

INSPECTION REPORT

LISCARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Liscard

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 104994

Headteacher: Mr. D.F. Williamson

Lead inspector: Ruth J. Schaffer

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th June 2004

Inspection number: 256749

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:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	736
School address:	Withens Lane Liscard Wallasey Merseyside
Postcode:	CH45 7NQ
Telephone number:	0151 6388757
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Sir Malcolm Thornton
Date of previous inspection:	18 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Liscard Primary School is much larger than most other primary schools with 736 boys and girls aged three to eleven, including 52 children who attend the Nursery part-time. Because the school admits up to 87 pupils in each year group, some do not start their education in the school's Nursery class. There are four classes in almost every year group. Currently about 27 per cent of pupils are in receipt of free school meals and this is higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below the national figure. The nature of these pupils' needs is mainly moderate learning difficulties and social and emotional problems. Almost all pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. Around two per cent come from other ethnic groups with no one group predominating. One per cent of pupils are at an early stage of acquiring spoken English in addition to their home language. There are slightly more pupils than usual who move in and out of the school, other than at the normal time of admissions and this tends to occur more in the older classes. The socio-economic circumstances of the school are less favourable than elsewhere. The attainment of most pupils on entry to the school is below average. The school is involved in several local and national initiatives, including the Excellence in Cities and Leadership Development Strategy for Primary Schools. It has received several awards, including the Activemark for physical education, Investors in People, School Achievement Award and the Eco-Schools Green Flag Status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. Teaching is good. Pupils work hard at their lessons and learn well. They enjoy school and participate with enthusiasm in the opportunities it provides. In the Foundation Stage, children's achievement is good and in Years 1 to 6 it is satisfactory. The headteacher, senior managers and staff provide a high level of care for each pupil in a warm and welcoming school community. Overall, value for money is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage, and in Years 5 and 6 where it boosts pupils' attainment, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The arts are celebrated and pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT), music, art and design, and physical education are good.
- The school's very good provision for pupils' personal development results in very good relationships, and pupils work and play in a harmonious friendly atmosphere free from bullying.
- The leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff is good.
- The school's very good partnership with parents and the community is a great benefit to pupils' learning and teachers make skilful use of volunteers and parent helpers.
- Standards in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 and in science in Years 1 to 6 are not high enough .
- Although the school has good systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning, in some areas of its work this process has not been fully effective.
- Despite very good provision in the Reception classes, challenges presented by the nature of the accommodation limit children's personal and physical development.

The school has made **satisfactory** improvement since the previous inspection. There have been very good gains in the standard of work in ICT, but standards in science by Year 6 and reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 have not improved enough. The need for repair and renovation of the building has taken up too much of the school's resources in time and money.

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	C	D	D
mathematics	C	C	D	D
science	A	C	D	E

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

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is good. Although many start their education with attainment lower than is usual for their age, most are on track to reach the levels expected of them by the end of the Reception Year. By the end of Year 2, the standard of work in mathematics is average but in reading, writing and science it is below average. A significant number of pupils started in Year 1 with their attainment below average because they did not have the advantage of the current very good provision in the Foundation Stage. Their achievement is satisfactory in English and science and good in mathematics. However, children with lower attainment do not make enough progress in learning letter sounds to help them read and write. The standard of pupils' work currently in Year 6 in English and mathematics is an

improvement on the below average standards as shown in the results of 2003. Current standards in English and mathematics are average but in science they are below average, with too few pupils attaining the higher level. The school has recognised the deficit in science and has put in good measures to correct this. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in English and mathematics. In science, the achievement of pupils of average and lower attainment is satisfactory but it is unsatisfactory for those of higher attainment. The progress of pupils with special educational needs in relation to their prior learning is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Pupils who speak English in addition to their home language make satisfactory progress in learning English. In ICT, art and design, music and physical education, pupils' achievements are good.

The provision for **pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good**. Their personal development is very good. Pupils respect one another's feelings and beliefs. They have good attitudes to their work and they behave well. The accommodation has an adverse affect on children's personal development in the Foundation Stage

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teaching and the curriculum are very good in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 to 6, curriculum changes aimed at increasing pupils' interest and enjoyment of learning are being developed successfully and ICT is used well to develop learning. However, more checks need to be made on subject plans in Years 1 to 3, where work is not always well matched to pupils' level of understanding. Year group teams plan well together and in Years 4 to 6 the sharing of expertise is particularly effective in boosting pupils' learning. In every year group, team leaders are good role models. Their lessons capture pupils' interest and move them on quickly to the next stage of their learning. A good working atmosphere is established by nearly all teachers, but in a few classes, pupils' behaviour slips when work is not interesting or well organised. Good planning, teaching and some innovative methods provide very well for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language to their home language in Years 3 to 6. However, the lack of classroom assistants in Years 1 and 2 makes even the best plans less effective for these pupils, and provision in these years is satisfactory. The accommodation limits teachers' planning for children's personal and physical development in the Reception classes. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the many clubs and activities run outside of school time.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good. Aspects of management relating to the daily care of pupils in this large school are good but overall **management is satisfactory**. The headteacher is a good leader. The challenges posed by the building have not deterred him from his vision to provide good quality education for the pupils. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and key staff. The governance of the school is good. Governors are strongly led by the chairman, and their strength in financial management has off-set some of the difficulties caused by lack of resources. However, monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not always rigorous enough to ensure pupils' reach their full potential.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have great confidence in the school and the headteacher. The relationship between parents and the school is very beneficial to pupils' learning. Pupils like their teachers and have very positive views of school life.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2
- Raise standards in science by the end of Years 2 and 6
- Improve the effectiveness of checks on the quality of teaching and learning
- Continue to seek ways to improve the accommodation, particularly for the children in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils start their education with standards below expectations for their age. Children in the Foundation Stage are on track to attain the levels set for them by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils attain average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 but standards in science are below. By the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics are average but below average in English and science. Overall standards achieved are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weakness

- Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 have improved in comparison to those as shown by the results of tests of 2003.
- Standards in science are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils of higher attainment do not achieve well enough.
- Standards are below average in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and pupils of lower attainment do not achieve well enough.
- Children's achievements are good in the Foundation Stage.
- The rate of pupils' achievement slows in Years 3 and 4 but picks up very well in Years 5 and 6.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6 and in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Pupils' achievement in ICT, art and design, music and physical education is good.

Commentary

1. Although the proportion of pupils attaining the level expected at the end of Year 6 has improved in a similar way to nationally, that is, a slow rise upwards over a period of five years, standards do not compare as well to the national average as they did at the time of the previous inspection because standards in science are below average. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory. The explanation for this is that children are starting their education with lower attainment, owing to some significant changes in the locality in the period since 1998; the area has suffered economic decline. This can be seen in the comparison of the school's results with schools in a similar context, being above average for Year 2 results and average for Year 6. In addition, there are now more families that move in and out of the area and so pupils join the school part way through their education, sometimes having suffered lack of schooling or disruption to home life. A significant number do not start their education in the Foundation Stage; for instance, a high proportion of pupils joined the school in Years 5 and 6 in 2003. The school has a justifiably good reputation for meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with emotional and social difficulties who no longer like school or attend regularly; pupils come from out of the school's allocated area for this reason, increasing the number of pupils working in the lower National Curriculum levels.
2. The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated since 1999, reaching a high in 2001 when standards were above average in English and well above in science but a low in 2003 when standards were below average in English, mathematics and science. The achievement of the pupils in Year 6 is satisfactory. However, the school's own tracking systems show that in Years 3 and 4 these pupils did not make the progress that they should have done and that they moved on very quickly in Year 5 – a number of pupils, for instance, going up a whole level in that year. These fluctuations are linked to the quality of teaching. In the current Year 6, pupils have attained an average level of competency in the use of English and mathematics. They read with enthusiasm and show a good understanding of how to structure their writing to match a range of different purposes. The level of spelling and

handwriting of most pupils will enable them to tackle work in the next stage of their education. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They are not at the standard expected for their age in either mathematics or English but they are confident learners and very keen to try their best because of good support in mathematics and English where they are taught in classes with a smaller number of pupils. In science, too few pupils attain the higher levels and standards are below average. The school has begun to teach investigative science with much greater rigour and this is beginning to have a good effect on pupils' achievement in classes below Year 6, but pupils in Year 6 have not had enough opportunity to respond to the challenge of thinking out their own investigations or posing hypotheses to test.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.0 (26.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.1 (26.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.6 (28.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 108 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is good. When they start in the Nursery, their attainment is below expectations for their age. In the current year, a good proportion of children are on track to attain the levels expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year in all areas of learning. Standards in the current Year 2 are average in mathematics but below average in English and science. The group of pupils currently in Year 2 was not as far on when they started in Year 1 as the current Reception Year because the very good provision in the Foundation Stage was not fully in place at that time. Attainment for a good proportion was below average. In mathematics, their achievement has been good. Higher and average attaining pupils work with numbers up to and beyond 100 at the level expected for their age and those of lower attainment are confident with numbers up to 20. In English, pupils of higher attainment achieve satisfactorily but those of lower attainment do not make enough progress in using letter sounds to help them read and spell. In Years 1 and 2, pupils with special educational needs are identified quickly. They make good progress towards their individual targets when they have one-to-one support but, overall, their achievement is satisfactory. In a similar way to lower attaining pupils, they struggle to use letter sounds effectively. In science, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but, as in Years 3 to 6, those of higher attainment are not given enough challenge.
4. The small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress in learning English. The school provides volunteer helpers who speak their home language, when possible, and they are included well in all activities.
5. The out-dated building is a barrier to pupils' achievement because it demands a disproportionate amount of the school's resources. Currently, there is no learning support staff in Years 1 to 6, with the exception of those employed to support pupils with special educational needs. The lack of trained support staff affects the amount of adult time available for each pupil. This has a particularly unfavourable affect on Years 1 and 2. For instance, lower attaining pupils and those with special education needs have not had the benefit of the national programme for teaching letter sounds to pupils in Year 1 who have fallen behind with their learning and this is a significant factor in their under-achievement in writing.
6. Pupils' achievement in ICT is good and a good proportion of pupils in Year 6 are attaining standards in some areas of their work above the level expected by the end of Year 6. In the performing element of music and in some aspects of art and design, pupils attain standards beyond expectations by the end of Year 6 and their achievement is good. In physical education,

pupils' achievement is good by the end of Years 2 and 6 and standards for many are beyond those expected for their age.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good attitudes help them to learn effectively, but in a small number of lessons their behaviour is unsatisfactory.
- Very good relationships help create a happy learning environment.
- The school deals very effectively with all forms of harassment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well and helps them become mature and responsible.

