, water and light to grow. Staff use vocabulary well and children make good progress in learning the names of various garden tools. Children satisfactorily develop observation skills as their teacher makes chocolate chip buns. Although they stirred the mixture, children did not weigh out and add the ingredients themselves.
49. Children control the computer mouse well and use the icons on the interactive whiteboard effectively to respond to instructions and alter the information on the screen. When working on the interactive whiteboard without direct adult involvement, children demonstrate a high degree of confidence in using the toolbar to change and develop their work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children handle tools and equipment safely
- Many children's finer movements are stiff and uncoordinated
- Outdoor activities, although developing, do not sufficiently promote independent learning

Commentary

50. Most children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Achievement is sound. Children join in well with *warm up* and *cool down* activities. They move freely around the hall and respond promptly to instructions to stop, start, walk and run. Most can adjust their speed and change direction but their finer movements are often stiff and uncoordinated. There are not enough opportunities for children to experiment and try out different movements. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the provision made for children's outdoor activities. There is now a suitable surfaced area and a number of large wheeled vehicles available. However, planning for children's use of these outdoor facilities does not sufficiently focus on planned opportunities for them to develop a range of different physical skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

It was not possible to see sufficient activities in this area of learning to make a judgement about teaching. However, scrutiny of teachers' planning and assessment information, work on display together with comments from children indicate that they achieve soundly and the majority are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Unsatisfactory achievement over time has created a barrier to pupils reaching higher standards in writing in English and in other subjects
- Good teaching is starting to improve standards
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, but average pupils need more specific help with their reading and writing
- Pupils' research and study skills are impeded by unsatisfactory library provision

Commentary

51. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in speaking, reading, writing and spelling are below average. Listening skills are average. A high proportion of pupils in each year group has difficulty with reading and writing. Programmes of extra work in the run up to national tests in Years 2 and 6 help to improve results but, when compared with the national picture, more pupils attain the lower levels and fewer pupils reach the higher levels.
52. Achievement is good in listening, satisfactory in speaking and reading, but unsatisfactory in writing. In Key Stage 1 classes, pupils' skills with pencil control and early independent writing are below average. This holds back the pace and quality of their work. In Year 2, over a third of pupils find it difficult to spell everyday words or produce simple sentences by themselves. Analysis of previous test and other assessment information shows that achievement in writing has, in earlier years, levelled off in Year 4 as pupils' basic skills have not been good enough to underpin more complex work. The subject co-ordinator has successfully overseen changes to the curriculum and from the start of Key Stage 2, pupils systematically learn how to structure stories. They make good progress creating settings, characters and plot. However, pupils still do not have sufficient opportunity, or the time necessary, to create, read through and improve longer pieces of work. This is depressing standards.
53. Over time, pupils learn to listen carefully to adults and each other. They make good progress because staff actively encourage them to value what others have to say. From a low starting point, pupils gain in confidence as speakers and make satisfactory progress over time. Teachers encourage all class groups to join in discussions in class lessons and feedback time in the literacy hour. Pupils with special educational needs contribute successfully, because of effective adult support. However, well into Years 4 and 5, few pupils initiate talk and ask questions.
54. Progress in reading is satisfactory. Pupils move from well below average attainment at the start of school, and become accurate readers. By Year 6, capable readers read aloud in a mature and expressive way. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of regular, targeted support. In Key Stage 1 classes, average attaining readers lack fluency when reading aloud. In Key Stage 2 classes, books for average readers are sometimes too hard and pupils struggle with understanding. Discussions with pupils show that they enjoy reading and buy books and magazines to read at home.
55. In lessons, teaching is good, particularly in whole class work and in feedback time in the literacy hour. Recent analysis of test results and pupils' work has helped teachers to identify and address shortcomings. This is coming through well in teachers' plans and practice. Useful targets for pupils' learning in Years 5 and 6 indicate where additional learning is required. Teachers have good subject knowledge and work hard to encourage pupils to contribute in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs, including pupils with physical difficulties, progress well with their learning because of the good support they receive from staff. Teachers make good assessments of pupils' writing in Years 5 and 6 and use these to set targets for

