

INSPECTION REPORT

LOWER PEOVER C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lower Peover, Knutsford

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111337

Headteacher: Mrs Diana M Rainey

Lead inspector: Mr Keith Edwards

Dates of inspection: 19–22 January 2004

Inspection number: 256789

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	122
School address:	The Cobbles Lower Peover Knutsford Cheshire
Postcode:	WA16 9PZ
Telephone number:	01565 722529
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Alun McIntyre
Date of previous inspection:	14 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Lower Peover Primary is a Church of England aided school that secured an Achievement Award in 2003. The school draws its pupils from a wide area. Socio-economic circumstances are favourable for most families. Numbers on roll have fallen since the time of the last inspection and there are now 122 full-time boys and girls. Three pupils joined the school and twelve left during the course of the last academic year. Almost all of the pupils are white and all come from homes where English is the first language. The percentage of pupils at the school with entitlement to free school meals is less than one percent. This is well below the national average.

There is one intake into the Reception class during the course of the year. Most of the children who start in the Reception class have had the benefit of pre-school experience. The attainment of most of the pupils on entry to their Reception Year is above average, although there is a significant variation in the pupils' achievement at the start of their full-time education. The children are taught in mixed-age classes and there is a wide spread of ability in each class. Five per cent of the pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs. This is below the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21190	Keith Edwards	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs
12682	Jim Griffin	Lay inspector	
15236	Morag Thorpe	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Personal, social and health education Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school. The very effective team of teachers works hard to ensure that the pupils achieve their best. The school is very well led and managed. The school's priorities are clearly identified and the provision gets better each year. The ethos of care and respect has a very positive impact on the personal development of the pupils. They are making very good progress and achieving very well because the teaching is very good, the curriculum is rich and inclusive and the assessment procedures are very good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. In the 2003 national tests for the pupils in Year 6, standards were well above those in similar schools.
- The quality of teaching is very good and this ensures that the pupils achieve their best. Assessment procedures are used very effectively to help the pupils to learn.
- The headteacher has high aspirations for the school and has successfully built on the strengths identified in the last report. The school is well supported by the governing body.
- The level of care shown by all staff is excellent. This enables the pupils to feel secure and boosts their self-esteem.
- The pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and their behaviour is excellent.
- The pupils' personal qualities are developed very effectively by the school.
- Attendance levels are very high.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. In particular, the quality of teaching and the quality of the curriculum have both improved. With the introduction of mixed-age classes, the school has adapted its curriculum very well to meet the needs of the pupils. As a result, standards at the end of Year 6 have risen faster than the national trend. The minor issues identified in the last report have mostly been met. The school has made very good progress in developing its capacity to teach information and communication technology.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The achievement of the pupils is very good. The children make very good progress in the Reception class and most pupils are set to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year. This is because the pupils feel secure and the quality of teaching is very good. The achievement of the pupils continues to be very good and standards are well above average, particularly in English, mathematics and science, in the infant and junior classes. The A* in the table above shows that the school's results for English at Year 6 in 2003 were in the top five per cent nationally. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly average in each age group and are rising because of the systematic programme of work that has been introduced. Standards in art and design and swimming are well above average. The pupils achieve well in geography, history and physical education. This is because the teachers know the pupils well and ensure that the work set is well

matched to the pupils' needs. Furthermore, because the school's provision is very effective, **the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** They grow to become mature, confident and responsible. The pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and their behaviour is excellent. The pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance levels are excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The teaching is very good throughout the school and results in the pupils learning very well, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The teachers maintain very good levels of discipline and plan interesting work that the pupils enjoy. Because the teachers make very good use of assessment information, there is a good level of challenge in lessons. Tasks are usually modified for different groups of pupils so that all achieve well. Consequently, the pupils apply themselves well and work hard. The provision for those pupils with special educational needs is very good.