Commentary

8. Pupils' good attitudes to school and to their work contribute well to their personal development, attainment and achievement. The pupils like school and enjoy learning. This positive attitude to work is encouraged from the moment the children enter the Nursery. In the Reception Year, children make good progress towards many of the goals set for them in personal, social and emotional development, but their independence is hindered by the accommodation as they cannot leave the classroom without being with an adult. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning and take a full and active part in lessons. However, there are occasions, in some classes, when pupils' attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory due to unsatisfactory teaching and this hinders pupils' progress. The 'Good Behaviour Passport' encourages pupils to behave well and try hard. The school is successful in building pupils' confidence and self-esteem in lessons and in assemblies and through a very good programme of out-of-school activities. Pupils willingly accept responsibility by taking on jobs in class or becoming elected to the school council. Older pupils are given a higher level of responsibility in such positions as playground leaders, buddies, first aid assistants and lunchtime monitors, all of which have to be applied for to make sure they are suitable to take on the role.
9. Relationships are very good throughout the school because the pupils have a very good understanding of their responsibilities within the school community, and the importance of self-discipline is promoted very well. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and almost always try to do what they know is right. The school's Code of Conduct helps pupils to learn moral principles that they are beginning to apply in their everyday lives. This results in the pupils showing care and consideration for one another and creates a happy learning environment. However, when moving along the corridors, during the busy lunchtime period, some pupils are not always as polite and considerate as at other times of the day. There is little bullying and pupils are respectful of those who come from different cultural backgrounds. If any form of harassment does occur, parents and pupils agree that it is taken most seriously and dealt with very effectively by the school's senior staff. There has been one fixed-term exclusion during the last school year. This is a success when consideration is given to the large numbers of pupils and an indication of the school's strong commitment to inclusion.

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	715	1	
White – any other White background	5		
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Mixed – any other mixed background	8		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4		
Any other ethnic group	2		

10. Spiritual development is an integral part of the assemblies, which are planned around themes that are relevant to pupils. They are held in an atmosphere of calm that helps pupils to reflect upon their personal feelings, values and beliefs. Class discussions, especially in personal, health, social, and citizenship lessons, give very good opportunities for pupils to listen to varied opinions that may not match their own and they show respect for the differing views of others. Pupils develop a good level of cultural awareness, for example through art and design, music, history and religious education lessons. This awareness is enhanced through visits to the Multicultural Centre and visitors into school, an Indian story teller for example.
11. The systems for encouraging and monitoring attendance and punctuality are successful due to the involvement of the attendance officer funded through ASPIRE a project to raise the motivation of disaffected pupils as part of the Education Action Zone. The attendance officer provides flexible support to families with social problems and this has helped to improve the attendance and punctuality of targeted pupils. The project has enabled the school to acquire a computerised registration system that provides useful attendance data and automatically generates first-day absence calls. This ensures early detection of any dips in pupils' attendance, and any unexplained absences are followed up rigorously.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/03 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and good in the Foundation Stage. It is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Standards of care, welfare and safety are very good. Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Team leaders give good direction to the planning and evaluation of lessons in year-group teams and expertise is generally shared well.
- The staff in the Foundation Stage are very knowledgeable about the way young children learn and they provide a wealth of varied activities that capture their interest and develop their skills quickly.
- The very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 stems from accurate assessments of pupils' attainment, but in some year groups not enough attention is paid to the level of pupils' understanding before work is planned.
- In nearly all classes, praise and respect for pupils' opinions and efforts are coupled with high expectations of good behaviour, but in less effective lessons behaviour is not always managed well.
- In the best lessons, teachers use a good range of methods, keep up a good pace and use stimulating resources and ideas.
- Teachers' explanations often tend to be too long, even in good lessons, and pupils spend too long listening.
- Teachers make very good use of parent and volunteer helpers, homework and the learning support staff whose primary role is to support pupils with special educational needs, but the lack of teaching assistants in Years 1 and 2 has a negative effect on pupils' learning.
- Marking in Years 5 and 6 is good but in some year groups it is not used well enough to explain to pupils how they should improve.

Commentary

12. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection in that the percentage of very good or better lessons has almost doubled and there is less unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was good and it is now very good. Teachers work well together in year groups and this has had a good effect on the planning of lessons. Expertise is shared, especially in Years 6 and 4, where teachers exchange classes so that one teacher takes all the classes in a year group for a particular subject. Teachers with good subject knowledge are used to best advantage and the amount of planning is reduced. All team leaders provide very good, and sometimes outstanding, examples of teaching for others to emulate. Year-group team planning is evaluative and effective. This is one of the strengths of the Foundation Stage teaching. However, where weaknesses exist, the current procedures for monitoring and ensuring improvement have not done enough to remedy inconsistent practice. The three unsatisfactory lessons in the table below were examples of this. Most classrooms have exciting and useful displays that encourage and extend skills in writing and reading, and provide motivational targets, reflecting the good practice of team leaders, but two classes, one in Year 2 and one in Year 3 do not come up to this standard.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 76 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (3%)	19 (25%)	31 (41%)	21 (28%)	3 (4%)	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.

13. In Years 5 and 6, the organisation of the classes into sets of pupils at a similar level of attainment is based on accurate assessments which continue to take place throughout the

year. Work is generally marked well in Years 5 and 6; good accurate assessments against the objectives for tasks enable teachers to praise efforts and point out what needs to be done to improve. However, work is not always marked well. Not all teachers give pupils a clear understanding of how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Similarly in lessons, although the objective for learning is pointed out at the start of the lesson, not all teachers refer back to it to help pupils understand how well they have done. On occasions, objectives are given that are not fully understandable to some pupils. During the best lessons, questioning probes understanding of the work in hand and clear explanations help those who struggle. Tasks are set at different levels of difficulty that match the stage of learning for each pupil. This is particularly effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs who generally have good support by the provision of especially prepared resources. Teachers who take the lower sets for mathematics are particularly successful in matching work to pupils' needs and improving the learning of pupils with special education needs. However, this good match of work to the level of pupils' understanding is not always evident. In English in Years 1 and 2, teachers sometimes keep too strictly to the year-group planning in the National Literacy Strategy and fail to match work to the level of understanding for pupils of lower attainment. This affects their rate of learning and as a result their achievement overall. The school sets pupils targets to reach so as to raise their interest and motivate them to try their best. In a good proportion of classes pupils know their targets and how well they are working towards them, but again this is not done consistently well throughout the school.

14. In the best lessons, teachers use a range of good methods and strategies to maintain interest and keep pupils' concentration high. Very good relationships establish a friendly and co-operative working atmosphere in most classes, to which pupils respond by good behaviour. In the Foundation Stage, teachers have a very good understanding of how young children learn and activities are exciting and stimulating. Warm relationships and good opportunities to develop children's personal and social skills are securely established. In a Year 6 history lesson, pupils' interest was high because the content of the lesson was exciting and organisation was very effective allowing pupils to act out the part of John Lennon, using a *PowerPoint* presentation as a stimulus. In the best lessons, the pace of lessons is well judged, and pupils are expected and encouraged to complete tasks with reasonable speed. However, even in some good lessons, teachers' explanations are too long and pupils spend too long listening with the result that pupils' attention wanders. In mathematics, there are too few opportunities for pupils to explain in their own words how they solved a problem. In writing, in the younger classes, teachers do not provide enough support through modelling spoken sentences for pupils to gain confidence in forming sentences before attempting to write.
15. Because the school has suffered severe cuts in its finances, there are far fewer learning support assistants than in most schools. Teachers have made up for this by making the very best use of a range of adults, including parents, students and volunteer helpers. A group of committed volunteers receive training in the best methods to teach reading and they come into school very regularly to read with individual pupils. Homework is an effective support for learning in class because teachers use imaginative strategies to keep parents' goodwill and pupils' interest. Despite these good efforts, in the younger classes teachers are sometimes much stretched in group work, without a classroom assistant, to provide the support needed for the wide range of attainment.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6; it is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. It is good in the Foundation Stage. There are very good opportunities for enrichment that extend beyond the school day. The accommodation was intended for secondary education and presents significant difficulties with regard to upkeep. Overall it is unsatisfactory and in particular it limits children's personal and physical development in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Recent changes to the curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6 have made it more interesting as well as contributing to their positive attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and helps children to achieve well.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
- The out-dated and unsuitable accommodation has a negative effect on teachers' plans.
- There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and visitors that enriches the curriculum.