improvement. However, despite work planned at different levels, average attaining pupils lack specific support during group work. Although marking is satisfactory, it is not consistent between teachers; at its best, it shows pupils how to improve their work. In some year groups, teachers' good information and communication technology (ICT) skills with the interactive white board successfully help to move learning on.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Pupils' competence in the use of language and literacy across the curriculum is below average. Although teachers try hard to encourage pupils to discuss and ask questions, particularly in the humanities, there are not enough planned opportunities to develop pupils' writing in English or across the curriculum. In science, design and technology, geography and history there are examples of writing for particular purposes but standards are below average and work does not always do justice to pupils' wider learning in these subjects. The school library is very limited as a learning resource.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of skills and strategies is good
- The booster classes in Key Stage 2 are effective in improving test results
- Work is well matched to the varying abilities within the classes and the more able pupils are appropriately challenged
- Pupils do not sufficiently investigate, solve problems and apply their mathematical skills in a range of contexts

Commentary

57. At the end of Year 2, standards are below the national average, but they are average by the end of Year 6. Overall, achievement is sound. The numeracy strategy is well established and teachers plan their lessons to include a mental or oral starter, the main learning activity and a plenary (feedback) session. Teachers use the plenary sessions well to address common misconceptions and to take the learning forward.
58. In the run up to the national tests, pupils benefit from teaching in booster classes that improves their results considerably. Results are carefully analysed and, with the effective guidance and support of the subject co-ordinator, teachers' plans adapted to address areas of need. Teachers successfully meet the needs of different groups of pupils by setting work at different levels and by providing additional support from teaching assistants. More able pupils are set extension work to challenge them further.
59. The teaching of numeracy skills is accurate and thorough. In whole class lessons, teachers provide pupils with effective strategies to solve a problem, which they do successfully. However, when working independently, pupils cannot always apply this learning to other similar examples and find it hard to apply their knowledge when the problems are slightly different. Pupils do not do enough work on investigations or problem solving activities. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for them to demonstrate, explain their thinking, offer their own strategies to solve problems, or discuss their work with each other.
60. The marking of pupils' work is thorough and, in the best practice, there are very helpful comments that identify what the pupil does well, and how to improve. Marking is, however, inconsistent between teachers. There is very good practice with the targets set for some pupils in Key Stage 2 where three individual targets are set, progress is monitored and helpful marking identifies progress. Pupils have positive attitudes to mathematics and many identify it as their favourite subject. They show concentration and perseverance and take a pride in their work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Pupils' competence across the curriculum is average overall. Opportunities to investigate, solve problems and apply their skills in real life contexts are not fully developed. There are some good examples of numeracy in the use of graphs in science and in measuring in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding is better developed than their investigative and experimental skills by the end of Year 2
- Improved planning and reporting of investigations at the end of Year 6 are helping to raise standards
- Pupils' problem-solving skills are not good enough
- Pupils use scientific vocabulary correctly

Commentary

62. Standards are similar to the national averages at the end of both key stages. Achievement is sound. The standard of pupils' knowledge is higher than their skills in investigative and experimental work because they do not systematically develop problem-solving skills as they move through the school. This is preventing pupils from making better progress in their work.
63. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a sound understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and accurately explain the stages of growth from baby to adulthood. They are keen to share their ideas and thoughts with others but many have difficulty in recording their work. However, many pupils look to adults to guide them in each step of their learning. Where teachers do not have additional adult support, this slows the pace of learning. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are knowledgeable about the causes and prevention of tooth decay. They use scientific vocabulary accurately and apply themselves well to practical work. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to ask questions such as *how* and *why*, and to independently link *cause* and *effect*. Good achievement in these lessons stems from the good pace of teaching, pupils' vibrant interest and curiosity, and their active participation in planning and conducting practical investigations.
64. Under the effective guidance of the subject co-ordinator, the school has successfully addressed shortcomings identified in the previous report in the teaching of science at the end of Key Stage 2. The use of planning boards to help pupils in Years 5 and 6 plan and carry out their investigative work enables them to be more systematic in their work; they understand the importance of testing their predictions fairly and presenting their findings accurately and clearly. Teachers work hard to help pupils to link their practical experiences to their previous knowledge. They provide sound guidance as to how to report and comment upon their findings and this is why results have risen. However, many pupils' problem solving skills remain insecure, particularly when they are working independently of adults, and this is something that teachers have still to improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection
- Pupils' application of ICT across the curriculum lags behind their skill development
- Pupils are familiar with a range of ICT equipment
- Recently installed interactive white boards are being well used by teachers and pupils
- Pupils with special educational needs have full access to equipment and make good progress