The curriculum is rich and vibrant and is very well enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors. The care, guidance and support of the pupils are very good. The pupils enjoy very good relationships with their teachers, who monitor their progress carefully. The teachers know the pupils very well, listen to them and welcome their comments and ideas. Partnerships with parents are good. Parents support their children very well. The school has developed very good relationships with the local Beacon School and with the community, particularly the local church.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher has successfully sustained the school's progress in spite of the difficulties of falling rolls. This is because the ethos of the school is excellent. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds feel secure and confident and this enables them to make good progress. **The school is very well led and managed.** The teamwork between members of staff is a strength of the school. Co-ordinators have established an atmosphere that encourages an open discussion of effective classroom practice. This, together with the more formal programme of monitoring of teaching and learning, continues to improve the quality of teaching. The governors provide good support for the work of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties and are very successful in maintaining the ethos. Financial systems are secure. Because the school is so successful, it provides very good value for money.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and think highly of it. The pupils are proud of their school and feel they are valued and very well supported.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school is not required to make any significant changes. The school needs to bring greater clarity to its communications with parents, particularly in its reporting on the children's progress and homework requirements in the junior classes. The Reception class would benefit from a secure outdoor play area.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The overall achievement of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design and swimming. This is because the pupils are very well taught and the school provides a very rich curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average in Year 6 and have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- In the national tests (SATs) for pupils in Year 6 in 2003, standards were well above the national average and the pupils' achievement was well above that of pupils in similar circumstances. In English, the pupils' results were in the highest five per cent nationally.
- Current standards in reading and writing in Year 2 are well above average. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are good.
- Pupils are making good progress in acquiring skills in information and communication technology and standards meet expectations in Years 2 and 6.
- By the end of the Foundation Stage, most of the children are likely to exceed the goals set for them in each of the areas of learning. The children's achievement is very good.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.1 (17.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.8 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.5 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.3 (29.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.5 (29.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.1 (31.1)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Although the school did not match the achievements of the 2002 cohort in English, mathematics and science in the 2003 end of Year 6 National Curriculum tests (SATs) or the achievements of the 2002 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, the results represent a significant success for the school. This is because the cohort numbers are small and each year group includes a significant group of children with special educational needs. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved better than the national trend over recent years.
2. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is generally above the expectations for the pupils' age in all areas of learning. The children make very good progress, and so, by the time they start the next phase of their education, their attainment is well above average. This is

particularly the case in the children's personal, social and emotional development, in their communication skills and in their creative development. They make very good progress in their personal and social development because the adults provide such good role models and provide a rich variety of experiences for the children. This also contributes significantly to the children's very good progress in the acquisition of language skills. This is very good achievement over time and is a direct result of the consistently, very high quality of education provided by the teacher and her classroom assistant.

3. The pupils continue to make very good progress in the infant classes, particularly in the development of their literacy skills. In speaking and listening, standards are well above average for their age. Most pupils listen carefully and speak clearly. This is because from an early age, the children are encouraged to work in groups and to solve problems together and this strongly supports the development of their vocabulary and their skills of speech. Furthermore, the teachers set a good example in helping the children to appreciate the richness of language through the range of stories which they tell and through the richness of the experiences that they provide. This strategy strongly supports the pupils' achievement in reading and writing. The systematic teaching of reading, the broad range of opportunities for the pupils to write and the strong links with the parents enhance the pupils' performance.
4. The pupils' achievements are very good in the junior classes because of the very good teaching and the strength of the curriculum, which places such high value on the personal development of the children. Current standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. The pupils have a very clear understanding of what they need to do to improve and work hard to meet the targets set for them. The teachers, in most lessons, set an appropriate degree of challenge. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory because the skills are being taught systematically. Standards are rising as the full benefit of the additional resources is realised and as the pupils grow in confidence. They are making good progress. Standards in art and design are well above average. The pupils achieve well in physical education and very well in swimming, where standards are well above average. Standards in history and geography are good.
5. In all year groups, pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve very well. This is because the provision for pupils with SEN is very good. Because the staff know the children so well they identify pupils who find it hard to learn at a very early stage. They analyse the performance of these pupils and prepare high quality Individual Education Plans, which set out clear targets for them. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Support staff are very involved at each stage. The very skilled and well-briefed teaching assistants support these pupils in lessons and their careful planning and sensitive management of the pupils enable them to learn. Higher-attaining pupils respond very well to the challenge set for them, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and achieve very well. There is no significant variation between the achievements of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils show very good attitudes towards school and their work. Their behaviour is exceptionally good. It is based on excellent relationships and their personal development is very good. The good links with the parents and the school's very good provision for the pupils' personal development make significant contributions to their very positive attitudes and values. Attendance is excellent and punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes towards school and their work are very good.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well and relationships among pupils are excellent.
- Pupils' personal qualities are very well developed; their social development is excellent. whilst their spiritual, moral and cultural development are very good.
- Attendance is excellent.