Commentary

16. The curriculum has been redesigned over the last year to make it more relevant to pupils' needs and interests. A thematic approach has been introduced to develop better links between subjects, so that pupils are able to use skills learned in one subject to support their learning in others. The indications are that this is proving successful, with pupils having some good quality opportunities to practise their literacy and numerical skills across a range of subjects. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their activities, saying how much more interesting they are now than before. However, planning is not always at the level of understanding for all pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2 in English. Teachers do not adapt the National Literacy Strategy sufficiently to meet the needs of pupils. In science, the school has not identified fully how to stretch the higher attaining pupils as they move up the school. Also the teaching of spelling in Years 3 and 4 suffers because of the lack of an effective whole-school approach, but the school has good plans to rectify this. The provision for ICT has been greatly improved since the previous inspection. In the Foundation Stage there is strong emphasis on giving children well-structured and enjoyable practical experiences to develop their learning.
17. There is a strong commitment to developing the pupils' creative talents as well as their academic ones and they are able to take part in a variety of rich and exciting experiences in art and design, drama and music. There has been good use made of visitors, such as theatre groups, artists and musicians, who have worked with the pupils to develop a variety of skills. The school gives all pupils opportunity to take part in an extensive range of visits, including a residential stay, that enriches the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences. Pupils can take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as expressive arts, chess, science and sports clubs. These experiences support pupils' personal development well, as they give them chance to learn how to socialise with each other in situations away from the classroom. Good use is made of national and local initiatives to supplement and strengthen curricular provision. For example, the school has worked hard to gain the Activemark Award for physical education and, in so doing, has improved the provision for physical education.
18. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good overall. The teachers who co-ordinate this aspect are very committed to their role and ensure effective administration and liaison with parents and outside agencies. They have put in place a good number of innovative strategies to meet the needs of these pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language take full part in all lessons and other activities. However, in Years 1 and 2, provision is satisfactory rather than good because the lack of classroom assistants in these years means that the school is unable to provide times when pupils learn in small groups so as to benefit from adult intervention. In particular, in the current year the school has not provided the national programme to help pupils in Year 1 catch up on their learning of letter sounds and names.
19. There is very good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. The school provides many opportunities to help them in learning to respect the values and beliefs of other pupils and adults, in addition to developing their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils in Year 6

are prepared well for when they join their new school as there is good liaison between the high school and Year 6 teachers to ensure continuity of learning.

20. The building is not suited to the age range of pupils. It presents particular difficulties for children in the Reception classes whose physical and personal development is hindered because they cannot leave the classroom without an adult. In other age ranges there are a number of limiting factors, including poor ventilation with windows that do not open and rooms where pupils cannot see out of windows. Exits and entrances into the main building and central hall are few so that a significant amount of time is lost, at assembly time and lunchtime, as pupils enter or leave in single file. The temporary portable classrooms are past the date for which they should still be in use. The drain that the building causes to the school's finances has an adverse effect on the school's provision for resources for learning. There are insufficient numbers of classroom assistants for a school of this size and, as explained above, this has a negative effect on pupils' learning, especially in Years 1 to 3. The good organisation of the volunteer readers' scheme ensures that this makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' reading skills.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good and much is done to limit the effect of the unsuitable building. The school provides pupils with very good personal support and satisfactory academic help and guidance. The way the school seeks and acts upon pupils' views is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a welcoming place where all pupils are cared for very well and helped to mature.
- Teachers and other staff provide very good personal support for pupils but the use of assessment to guide pupils' learning varies throughout the school.
- The arrangements to help children settle into the Nursery are very good.
- Pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon. They contribute very well to the development of the school.
- Although the school takes care to check health and safety aspects with regard to the building, the children in the Reception classes cannot go to the toilet unaccompanied and many of the windows in classrooms do not open sufficiently to allow fresh air to circulate.

Commentary

21. Pupils are safe and secure at school and the very good attention paid to their care, welfare and safety allows them to concentrate on learning. Health and safety matters are dealt with very thoroughly. Records are kept of risk assessments of all aspects of the school and problems highlighted are dealt with promptly. Management systems for ensuring this large school runs smoothly are very efficient and ensure a safe learning environment. Despite these good efforts, there are still aspects of the building that make care for pupils problematic. For example, in the Reception classes, children have to be accompanied by an adult to the toilet which then means the adult cannot teach other children during that time. Also, the sum needed to replace the many windows in the school is prohibitive and so many do not open, resulting in stuffy rooms, particularly in the warm weather.
22. At all times, children are well supervised and they are trusted by staff. Relationships throughout the school are very good so pupils feel secure and know there is always someone to whom they can turn for help. Child protection procedures are very good and well established. All staff are now aware of the appropriate procedures, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The school caters extremely well for pupils with complex medical needs and works very closely with other agencies, such as social and educational welfare services, to ensure

that pupils get specific additional help as and when they need it. This helps all pupils to take a full and active part in school life.

23. The school is always ready to listen to pupils and to offer very good personal support as their needs arise. Older pupils act as 'buddies' to help sort out any minor squabbles that sometimes occur in the playground or look after those who find playtimes difficult. The learning mentor provides very good support in her role helping specific children with personal and social problems that may be hindering their education, and as a result the children achieve well. Information about pupils' academic achievements is used satisfactorily to guide future learning. Although better developed in some subjects, such as English and mathematics, systems such as marking and providing clear guidance on the next steps of learning vary throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are usually supported very well in class so they take a full and active part in lessons and achieve as well as other pupils. However, in Years 1 and 2 lower attaining pupils do not have the benefit of the national programme to help them catch up on learning they have missed. .
24. There are good arrangements to help the children settle quickly and happily into the routines of the Nursery. The staff establish early links with parents through a series of well-planned visits to school and gather information about the children in order to maximise support and guidance. Parents agree that the arrangements are good and that children settle easily into school.
25. Pupils know that their views matter and the school will try to act upon what they say. The school council helps pupils to learn about democratic decision taking and makes a real contribution to life in school. For example, the work of the council was instrumental in implementing the 'Friendship Stops' and football rotas in the playground which have helped to improve the quality of playtimes. A governor attends school council meetings which helps pupils to appreciate that their views are important and taken seriously.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is very good and contributes well to the pupils' learning. Links with the community and other schools are very good and enrich the range of learning opportunities for pupils and contribute very well to their personal development. Educational and support programmes for parents are good and effective

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good relationships with parents. The resulting trust between school and home makes a good contribution to children's learning.
- Very good communication keeps parents very well informed about the school and their children's progress.
- Family learning courses help parents to develop their own skills and gain an understanding of how to help their children at home.
- Very good links with other schools and the local community enhance curricular opportunities for pupils.

Commentary

26. Since the last inspection the school has maintained its strong partnership with parents. Parents have a high regard for the school and are keen for their children to do well. They especially like the welcoming atmosphere in school and find teachers and support staff are always available to discuss any concerns and help them to understand the work their children are doing. At the start of the day the headteacher greets parents and pupils warmly and is clearly very well known to them. A small number of parents and volunteers are involved in the 'Successful Reading Partnership' which provides extra adult support for pupils to help them

develop their reading skills and this contributes well to their achievement. Parents are extremely supportive of fund-raising activities and other events or performances involving their children. The school regularly seeks parents' views and acts upon their suggestions in order to improve its provision.

27. The school communicates very well with parents through an impressive range of very good quality information about the school, the curriculum and children's progress. Parents agree that they receive lots of useful communication and feel very well informed about what is going on in school. Pupils' progress, targets and achievements are regularly reported to parents through parents' meetings, written reports, annual reports and reviews for pupils with special educational needs. Regular curriculum and topic information provided through newsletters and meetings helps parents assist their child's learning at home. Annual reports provide very good detail about pupils' achievements and progress and include useful targets for the next steps of learning. Parents of children with special educational needs are seen as equal partners in their children's education and receive good information about their progress through the regular review meetings.
28. The school organises a good range of courses for parents that help them to develop their own skills and this boosts their confidence. The courses are popular and very well attended and encourage positive attitudes towards school which results in a readiness to become involved in school life. Many parents go on to further education and some train to become teaching assistants. The family learning courses are successful in giving parents the opportunity to gain a better understanding of what their children are learning and as a result they are able to help them at home.
29. The school uses local resources very well to widen children's learning. There is a wide programme of visitors to the school and children visit many interesting local places to enrich their curriculum. Local businesses contribute well to pupils' learning by providing resources. For example, a local store provided compost and seeds to help with the topic on plants.
30. As part of the Education Action Zone the school has networked with other schools addressing the same issues of raising achievement. The very good links with these schools make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. There are regular opportunities for sharing of curricular issues and staff expertise which help to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Teachers liaise very well with secondary schools to ensure the hand-over of pupils and information is efficient.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is good. Management is satisfactory overall, with some new very good systems yet to have full effect on raising standards and achievement. The governance of the school is good and the governing body meets its legal requirements in full.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong leadership of the headteacher has created effective staff teams and a sense of common purpose and direction that is firmly focused on raising standards.
- The deputy headteacher makes a significant contribution to the leadership of the school and has been influential in her role in developing new management systems and improvements in ICT.
- Systems for checking teaching and learning and pupils' achievements have not yet remedied inconsistencies in the quality of teaching throughout the school.

- Governors have a good understanding of the main strengths and areas for development, and play a significant part in shaping the direction of the school.
- Finances are managed extremely well within the financial constraints of budget cuts and falling rolls; governors are prepared to make difficult decisions in spending when the need arises.