Commentary

65. Standards in ICT are similar to those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievement is sound. At both key stages, pupils are knowledgeable about the different applications of ICT in everyday life and enthusiastic about using equipment. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons, with specialised equipment available for those with physical disabilities. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they focus well on the development of pupils' skills in their planning. The subject co-ordinator provides colleagues with good quality guidance and support.
66. In word processing work, Key Stage 1 pupils successfully use the mouse to carry out specific instructions such as *highlight*, *drag* and *drop* but some find it difficult to link together a series of moves and look for adult help and support in case they make a mistake. Nonetheless, teachers challenge pupils to *have a go* and provide praise and encouragement for their efforts. In Years 5 and 6, pupils successfully demonstrate their mastery of the skills necessary to develop slides for their multi-media presentations. They collaborate well with each other in their discussions and experiments to find the right combinations. Pupils with special educational needs and those with physical disabilities are fully involved, with pupils showing first-rate concern that everyone in their group has the opportunity to contribute valued ideas and opinions.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is sound. Teachers and pupils successfully use the interactive whiteboards in starter activities for mathematics, to introduce the pentatonic scale in music and help pupils identify verbs in a poem in an English lesson. Although pupils use word processing for writing, opportunities for them to draft, edit and improve their work are not sufficiently developed. There are some good examples of pupils designing clay tiles to make in design and technology as part of their study of Egypt in history.

HUMANITIES

Inspectors sampled pupils' work in geography, history and religious education during the inspection. They saw too few lessons to make individual judgements about teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in geography in their study of rivers and the local environment
- There is too much emphasis on learning facts about religion and not enough on exploring their meaning
- Field trips make an important contribution to pupils' achievements in history and geography
 - Both the quality and range of writing in pupils' books are lower than expected, and do not always reflect the true extent of pupils' learning

Commentary

68. Standards by Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations in history and geography and reflect the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Achievement is satisfactory in each subject. These are similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
69. In **geography**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make steady progress with their understanding of place. They identify physical and human features of their own environment and make comparisons with other places, such as Llandudno. In compiling a guidebook about their visit, a significant proportion of Year 2 pupils find it difficult to communicate in writing and this is creating a barrier to higher standards. In discussions, Years 5 and 6 pupils recall their exploration of the Batch Valley and are knowledgeable about how rivers develop. Work in books reflects good progress in map work and analysing data. Pupils use these skills successfully to draw conclusions and provide suggestions for improvement of their local environment. Field trips provide pupils with first-hand experiences that successfully motivate their interest and learning.
70. In **history**, pupils develop a growing understanding of the passing of time. Key Stage 1 pupils draw from their own experiences of *growing up* and *change*, and communicate their findings clearly through illustration. Teachers use worksheets sparingly and encourage some reflective writing about important historical events, such as Remembrance Day. Key Stage 2 pupils recall specific periods in British history with clarity, and talk knowledgeably about changes brought about by Roman and Viking invaders. Visits to places of historical interest, such as Chester, add to this learning. Work in history reflects good coverage of British history. The standard and range of writing is disappointing in all year groups, and holds back achievement for all but the more able.
71. In **religious education**, work in Years 1 and 2 focuses on stories from the Bible and important ceremonies and celebrations, such as baptism and harvest time. Pupils discuss the importance of giving thanks and relate this to their own experiences in school. They lack skills as speakers and writers, and so in discussions and writing their contributions remain at a simple level. Visits to the local church enable pupils to respond in a personal way to the symbols and images found there. In Years 5 and 6, pupils learn about other faiths through their study of Islam. Pupils depend upon the teacher's secure subject knowledge, and good questioning skills to guide their learning. Pupils learn about fasting, giving alms and pilgrimages, and with encouragement begin to make comparisons between Islam and the Christian faith. Pupils' knowledge of Islam is limited and lessons lack the resources necessary to make learning more meaningful, and to show the importance of faith in everyday life.
72. Teachers have good subject knowledge and pupils are keen to learn, but a high proportion lack confidence and competence as speakers and few initiate talk or ask questions. Teachers work hard to motivate discussions and use questioning well, but find it hard to encourage pupils to seek deeper meaning and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the focused support they receive. The school plans and monitors a rolling programme of lessons for mixed-age classes, which ensures coverage of agreed guidelines. Teachers satisfactorily link the assessment of pupils' work to these guidelines.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Inspectors sampled pupils' work in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education during the inspection. They saw too few lessons to make individual judgements about teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils successfully evaluate the wide range of work they undertake in design and technology but their use of control technology is under-developed
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the lives and works of famous artists
- Music has good links with other subjects including religious education, science and mathematics
- Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the range of extra curricular activities in sport and the arts