Commentary

6. The pupils are proud of their school and enjoy attending. School plays an important part in pupils' lives. For example, they are very positive about their teachers, whom they justifiably hold in very high regard. They enjoy most of their lessons and the very positive atmosphere during playtimes and lunchtime. In most lessons, the pupils' attitudes towards their work are very good. They listen very well and show very good levels of interest, concentration and determination to complete set tasks. Pupils respond particularly well when expectations are high, lesson tasks are demanding and they are able to engage in a variety of practical activities. Their enthusiasm for practical activities is clearly evident in design and technology, art and design, physical education and information and communication technology lessons.
7. Behaviour in classrooms and during lunchtime and playtimes is excellent. Staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and pupils are very keen not to let down their teachers or themselves. As a result, there is an unusually high level of trust between staff and pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils are trusted to start up the computer suite each morning. The very good and reliable behaviour of nearly all pupils is a key element in the very positive atmosphere for learning and social development that prevails. A strikingly calm, social atmosphere prevails in the dining hall. There is no sign of any bullying or other anti-social behaviour. Parents' and pupils' survey responses fully support this exceptionally positive picture. Parents and pupils are very positive about the effective way in which very rare incidents of bullying and other anti-social behaviour are resolved.
8. The school's well-established use of 'Circle Time', when pupils share their feelings and concerns, is an important contributor to their excellent social development. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence are strikingly positive features. Year 6 pupils talk very positively about how their regular contributions to assemblies, little concerts and puppet shows also significantly improve their confidence. They exercise responsibility for themselves and others in a sensible way. For example, nearly all pupils routinely complete their homework. Older pupils 'buddy' younger pupils by helping them form friendships with others. When questioned in a group, Year 6 pupils listen calmly and with respect to different views expressed by others.
9. The range of art and design pupils experience and their very positive attitudes to learning make major contributions to their very good spiritual development. They justifiably talk of the confidence they get from teachers, who treat them as more grown up as they get older and expect them to achieve. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 speak very positively about the four B's sequence of 'Brain', 'Book', 'Buddy' and 'Boss' they have learned to apply when they come across work they do not readily understand. As a result, pupils' spirituality is developed as they engage actively in the joy of learning by working things out for themselves and each other. Pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong. Pupils show respect and care for others. For example, they hold doors open for adults in corridors and are kind to peers who are feeling unwell or left out. Pupils' understanding of their own culture is very good, aided significantly by direct involvement in local church and village events. Similarly, artwork and pupils' exposure to the beliefs of the major world faiths contribute very well to their good multi-cultural development. Almost all of the Reception children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goal related to their personal, social and emotional development, by the time they start Year 1.

Exclusions

10. There have been no exclusions for a number of years.
11. Exceptionally harmonious relationships among pupils, irrespective of background, learning competency level or gender, are a very positive feature. Teachers value pupils' work and effectively praise effort and good work. As a result, for example in lessons, the pupils are comfortable expressing views and asking questions of their teachers. This significantly assists their learning.

Attendance

12. For several years, attendance has been consistently well above the national average. Pupils enjoy school and therefore do not want to miss their lessons or their friends. Parents take their responsibilities seriously in relation to contacting school, in the event of absence. This is reflected in the minimal unauthorised absence. The table below provides attendance and absence data for the latest complete reporting year, when the attendance was very high at 97 per cent.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.0	School data	0.0
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.

13. Pupils' punctuality is good. Most pupils routinely arrive on time. However, on some days, car jams in the narrow entrance lane cause some pupils to arrive a few minutes late.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The school provides a very enriched curriculum and the quality of teaching is very good in each key stage.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. This highly inclusive school provides very well for all of its pupils. Assessment procedures are used very effectively to enable the pupils to make very good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school.
- Assessment procedures are used very effectively to help the pupils to learn.
- Literacy and numeracy are very well taught.
- The school is successful in ensuring high standards of behaviour in lessons.
- The school makes very good use of teaching assistants and parental support.

Commentary

14. The emphasis that each teacher gives to the pupils' personal and social development is a strength. This focus raises the pupils' confidence and self-esteem and nurtures a very positive attitude towards learning. Very good attention is paid to the pupils' previous attainment when planning work in literacy and numeracy. This ensures that these lessons run smoothly. There is an appropriate variation in the work set for the range of ability and for the age range in each class. The feedback to pupils is good and in the best examples, particularly in Years 5 and 6, the pupils are clearly informed about what they need to do to improve their work.
15. There is a high level of consistency of approach brought about by the teamwork of the teachers. They plan their work together and share their ideas and evaluate the outcomes. As a result, the quality of teaching in sixty per cent of the lessons seen was very good or better. This teamwork has been very successful in raising standards, particularly in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. There is a shared commitment to providing the pupils with activities that stimulate and challenge them. This high interest level ensures that the

pupils stay on task and work hard. For example, as a follow up to an infant

class visit to find out about Jewish traditions, the pupils enjoyed a Jewish feast in the classroom on the very next day. The teacher and the classroom assistant worked closely together to ensure that it was a memorable learning experience for all of the pupils.