Commentary

31. The headteacher provides strong leadership. He has been successful in creating a warm, very caring school but also maintains a very clear focus upon raising standards and how he is going to achieve this. During the last year, the headteacher, with the support of the deputy headteacher and senior managers, has reviewed the leadership system and created a number of effective staff teams around him, all with clear lines of responsibility. He knows what he wants of them and uses information from different sources to help him achieve this. Using advice from various consultants, he has created a leadership structure to meet the needs of this very large primary school. The effect of the strong team leaders in Years 5 and 6 can already be seen in the very good quality of teaching and learning in these year groups. The headteacher and key staff set very good role models for other members of staff and pupils through their teaching and the leadership of their subjects or aspects.
32. The day-to-day management of staff and pupils and making sure the school runs smoothly is very good and efficient. There is good communication with all staff. This is quite an achievement in such a large school. As a result, the school is a calm and pleasant place in which to learn and work.
33. School self-evaluation has been effective in a number of areas, in particular mathematics and ICT. Pupils' achievement in both subjects has improved because weaknesses were identified and well-judged action taken to remedy them. The school has analysed data from tests and used the information thus gained to identify areas for development for some time, but over the past year a very much improved system has been introduced. This allows data to be analysed in great detail and has contributed to an increased staff awareness of the need to be accountable for the methods they use and any proposed changes. However, as yet it has not been used to fully identify the achievement of different groups of pupils in order to best meet their needs, for instance summer born pupils or those who have not had the advantage of Nursery education. Staff are aware of the need to use assessment to verify the effectiveness of their work. For instance, new methods of teaching spelling are being tried out in two year groups, and if proved successful by assessment data, will be introduced to the whole school. This is good practice as it ensures that only effective changes are made. Year-group leaders are taking the lead in being responsible for improvements in teaching and learning within their teams, but not all planned improvements are checked by a thorough analysis of pupils' work.
34. Many subject and aspect leaders have very good knowledge and expertise in their subject and their teaching inspires others. In some subjects however, they have not had enough involvement in monitoring the teaching and learning. The two special needs co-ordinators are very well informed and they monitor the quality of individual education plans very well. Their liaison with parents and outside agencies is exceptionally good, especially in view of the large numbers they deal with. However, their time for monitoring provision is limited and, as a result, they are not in a position to provide advice and guidance to staff as much as they could. Monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior managers has identified areas for improvement but in some cases identified weaknesses have not been checked on with sufficient regularity to ensure that improvement has resulted. For example, improvements in marking and helping pupils understand how to improve has been highlighted with staff but subsequent monitoring has not tracked down the need for all staff to be effective in this aspect of their work. In consequence, some marking is not effective. Similarly, monitoring of whole-school planning has not identified that higher attaining pupils are not stretched enough in science. Expertise is shared well in year-group teams but not sufficiently across from one

team to another. An example of this is that the good practice in teaching letter sounds and early writing skills in the Foundation Stage is not sufficiently influencing work in Years 1 and 2. The school is committed to helping staff develop professionally and has attained the Investors in People award. Teachers have full access to training opportunities that build upon outcomes from monitoring and performance management. This has been effective in developing teachers' individual skills and expertise.

35. The governing body is well led by the chairman of governors who has a wide range of expertise in educational matters. The governors give the headteacher their full support in his commitment to including all pupils in the school's provision. The skills of governors are used effectively to support the work of their committees. Governors have a good range of strategies for checking on the work of the school; for example, visits to school, including observing lessons and talking to children, help them gain a good understanding of the main strengths and areas for development. In consequence, they have access to a lot of useful information to help them make decisions about the school's future direction. As well as being supportive, governors are willing to challenge the proposals of the senior managers through open and honest debate. Through their commitment and involvement they have a good input into the development of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,619,993	Balance from previous year	105949
Total expenditure	1,662,316	Balance carried forward to the next	63626
Expenditure per pupil	2,085.72		

36. Financial planning is very good. The school budget is very well monitored to support the school's priorities for improvement and is monitored regularly, with the assistance of the bursar, to ensure that spending levels are within the agreed targets. Governors make good use of financial projections provided by the local education authority to plan ahead but owing to falling rolls and unexpected budget cuts much of the surplus carried forward was needed to balance the new budget. As a result of these cuts the governors had to make some difficult decisions about reducing the level of support staff. The number of teaching assistants now employed is much lower than in most schools of this type. Those available are skilled and work hard alongside the teachers to promote the progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs. However, there are times when there is insufficient adult help, especially for younger children in Years 1 and 2 and this inhibits their learning and progress. There are barriers to further improvement caused by the constant drain on the school's finances caused by the upkeep and maintenance of the old building. It affects pupils' achievement even though governors use funds very creatively to match external funding in order to improve the condition and facilities of the building to create a good learning environment to the benefit of all pupils. Through prudent management of finances and bidding for extra funds, the governing body has been able to make a start in increasing the number of teaching assistants from the beginning of the next academic year. The principles of best value are used well, ensuring all available resources are used effectively. Managing and maintaining the building take up a lot of the school's time which could be more usefully directed to teaching and learning.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children get off to a fine start with their education as a result of the very good provision that is made for them in the Foundation Stage. Although most children start in the Nursery with attainments that are lower than average they make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning except outdoor physical play, where they achieve satisfactorily. This is because of the very good teaching and the rich curriculum that is well suited to their needs. A good proportion of the children are likely to reach the expected goals for their age by the end of their time in the Reception year in all the areas of learning. Lower attaining children and those with special educational needs achieve well but are unlikely to meet their goals in communication, language and literacy.

There is very good co-ordination of the Foundation Stage by the subject leader, and this results in an efficiently organised and managed, vibrant learning environment where children learn well. The very effective teamwork and reflective approach of the enthusiastic staff ensure that teaching is very well planned to meet the needs of all children. Teachers have a very good understanding of how young children learn and how to make learning enjoyable. Classroom assistants and adults are well briefed and they too contribute positively to the quality of the provision. There is very good provision for the children with special educational needs. They are identified quickly and steps are taken to support their individual difficulties.

The school has very good arrangements for inducting new starters so that children and their parents are very well prepared for the first days in school. The calm and well-ordered atmosphere in the Nursery helps to make children confident and secure. The teacher's patient and gentle guidance teaches them the expectations of behaviour and settles them into routines so they are ready to learn. In the Reception classes the curriculum is well structured to build on what has been learned in the Nursery, so that children make the best possible progress in all the areas of learning.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour.
- Clear routines give children confidence and security.
- Children are encouraged to be independent, though the constraints of the building limit the extent to which this can be achieved.

Commentary

37. The good provision for personal, social and emotional development helps to set the tone for learning in other areas. From their earliest days in the Nursery, children are sensitively encouraged to conform to the expectations of the classroom. Although many of them start school finding it difficult to sit and listen attentively they gradually learn to do so over time. Staff set a very good example by modelling courtesy and clear speech for the children to follow and setting clear parameters for behaviour. In consequence, behaviour is generally very good indeed. Teachers are good at seizing opportunities to reinforce what is acceptable, as when an incident of unacceptable behaviour during the lunch break was highlighted as a topic for discussion in the afternoon session in one Reception class.
38. In all classes, there are well-established routines and systems which children follow sensibly. There is a clear emphasis on promoting independence so that children play together co-operatively and share resources. As a result, children tidy away their activities and put on their

shoes and socks after physical activities in the hall with little help from adults. They are familiar with the routines of snack time and most sit patiently as they await their drink and return their empty milk boxes to the correct place. In group activities children are happy to share and most talk freely with adults and other children. The very good teaching develops confidence by recognising and celebrating individual achievements and praising good behaviour and effort. Children are encouraged to value the efforts of others. The development of independence is hindered by the limitations of the building, however, because children are unable to go to the toilets alone as they are too far away. Nor can they be sent on messages in the labyrinthine building with some doors that are heavy to push open.

COMMUNICATION LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment is used very well.
- Teaching is very good and promotes basic skills
- Adults take every opportunity to develop language by initiating conversation and joining in with play.
- The accommodation is used very well to provide a range of areas for role-play but book-areas in the Reception classes are not promoted well enough.

Commentary

39. Children achieve well because the teaching is very good. Basic skills of reading and writing are taught very well. Most children get off to a good start with their reading and progress steadily from making marks in the Nursery to writing simple sentences independently by the end of the Reception year. Letters are formed with increasing accuracy and children are beginning to use their knowledge of letter sounds to build up simple words. Teachers prepare stimulating tasks that encourage children to write for a range of purposes and about different subjects, such as recording their observations of mini-beasts.
40. Teachers have very good systems for assessing the progress of the children. All adults in the Nursery and Reception classes regularly observe the children and check what they can do so they know what children need to work on next. The school keeps careful records of what children have learned so the teachers have a very good knowledge of the achievements and needs of all the children and tasks are well matched to the levels of development of the children.
41. Language development is a key part of every day. All staff are mindful to encourage conversation at every opportunity. There are frequent class discussions and question-and-answer sessions, though there is some scope to provide more opportunities for children to articulate their thoughts and ideas in fuller and extended responses. The well-planned provision for role-play links nicely with the topics being studied and provides many opportunities for collaborative and imaginative play and the development of speaking and listening.
42. The accommodation is generally used very well to promote learning with vibrant and colourful displays that remind children of what they have learned and provide prompts to help them with their writing. However, in the Reception classes the book-areas are not given a high enough priority to emphasise the importance of reading and to tempt children to read for pleasure.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Tasks are appealing and well matched to the needs of the children.
- Resources are of good quality and used very well to promote learning.
- Additional adults are deployed well.