- In physical education, pupils do not identify what needs to be done to improve their work

Commentary

73. In **art**, work on display shows that standards are similar to those expected nationally. Discussion with pupils indicates that art is one of their favourite subjects and they achieve soundly. Pupils in Year 3 enthusiastically recall their recent visit to an art gallery and name some famous artists and the works they had seen. They successfully use a range of materials to decorate their printed Egyptian designs. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 work with precision as they design and make stencil prints and use their string tiles to print a design. They are familiar with some of the works of famous artists such as Picasso and Monet.
74. In **design and technology**, standards of work in Years 2 and 6 are above average and achievement is good in both key stages. Pupils in Year 2 successfully design and make a fruit salad. They improve their skills in cutting, peeling and slicing fruit, pay good attention to hygiene and health and safety, and taste their fruit salad to evaluate the finished product. Other work on display from pupils in Years 1 and 2 includes fishing rods using winding techniques, and weaving undertaken with an artist in residence. Work on display from pupils in Years 3 to 6 includes *design and make* tasks for slippers, which are of a high standard. Pupils' evaluations are also good. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 research bridge designs on the Internet before designing and making their own in small groups. These bridges show a range of techniques for joining wood and card. Throughout the school, pupils produce well-labelled drawings of their designs with written evaluations. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
75. In **music**, standards at the end of Year 6 are similar to those expected nationally. Achievement is sound. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 compose simple tunes using the pentatonic scale. They have time to develop and perform their work to the class, and make good use of information and communication technology. There are, however, missed opportunities for pupils to say what is good and what could be improved. In Years 5 and 6, pupils listen to a range of music, are beginning to read standard musical notation and sing tunefully in two and three parts.
76. In **physical education**, standards are similar to those expected in Years 2 and 6 and achievement is sound. In Year 2, pupils watch each other develop games skills but there are missed opportunities for them to identify what is good and what they could improve. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 build up a sequence of movements using different rolls and balances but lack greater control and accuracy in their movements.
77. Pupils enjoy practical work and achieve good results. Those with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support and help they receive. As in the humanities, the school plans and monitors a rolling programme of lessons for mixed-age classes and teachers successfully link the assessment of pupils' work to these guidelines.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a high respect for the views, opinions, contributions and successes of others
- Pupils are actively involved in drawing up classroom rules
- Staff apply the school's behaviour and other policies consistently
- Many pupils have a limited knowledge of the wider community

Commentary

78. Pupils achieve well because personal and social education is part-and-parcel of their everyday learning in school. The school successfully weaves its health education programme into the curriculum and teachers deal effectively with any particular issues as and when they arise. The school's excellent commitment to inclusion successfully steers pupils' social education. All

staff provide good role models in the way that they value the suggestions and contributions of all pupils during class discussions. Although the school has a number of pupils with specific and complex needs, they are one-and-the-same as far as their classmates are concerned. Pupils appreciate how important it is to work together; they celebrate and value each other's achievements in sporting and other activities in and out of school. Through the school council, they have a growing understanding of decision-making in school. However, many pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding of the different cultures and life styles outside their immediate community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	4
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	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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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