Commentary

43. Children make good progress in their mathematical development because the teaching is very well planned and organised. Teachers plan interesting and challenging activities that make children think hard and hold their interest well. Tasks are invariably relevant to work in other areas of learning. In the Reception classes, for example, children made good gains in understanding the sequence of numbers by making a number line with segments of a caterpillar's body. Children in the Reception class use their 'garden centre' to practise buying and selling seeds and plants, while in the Nursery, children explore the concept of weight as they compare heavy and light parcels in their post office.
44. Teachers make good use of a wide range of colourful and attractive resources for learning. Some of the most appropriate resources are those made by staff themselves to suit a particular purpose. For example, in the Reception classes children played a simple game in which they learned to order numbers up to 20 by using little cards with numbers on them chosen at random to place on a chart in the correct order. Under the teacher's guidance the children were not only successful in recognising the numbers and ordering them correctly, they also practised simple addition and subtraction.
45. Children make particularly good gains in learning when there are plenty of additional adults and volunteers to help them with their tasks. When groups are working with adults the children benefit from guidance, support and encouragement and the constant repetition of correct mathematical terms so that they become confident to use the terms themselves and their understanding is reinforced.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to use correct technical terms.
- Children benefit from a wide range of worthwhile first-hand experiences.
- There are good links between all areas of learning.

Commentary

46. Teaching is very good and children acquire a good body of knowledge over time about the topics they study. For example, children in Reception recognise a range of different insects, can differentiate between moths and butterflies and know that spiders are members of the arachnid family. There is a good emphasis on encouraging children to use the correct terms, such as 'chrysalis' and even 'metamorphosis'! Occasionally, there are good opportunities for children to experience awe and wonder, as in a Reception class when "something magical happened" to their caterpillars as they turned into chrysalises.
47. Activities are very well planned to link all areas of learning so that the curriculum is cohesive and builds on the children's own experiences. The curriculum is very effective in laying down

foundations for learning in history and geography in later years as well as teaching children about feasts and festivals celebrated by different cultures, such as Chinese New Year.

48. In all classes there is a good emphasis on first-hand experience. Good use is made of the local area to promote learning and stimulate curiosity. For example, children in the Nursery begin to learn the importance of people who help us through their work on the post office. Topics such as this are effective vehicles for discussion, painting and writing and also sow the beginnings of understanding citizenship. Following their recent visit to the local sorting office they built on the experience in the classroom by 'writing' letters, weighing parcels and observing the different buildings they passed on the route. In the Reception classes children broadened their knowledge of insects on a mini-beast hunt in the school grounds when they searched for different types of insects and small creatures and observed their differing habitats. Activities are well planned to link all areas of learning so that the curriculum is cohesive and builds on the children's own very limited experiences of the world around them prior to starting school.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are plenty of opportunities for children to manipulate small apparatus.
- Teaching is good in dance lessons.
- Outdoor physical play is satisfactory but activities sometimes lack a clear focus and are restricted by the limitations of the accommodation.

Commentary

49. Children are given a good range of opportunities to develop their muscles, balance and manipulative skills. Teaching is good overall and children learn well because they participate in well-planned activities both indoors and outdoors. In the classrooms there are numerous opportunities for children to handle tools and materials and to develop their skills of manipulation, for example as they use scissors, jigsaws and brushes, and roll and mould dough.
50. Good attention is given to planning regular outdoor physical play, which is satisfactory overall. The outdoor area for Nursery children is small however, and this restricts the use of wheeled toys. The outside play area used by Reception classes is purposefully used but the activities on offer sometimes lack a clear focus and so children do not make the best possible gains in learning. Children cannot have continual access to outdoor play because it is situated too far away from the classrooms.
51. Children use the hall for dance lessons and make good progress in controlling their bodies and negotiating space sensibly. Reception children developed their balance and control well as they re-enacted the story of the Very Hungry Caterpillar. The teaching was good because instructions were clear, expectations of behaviour very high and there were clear explanations of what children were expected to do. Good use was made of children's ideas to demonstrate good shapes to the rest of the class and the teacher drew attention to ways in which children could refine their movements.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned activities capture children's interest.
- Children use a good range of materials and techniques.

Commentary

52. Good teaching ensures that children have a wide range of opportunities to express themselves creatively through a range of materials and media, movement, stories and imaginative play. They develop skills well because they have regular access to activities such as painting, printing and picture making using fabrics, papers and artist's materials. The children are often well supervised by adults as they work so they are guided in the correct way to handle materials and encouraged to experiment.
53. The best learning takes place in activities that have a distinct creative element rather than those in which children are merely required to stick shapes inside outlines provided by the teachers. Nursery children are becoming confident in controlling brushes and paint and develop their skills of observation as they re-create pictures of sunflowers, paying close attention to observing the shapes and colours of the petals and leaves. In the Reception classes skills become a little more sophisticated and are used well to illustrate topic work. For example, children made realistic representations of lighthouses using printing techniques to illustrate the story of the Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch. Finished products are of good quality and children's efforts are valued in the attractive displays. Conversations with adults in these activities are a strength of teaching, expanding ideas and vocabulary. No musical activities were observed, though planning indicates that appropriate provision is made.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards for pupils in Year 2 in reading and writing are below the national average.
- Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are good and pupils make good progress in these classes.
- In Years 1 and 2 lower attaining pupils do not make enough progress in using their letter sounds to help them read and spell.
- The National Literacy Strategy is generally used well, but not always adapted sufficiently to match the needs of lower attaining pupils.
- In Years 3 and 4, the school's approach to the teaching of spelling is not effective.
- The recently appointed co-ordinator provides a very good role model for other teachers.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and by the end of Year 6 most are keen readers and writers.
- The change to a thematic approach to the curriculum provides pupils with useful opportunities to practise their language and literacy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

54. In Year 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they reach average standards in reading and writing by the end of the year. Though standards are below average in Year 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, as a significant number of them started with standards below average in Year 1. However, those with lower attainment do not make enough progress in learning letter sounds. Standards in speaking and listening are average through the school. Since the previous inspection, there have been changes in the nature of the locality and children's attainment on entry, and when this is taken into consideration, improvement is satisfactory even though average standards by the end of Year 2 have not been maintained. The school has fewer learning support assistants than other primary schools. The lack of classroom assistants in Years 1 and 2, to help support with reading and writing activities, limits achievement in these year groups. For instance, there are no trained classroom assistants to teach the national programme to small groups of pupils who have not acquired enough knowledge of letter sounds in Year 1. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment, but they also are affected by the lack of opportunity to be taught in a small group. Currently, ICT programs to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs are limited but the school's action plan identifies this for development.
55. Teachers make good efforts to provide opportunities for speaking and listening, such as paired discussion time and when reporting back to the rest of the class at the conclusion of lessons. Good use is made of pupils' interest in the world around them; for instance, in Year 1 they talked about visits to the seaside, and in Year 2 interest in their science work was developed well to help pupils understand the features of text and books providing information. Pupils are taught the importance of listening to and appreciating the views of others. There are occasions, however, when the introduction to lessons are lengthy and dominated by the teacher talking for much of the time. In consequence, pupils' attention wanders and they do not participate in answering questions.
56. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy reading; they talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors. There are many opportunities for them to read on their own or as part of a

group. The use of the volunteer reading scheme and the way pupils are encouraged to read at home play a positive part in developing reading skills. However, there are times in Years 1 and 2 when pupils are given reading books that are not appropriate for their ability and, consequently, these skills are inhibited. Pupils in Year 1 in the mobile classrooms do not have ready access to the reading books they take home, having to go into the main building twice a week to change their home reader. This limits their opportunity to select a book, or browse through a favourite, when they wish to do so. In most classes, there are attractive reading areas that develop pupils' enjoyment of and interest in reading. In just one or two classes this could be improved. The school makes good use of volunteer helpers to read with pupils in Years 1 to 3 and those who continue to fall behind with their reading.

57. In order to improve writing, particularly in better gaining the interest of boys, the curriculum has been redesigned to incorporate a thematic approach so that pupils can practise their writing skills across a variety of subjects. The early indications are that this is proving successful, with pupils having opportunities to write in a wide range of genres across the curriculum, especially in Year 6. There are weaknesses in the teaching of spelling in Years 3 to 4, which have been identified by the school, but not yet resolved. In Years 5 and 6, new methods and organisation of teaching spelling are having a very good effect on pupils' achievement in spelling. Teachers in Years 1 to 5 generally plan from the National Literacy Strategy very tightly and do not always adapt planning to suit the needs of the lower attaining pupils and so their learning slows. While this is most noticeable in Years 1 and 2, there are also times when it occurs in Years 3 to 5. While opportunities for writing in other subjects are plentiful, the school has not fully integrated these opportunities into the literacy strategy planning in all year groups.
58. Teaching and learning are good in Years 5 and 6. In the school overall, because of inconsistencies, it is satisfactory. In Years 1 to 4, year-group leaders are good role models. They use good methods, for example, modelling how to write a sentence, and using ICT to help pupils understand the format of an instructional text. However, the quality of teaching is not consistent. In one unsatisfactory lesson in Year 2, pupils were not managed well and work was not set at a level to match their learning needs and, in consequence, pupils did not make satisfactory gains in their learning. In the best lessons, activities are well matched to the pupils' different abilities so that all are suitably challenged and achieve as well as they can. This was exemplified in a very good lesson for pupils in Year 6, in which imaginative tasks involving role-play and discussion enabled them to gain a thorough understanding of the style of writing of John Lennon. In this lesson, as in most others, pupils showed positive attitudes to their learning. While marking in some classes is good, in others it lacks clarity. In consequence, pupils in some classes are better advised as to where their weaknesses lie, which helps them take some responsibility for improving their own work. Pupils know and work towards their targets well in some classes; in others they are unsure of what they need to do to reach their target, or are not given sufficient opportunity to practise the relevant skill.
59. The recently appointed co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management, with her high quality teaching being a very good role model for colleagues. However, there have not been enough opportunities to monitor teaching and learning which means some inconsistencies in provision have not been identified. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. However, there is not a rigorous enough approach to using assessment at the end of lessons to judge whether pupils have understood the learning planned for that session. Because of this, the effect of planning using the National Literacy Strategy without adapting it to suit the needs of all pupils has not been identified by the co-ordinator as a factor limiting the achievement of pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Through the new curriculum planning, some teachers are providing good opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their language and literacy skills in other subjects. However, this is not yet developed in all classes, and overall is satisfactory. Pupils use their speaking and listening skills to extend their vocabulary and to gain an appropriate knowledge and use of subject terminology, such as in science and design and technology. They are encouraged to write in a variety of formats in order to communicate their ideas and findings. For instance, in science they write detailed reports about their investigations, along with producing accurately labelled scientific drawings. They use their ICT skills confidently in word-processing activities and present their work well in different fonts, styles and colours, sometimes combining text and graphics.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have improved on those for 2003.
- The organisation of classes in Years 3 to 6 into groups of pupils of similar attainment is helping teachers meet the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment.
- Shape and space are taught particularly well.
- Opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking are inconsistent from class to class.
- The subject leader has a good understanding of what needs to be done to drive up standards.

Commentary

61. Standards at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 were below average in 2003. Current standards are average in both year groups. This year more pupils in Year 2 gained the higher level in the national tests which reflected improvements in teaching. Pupils in all classes benefited from the school's focus on improving problem solving. When the pupils currently in Year 2 started in Year 1 their understanding of mathematical ideas was below expectations for their age. Their achievement was good in Years 1 and 2, enabling them to catch up to the expected level. Through Years 3 to 6 their achievement is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching which results in good progress, but in some classes in Years 3 and 4, the teaching is less than good which has a dampening effect on overall results. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior learning. On occasions, ICT is used well to move their learning on by the use of specialised programs, but this could be developed further.
62. Since the last inspection, standards have remained broadly similar, but there has been good improvement overall, because pupils are starting at a lower level of understanding than at the time of that inspection. There has been good improvement in the weaknesses which were mentioned at that time: teachers' knowledge of the subject in Years 1 and 2, and problem solving.
63. Teaching is good overall. In Years 1 and 2, it is consistently good. In Years 3 to 6, it ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good because teachers often make mathematics fun. The work planned for classes is broadly based. There is a good focus on number work, and the teaching of shape and space is particularly effective. In one very good lesson, the teacher had planned imaginative activities to teach about shape and angles based on gift bags. Pupils co-operated well to measure and count carefully, learning the correct mathematical words. They also had the opportunity to explain their strategies and methods to the rest of the class, and so learn from each other. This powerful technique is not used so well in all lessons. On occasions, teachers do not check that new ideas have been fully understood and, in consequence, some pupils lose track and do not learn as well. When

pupils explain their thinking, common misconceptions surface, and are dealt with more effectively.

64. Analysis of pupils' exercise books showed that throughout the school there is a good quantity of work being done. Teachers' marking is good, correcting and explaining errors and appreciating where effort had been applied. Pupils' work, together with displays around the school, showed that there is now a better focus on using mathematical skills to solve problems. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are in sets for their mathematics work, grouped according to their ability. As a result, work is planned at the right level of challenge. Higher attaining pupils are given the challenge they need while those pupils with special educational needs learn well in relation to their prior attainment; their sets have fewer pupils, and the good teaching seen in these classes enables them to achieve well.
65. The co-ordinator is experienced and leads and manages the subject well. As a result of initiatives and staff development, teachers are planning more work on solving problems. The improvement in pupils' ability to solve problems is just beginning to raise standards, though more development is needed. There is a new initiative in assessing pupils' progress. Half-termly tests are analysed, giving valuable information about individual pupils' performance and common areas of weakness in understanding. This information is then used to adjust planning. At the moment, this is too recent to have had an impact on pupils' progress. There is also a programme of monitoring of lessons by the co-ordinator and senior managers. However, judgements about lessons do not indicate sufficiently robust development points. The action plan for mathematics is good, and includes developing the assessment scheme and improving opportunities for mathematics to be used in other areas of the curriculum. Resources are good, and managed well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. There is satisfactory use of mathematics across the curriculum. Mathematics skills are used productively in science, design and technology, history and geography. In one lesson in science, Venn diagrams were used to sort objects. Results are tabulated, and made into graphs and charts. Displayed work features computer-produced graphs, as when a spreadsheet is used in the computer suite to enter data about types of food eaten at a Tudor banquet. Pupils made pie charts from this data, to go with their topic work. However, comprehensive planning for use in other subjects is still at a relatively early stage of development. It is not yet fully contributing to challenging those of higher attainment while giving opportunities for practising skills to those of lower attainment or with special educational needs.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average because pupils of higher attainment are not given enough challenge and their achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching of experimental and investigative science has improved considerably and this is having a good impact on pupils' learning.
- Good use is made of resources, including the school's grounds, to develop pupils' understanding.
- The subject leader has focused attention well on improving the teaching of investigative science but has not taken steps to ensure that there is the same level and content of work within each year group.
- Pupils' interest in the subject is promoted well because of good links with other subjects.

Commentary

67. Evidence from inspection findings shows that standards attained by Year 2 pupils are below average. This is also backed by the early indications from the 2004 teacher assessments for science. However, improving standards are seen in investigative science. This area of pupils' work is satisfactory. Standards pupils attain in Year 6 are also below average. Although pupils of average and lower attainment have satisfactory achievement pupils with higher attainment are not achieving well enough. This is because teachers do not challenge their thinking sufficiently in experimental and investigative sessions. Pupils with special educational needs achieve to a satisfactory level in relation to their capabilities. An overall analysis of the school's performance in science in national tests at the end of Year 6, over the period from 2001 to 2003, indicates that standards attained are broadly in line with the national trend. Nevertheless, improvement since the previous inspection has not been satisfactory because at that time there was a similar identification of the need to provide greater challenge for the pupils of higher attainment.
68. Pupils show an interest and enthusiasm in lessons that focus on scientific investigations. The majority of these lessons are effectively planned and organised by the teachers. As a result, pupils make good progress and begin to develop the necessary skills in investigative science and achieve to a satisfactory level. In this work good use is made of the school's grounds, particularly Simon's Garden, a conservation and wild life area kept in memory of a past pupil at the school. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils build up good records of their findings following visits to the garden in search of plants and small creatures.
69. An analysis of pupils' work shows that they are not as secure in their knowledge and understanding of other areas of science, for example materials and their properties. Teachers in Year 5 also make good use of the school's grounds in planning for both pupils' new knowledge and understanding about life processes and living things, as well as helping to develop pupils' scientific enquiry skills further. In one lesson, pupils made good use of light and temperature sensors in determining the habitat in which plants and insects live and survive. Although they were keenly interested in their work, they have not yet learnt the importance of returning habitats to their former condition after investigations, logs and stones being left upturned after their work was finished.
70. From lesson observations, analyses of pupils' previously completed work and discussions with pupils, teaching of science is judged to be satisfactory with some very good and good elements but balanced by less challenging and inconsistent teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The strengths in teaching are planning, for investigative science, involvement of pupils in their work, and the good use made of resources. Areas for development include higher expectation and more challenge for potentially higher attaining pupils, giving more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills in reporting back on their knowledge, understanding and skills at the end of lessons, and ensuring that similar work is taught within each year group.
71. The subject co-ordinator is acting in a temporary capacity in the absence of the science co-ordinator who is seconded to the local education authority for two years. The present leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator has the benefit of advice and guidance from the previous incumbent and this has resulted in the good focus on teaching through investigative methods. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the temporary co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school to identify and build on effective teaching. There are some good features to the curriculum. For instance, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop literacy, numeracy and a range of ICT skills in their science lessons. Interest is promoted through science weeks, and visiting scientists open pupils' minds to how scientists work and use their skills. However, monitoring whole-school planning has not identified weaknesses in subject content, such as lack of effective work in materials and their properties, and the level of work needed to

challenge those of higher attainment. A new system for assessing pupils' progress and achievement against each area of learning in science is in a preparatory stage. Current assessment procedures, while generally satisfactory, have weaknesses in that pupils' understanding and skill in investigative work are not assessed effectively. This is a contributory factor to teachers not setting work that challenges those of higher attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because of very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, pupils' achievement in Year 6 is good and in some areas of their work pupils attain standards above expectations for their age.
- Subject knowledge of the teaching staff is thoroughly audited and appropriate support and guidance given.
- Checking and interrogating data bases are not covered in as great a depth as other areas.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good
- ICT is being used well in all areas of the curriculum, including the arts, but more use could be made to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- The computer system and associated software are well organised.

Commentary

72. The standard of pupils' work by the end of Year 2 is average. In Years 1 to 4 pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is boosted in Years 5 and 6 by challenging work and by the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards beyond expectations in some areas of their work. The good progress by older pupils is because of the very good teaching available to them. In these classes, teachers exchange year groups in order to maximise the use of teachers with the best subject knowledge so that the pupils gain the benefit of staff with expertise. In one very good lesson in Year 6, new features of a PowerPoint program were demonstrated and pupils immediately set to work on their individual presentations. The teacher questioned pupils very well, and continually focused their work on the eventual reader; as they added relevant animations and sounds. The pupils built on previously acquired skills and their knowledge of other programs, selecting or dismissing effects skilfully and with good attention to the nature of their presentation. Their decisions showed a mature understanding of the intended audience and a good proportion of pupils worked at a level beyond expectations for their age. Pupils have a very good understanding of the uses of different elements of ICT and how they contribute to their work and to the world of work beyond the classroom.
73. Teaching seen on inspection in Years 1 to 4 was generally satisfactory, with some variations in confidence among the teaching staff. However, teachers' plans and the work seen on pupils' files indicate that in some lessons teachers' usual good work was not apparent because of difficulties with equipment failure. Teachers use ICT to demonstrate and explain in a range of subjects. In lessons where the teaching is satisfactory pupils learn new skills, but occasionally the work is too difficult or they become too engrossed with the effects of what they are doing and lose sight of the end product.
74. The school has made significant improvements to the resources for ICT. A second computer suite has been added, and classroom computers are linked to the network. This has the benefit that pupils can work on any machine, for example finishing work begun in the suite back in the classroom. One problem for younger pupils is that they have some difficulty logging on; the user names begin with numerals and letters, and while it is important for pupils to be independent as soon as possible, on occasions too much time is wasted in this process. There is good software, enabling all the required elements to be taught, although programs

supporting pupils with difficulties in particular skills are limited. The school has identified this deficit. Analysis of pupils' work on display and in books shows that, although there is coverage of the higher level skills of checking and interrogating databases, it is not as far on as other areas and in this work Year 6 pupils only reach an average standard. In some of the youngest classes, improvements to equipment are very recent, and there is not enough work on using CDs for adventure games, or as a source of sound, text and pictures. Otherwise there is generally good coverage of the required elements.

75. Leadership and management of the subject by the deputy headteacher and the co-ordinator are good. They have been responsible for oversight of the rapid improvements in resources. They also performed an audit of staff skills in teaching the subject, well focused on their personal computer skills and ability to use the particular software packages needed. From this information, training events are organised. A manageable scheme for assessing pupils' work is in place, and the results are centrally collected. This is beginning to reveal which aspects are taught well and which need development. There has been very good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection when it was identified as in need of improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. Computers are used well to support literacy, often in specially timetabled lessons in the computer suite. Around the school there are many examples of word processing, and pupils soon become adept at changing fonts, and adding pictures and graphics. They also learn to make pictures from the youngest classes on; by the time they are in Year 4 they can design jewellery, or add bright interesting masks to digital photographs of their own faces.
77. There is some very good work on data handling. An investigation into coloured sweets used a spreadsheet to enter data about the weights, numbers and colours of 'Skittles'. From this data pupils made graphs. Several classes used the computers to draw graphs. Computers are generally used well to provide extra interest in lessons, for instance as a resources for information in history and science, but more use could be made in lessons in providing extra challenge for higher attaining pupils or support for those with special educational needs.

HUMANITIES

78. In humanities, work was sampled in religious education with very few lessons seen, and in geography one lesson was seen. It is, therefore, not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. History is reported on in full.
79. In religious education, most pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, which shows satisfactory achievement in their time in school. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in Year 2. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' understanding was limited to factual recall of information with little understanding of the importance and impact of religion on people's lives. This has been remedied and in this respect there has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
80. The curriculum is well planned to deepen the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Pupils have a good understanding of the main events in the life of Jesus and of the main characters in the Bible. An emphasis is given to using the pupils' own experiences as the basis for discussion. This makes a positive contribution to their spiritual development. This was seen in a good lesson, in Year 4, where the pupils made good suggestions as to who would need to buy a Bible and why they might need one. Due emphasis is also placed on learning about the beliefs and traditions of other faiths and cultures. This is shown by the way that pupils in Year 6 talk about Judaism and Islam. Visits out of school, to a synagogue for example, and visitors of different faiths and cultures into school enrich the religious education curriculum. They also provide very good opportunities for the pupils to learn from other faiths and cultures, which is an improvement on the last inspection.

81. It was only possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in three lessons which varied from very good to unsatisfactory. In the very good Year 1 lesson, the teacher made learning about the Old Testament interesting and fun through a variety of activities, including discussion, role-play and art, which enhanced the pupils' learning and ensured they achieved very well. Where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory, in Year 3, the pupils were not sufficiently challenged, the pace of learning was slow and a significant proportion of the pupils were off task. Consequently their progress in learning how God influenced the life of Moses was unsatisfactory.
82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Assessment procedures are informal and the school recognises the need to improve them to give a more consistent view of pupils' progress and attainment.
83. A very caring ethos pervades the life of the school. Pupils have opportunity to pray in assembly and there are very good relationships to be found throughout the school. A remembrance garden provides a focus for pupils' quiet personal reflection. Pupils also have opportunities to visit the local church to take part in a variety of Christian services and celebrations.
84. In geography, standards seen in the pupils' work indicate that their performance is broadly in line for their age at the end of Year 2. They have a satisfactory understanding of a locality beyond their own through a study of an imaginary Scottish island. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of mapping skills, through using co-ordinates, for example. In a good lesson seen in Year 6, pupils effectively developed their understanding of how contour lines on Ordnance Survey maps represent the land height and the steepness of inclines.
85. Day and residential visits enrich the curriculum and enhance learning by developing pupils' ability to describe and contrast the physical and human features of different localities through first-hand experiences. The subject is effectively managed. Assessment procedures are informal and the school recognises the need to improve them to give a more consistent view of pupils' progress and attainment.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- There are good links with other subjects.
- Visits and visitors are used well to extend learning.
- Assessment procedures are very limited and do not contribute to information about pupils' achievement in the subject or other subjects when cross-curricular work is done.

Commentary

86. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a satisfactory understanding of the past and of famous people. They recognise similarities and differences through the years, as was evident in the work of pupils in Year 1 who were able to say how holidays in the past have changed to the present day. Most pupils in Year 6 achieve standards in line with those expected for their age. For instance, they have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in World War II.
87. The overall good teaching and learning seen in the five lessons observed enabled the pupils to achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of historical events. Lessons are made interesting and the subject is brought to life because the teachers place importance on pupils understanding the significance of historical artefacts and the need to study them in order to find out about times gone by. The pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 talk with much enthusiasm about

their studies of the life and times of Tudor England and Ancient Egypt and clearly enjoy their work in history. Although the pupils achieve well, standards are only satisfactory because the development of historical enquiry skills is not consistent across the school; in some cases there is an over-reliance on worksheets and a limited range of ways for pupils to record their work. The school is aware of this and an action plan is in place.

88. There are good links made with other subjects. Pupils in Year 5 make good use of their art skills to further their knowledge of life in Ancient Egypt, for example, by making detailed sketches of Ancient Egyptian artefacts. In Year 6, the pupils make very good use of their literacy skills to develop their historical knowledge and understanding, through studying quotes within journalistic writing, for example.
89. Good use is made of visits and visitors to extend learning in the subject. A good example of this was when a visitor told pupils about her experiences as a World War II evacuee. The pupils had prepared questions in advance of her visit which enhanced the quality of their learning.
90. The co-ordinator leads the subject well, knowing the improvements needed. These include formal assessment procedures to track more consistently the progress that pupils make. Good improvement has been made in using history as a starting point for a thematic approach to planning the curriculum but this has yet to contribute to raising standards, and overall improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

In art and design, music and physical education two or three lessons were seen in each subject and sufficient evidence was gathered from discussion with pupils, analysis of work, teachers' plans, records and portfolios to make judgements on provision. However, in design and technology only one lesson was seen and this subject is not reported on in full.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain standards beyond expectations by Year 6 in their study of pattern and texture because this is taught particularly well.
- The co-ordinator for Years 3 to 6 is inspirational in her work.
- A significant number of pupils attain well above average standards through attending art club.
- Pupils' skills are not always built on year on year, particularly in the exploration of tone and shape.
- Art and design makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

Commentary

91. There is a great enthusiasm for art and design in the school, generated not only by the very keen co-ordinator but by many of the teachers who plan good opportunities for pupils to explore a wide range of media and creative ideas. No teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2, but pupils' displayed work and sketchbooks show that they are given good opportunities to try out tools and techniques including painting, collage, decorative patterns and three-dimensional modelling. Their work indicates a standard at least in line with expectations and in some pieces beyond that expected. Pupils start their sketchbooks in these classes. As the move up the school, they continue to use them. Starting points for art work are varied and often linked to

work in other subjects. They provide a good record of pupils' work and interest in art and design.

92. By Year 6, standards are similar to expectations for eleven year olds, except in their knowledge of pattern and texture where their skills extend beyond expectations. They are taught particularly well in this aspect as could be seen in numerous displays around the school. Particularly eye catching were the mono prints based on Aboriginal art and the pupils' exploration of Muslim pattern. In Year 5, pupils' explorations of the designs of William Morris were imaginative and technically well advanced. They have a very good understanding of the processes of printing and the manner in which it has been used to decorate and embellish. However, some work done in Year 6 is not of the same standard, for instance painted portraits which lacked exploration of flesh tones in the way in which the paint was applied, and some pupils' skills have not advanced on those attained in earlier years.
93. Teaching is generally good. The two lessons seen on inspection were excellent and satisfactory. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, pupils were encouraged to evaluate their work and think of themselves as artists. They selected a variety of paper and string and explored ways in which to layer, twist or cut them to achieve a textured pattern. In this year group, they are accustomed to discussing their art work and can give critical evaluation of their own and others' work. In a lesson in Year 6, the teacher linked learning in art with the development of skills in English. This very interesting lesson provided highs and lows. Pupils learnt a great deal about working on a composition and using starting points, as the work was to form the basis of a future collage. However, in the part of the lesson where drawing skills were called upon, pupils had too short a time to produce a finished picture and the task was too challenging. In the main, observational drawing of still life is the area where pupils make the least progress.
94. Leadership of the subject is very good and management is satisfactory. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and provides good guidance to staff. The art club which is run on two nights, because of high numbers wishing to attend, allows pupils, including those with special talents in art and design, opportunities to refine their skills and try out new media. Most of these pupils attain standards higher than expected for their age. ICT is used well as a medium for exploration. Visits and visitors are used effectively to promote pupils' interest and learning. Displays of pupils' work in the school, in the locality and at festivals enhance pupils' personal development. The co-ordinator checks teachers' plans to ensure that there is proper coverage of the curriculum and that pupils have a good range of experiences. However, assessments are informal and there are inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' work as they move up the school. This is particularly noticeable in areas of drawing and in applying paint. Comments in sketchbooks are rare, either to praise or to help pupils see how they can improve or extend their skills. Teachers do not have a clear enough view of the levels pupils reach or the knowledge and understanding they have acquired in previous years.

Design and technology

95. Two enthusiastic co-ordinators promote the subject well. There is good guidance to help teachers plan assignments using a good range of different materials. Teachers successfully plan links with other subjects and this contributes well to pupils' interest in their work. In a good lesson in Year 4, pupils worked on their designs for a model Tudor house drawing on their knowledge from their history lessons. A highlight of the lesson was a display of antique carpentry tools that very effectively illustrated the difference between modern construction equipment and the basic tools Tudor workmen would have used. In Year 5, a unit of lessons on making footwear was also linked to history; the pupils were designing a slipper for a king of Ancient Greece. They used a good range of books and information from the internet to research colour and pattern. Good attention was paid in both lessons to safe working practices. Both lessons were very well resourced and teachers provided good guidance on techniques. Pupils enjoyed their work and co-operated well in sharing resources. However, in

both lessons the process of evaluation was not taught effectively. In Year 5, pupils evaluated their efforts but without clear criteria to guide them, such as suitability of material or style, their evaluations were too simplistic based on likes or dislikes of colour or decoration. In the Year 4 lesson, the importance of evaluating while work was in process was overlooked.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve a good level of performance by the time they leave the school.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- The curriculum includes a wide range of enriching features.
- Music makes an important contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils.

Commentary

96. Good arrangements throughout the school allow pupils to take part in musical activity. Through regular class lessons pupils develop their skills in singing, performing and composing so that by the age of eleven they reach a standard that exceeds the expectation for their age. They have good knowledge and understanding of musical terms which they use very well when composing their own tunes. An example of this was seen in a very good music lesson in Year 6 when pupils demonstrated their clear understanding of a pentatonic scale and ostinato rhythm as they composed their own tunes based on the lyrics of John Lennon.
97. The subject leader is an experienced and skilled musician and this ensures not only a high level of performance in her own lessons but a good level of support and guidance for less musical colleagues, which enables them to teach the subject more effectively. She is influential in managing the subject, leading by example and helping teachers to plan their lessons. All pupils in Year 6 benefit from being taught by the subject leader and this arrangement works well in maintaining the high standard of performance. There is a clear plan of action for the subject to bring about further improvement, although the school has yet to devise an effective means of assessing the attainment and progress of pupils in the subject.
98. The curriculum is well planned to incorporate all elements of the National Curriculum. National guidance is used judiciously as a framework for planning, but staff are skilled at customising this to meet the needs of the pupils. Teaching in the lessons observed was good. Teachers were confident with the subject and their lessons were well paced and varied, encouraging the full participation of all the pupils. In Year 2, for example, the teacher used a variety of games to remind pupils of musical notation and rhythm before they used percussion instruments to devise their own musical rhythmical phrases. Pupils enjoyed their learning and showed good levels of confidence in playing and in singing. In Year 1, pupils used a good range of musical instruments to demonstrate long and short sounds. Because the teacher made the lesson fun, pupils were well motivated and responsive and made good gains in learning. Teaching by the subject leader is very good, combining infectious enthusiasm and musical expertise. For example, she played a catchy rhythmic drum accompaniment that considerably enhanced the quality of singing and pupils' enjoyment in a lesson in Year 6.
99. Standards and provision were good at the last inspection and this has been maintained despite pupils starting their education at a lower starting point. Improvement overall has been good. The school enriches and broadens the music curriculum with a number of worthwhile additional features that raise the profile of the subject. The choir performs at a number of venues and has an interesting and varied repertoire of songs. The singing is of a good standard, showing good breath control and phrasing that adds colour to the sound. The music

of a range of different composers is used well to enhance the spiritual quality of assemblies and helps to set a reflective tone. Pupils sing hymns enthusiastically and with respect. A group of pupils recently attended a concert given by the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, which gave them a valuable experience of hearing live music. A recent Afro-Caribbean day enabled pupils to enjoy music from other cultures. Pupils are currently preparing a musical performance of the show *Smike* for public performance. All these additional activities make a strong contribution to the ethos of the school and the spiritual, social and cultural development of the pupils.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6, standards in physical education are above average.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in clubs and activities out of school time.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject and to each other's achievements.

Commentary

100. The school plans a good programme of work in physical education, including swimming in regular class lessons. This helps pupils to build up their skills year on year so that by the time they are in Year 6 they attain standards beyond expectations. During the inspection, an afternoon of sport was held, organised by the local education authority sports advisor. The afternoon activities, termed a 'mini-olympics', was an addition to the school's usual provision, offered to all schools participating in the local education authority training programme. The pupils were challenged well and in many cases showed that they had skills beyond expectation for their age. They could, for instance, perform standing long jumps using their arms and overall body alignment well so as to jump further than expected for their age. Those who were less physically able participated enthusiastically and it was particularly creditable to see them encouraged and praised by other pupils. The afternoon was a success because pupils showed keen interest in participating and doing their best.
101. The standard of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 could only be judged in one lesson. This was on a very hot afternoon and pupils were not at their best as the lesson had to be held inside. As it was aimed at developing ball skills, mostly related to football, it was less successful indoors and pupils were noisy. The standard was average overall, although some pupils were able to show skills beyond their age when performing a drag back, as shown to them in a previous lesson by a visiting Chester City footballer. The lesson was well organised and pupils were knowledgeable about the effects of exercise on their body and the reason for warming up and practising skills.
102. The subject is well led. Although the current co-ordinator has just taken over from a member of staff now working as an advisor, he has shadowed the previous subject leader and been involved in promoting the subject through after-school activities for some time. Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their skills and interesting sporting activities through a range of after-school clubs and competitions, including football, netball and athletics. The gymnastics club is particularly successful with large numbers of boys and girls gaining awards of gymnastic attainment well beyond the usual level for their age. Pupils with special skills are identified, and encouraged to participate in one or other of the school clubs. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school has achieved the Activemark Award, recognising its involvement in local competitions and the encouragement it gives to all pupils to participate in physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- PSHE is well promoted in all aspects of the school's life.
- There is a very good range of opportunities to develop citizenship.
- Valuable learning opportunities are provided both during and outside the normal school day.

Commentary

103. The school sees this area of learning as an important part of pupils' development. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, with a clear sense of direction for this subject and this has a positive impact on teaching and learning. Following an audit by the subject co-ordinator, staff awareness has been raised; a good policy and programme of work are in place which provide for the continuous development of pupils' awareness of citizenship, healthy and safe lifestyles and personal growth and relationships. This includes teaching pupils about sex and relationships, the dangers of drug abuse, and racial equality. The school is committed to a national project promoting a healthy lifestyle which not only involves pupils but also parents, staff and governors in regular meetings to ensure the well-being of all pupils and staff is fully addressed. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
104. Learning is promoted across most areas of the curriculum, through PSHE lessons and through achievement assemblies. For example, in a very good PSHE lesson, in Year 6, with a focus on John Lennon, the pupils made very good progress in identifying positive things about themselves through very well-planned activities. Circle time activities and the school council provide opportunities for pupils to share their ideas and opinions and to contribute effectively to the life and work of the school. The idea of using play buddies and friendship stops to improve playtimes came from the school council, for example. Visits to the Multicultural Centre have impacted positively on pupils' awareness of living in a multicultural society. This, together with the range of extra-curricular activities, including residential visits, makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development and to their overall progress and achievement.
105. The school effectively promotes pupils' learning to enable them to play an active role as citizens. Pupils are developing a very good awareness of how to behave in a community and they work very well together in a supportive and caring way. For example, pupils in Year 6 have been successfully trained and assessed as play leaders to develop their sense of citizenship. The serious and effective way they carry out their responsibilities reflects their commitment to their role. Citizenship is also effectively developed in lessons. This was seen in a good lesson, in Year 3, where the pupils developed a good understanding of the importance of recycling waste materials. The pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have the opportunity to gain the Wirral Citizenship Award as an out-of-school activity. This type of provision represents a good preparation for citizenship.

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	4
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	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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