16. A particular strength of the teaching is the way that the teachers help the pupils to develop their vocabulary and language skills. Many lessons begin with very lively question and answer sessions that build on what the pupils know from a previous lesson or unit of work. For example, in a geography lesson for the pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher efficiently and effectively enabled the pupils to identify similarities and differences between Lower Peover and a village in India. Furthermore, from the Reception class onwards, teachers expect the pupils to convey their ideas on paper. This means that the pupils experience a good range of opportunities to practise their writing in different subjects and this develops both their confidence and expertise. Homework is used very well in the lower school, particularly to help the pupils to develop their skills of literacy, but the provision lacks consistency in the junior classes.
17. The teaching assistants are fully engaged in each lesson. This is particularly the case in those classes where there are pupils with special educational needs. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The pupils are identified at a very early stage. A suitable programme of learning is planned and the work set is very well matched to the pupils' needs. The specialist expertise of outside agencies is called in and used if necessary. Teaching assistants are very closely involved in the planning. Reviews both formal and informal are regularly held to check that the pupils are making sufficient progress. Higher-attaining pupils are frequently challenged by the work set because they are required to find solutions to problems. For example, in an excellent science lesson in Years 5 and 6 on the theme of adaptation, the pupils were required to research the habitat needs of different species of creatures and identify the characteristics that they had evolved to suit their environment.
18. A successful element of the classroom practice is the way that information and communication technology is increasingly used to support learning. Parental support is used very well, particularly in the Foundation Stage. For example, parental expertise was used to great effect to enable the children to understand Monet's techniques and to work in his style.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	9	9	1	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories.

The curriculum

All pupils benefit from a very high quality curriculum, which enriches all aspects of their development and contributes to very high levels of achievement. It is broad, balanced and enriching, and enhanced by very good teaching throughout the school; curricular provision has improved very well since the last inspection. Resources and accommodation are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are highly effective strategies for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Very good assessment of all pupils guides curricular planning.
- The provision for developing the pupils' creative development and achievements in the humanities is very good.
- There is an exceedingly wide range of visits, visitors and opportunities for enrichment.

- The curriculum for the Reception children is generally very good, but is limited by shortcomings in the accommodation and equipment for outdoor play.
- Resources are good and the accommodation supports all the requirements of a full curriculum but the space for the library and hall are too restricted.
- Opportunities for teaching pupils about sex education, drug awareness and health and safety are built into the overall provision in a sensible manner.

Commentary

19. The school's curriculum has been revised and improved in recent years and fully meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Very well structured schemes of work are in place for all subjects. Children in the Reception class benefit from a very rich curriculum that is based on the areas of learning and enriched by many visits and visitors.
20. The curricular planning ensures very high quality continuity from Reception to Year 6 and very good planning for the different age and ability groups within the mixed age classes. Teachers use very effective procedures for reviewing and developing the curriculum. Subject co-ordinators manage their areas of responsibility very well. The entire staff is committed to improving the provision for all subjects. Very good progression within subjects is secure. Initiatives that link subjects such as design and technology with science and art and design with mathematics, are working very well.
21. An excellent feature of the school's work is the determination of all teachers to value all pupils and to include them in all aspects of learning. Consequently girls and boys, pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented pupils achieve very well. The excellent inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of learning contributes to very high levels of achievement.
22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers are very sensitive to their pupils' specific needs and give very good support. The ongoing assessment and the monitoring and review of the progress of pupils with special educational needs are important factors in ensuring that the needs of these pupils are fully met. Parents are regularly consulted and informed of their children's progress and what they can do to help.
23. The school very successfully implements the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, resulting in pupils' very high levels of achievement throughout the school. These subjects are very well applied in all other curricular areas. The effectiveness of the curriculum is monitored regularly and developed according to the changing needs of pupils, parents and community. The school has very successfully ensured that all pupils who are now in mixed aged classes benefit from a curriculum that is very well matched to their individual needs.
24. The pupils benefit very well from the many activities, including extra-curricular clubs, that the school offers. An extremely dedicated staff and a group of volunteers and parents lead a very wide range of schemes including sports teams and art activities. Pupils benefit from a very wide range of visits to places of interest, for example, art museums and to listen to the Hallé orchestra. Residential visits are arranged for older pupils to enable them to experience a wider range of more adventurous activities than they have in school. Visitors to school share their skills and experiences; during the inspection very skilled parents helped with art and, throughout the year, pupils' learning in other subjects benefits from their help. Pupils participate in sports and literacy and numeracy activities with pupils from nearby schools.
25. There are strong links in the community. Pupils take part in a range of musical activities to celebrate festivals in the local church. The choir and handbell ringers visit a day care centre. These opportunities very successfully contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. Pupils are very well prepared for transition between the phases in the school and for transfer to the receiving secondary school.

26. Staff levels are good; there are sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced teachers who, with the classroom assistants, make a very positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school has good resources.
27. The accommodation is good, although it has its limitations. The building is situated in a very attractive setting and is maintained to an exceptionally high standard by the excellent maintenance officer and team. It is further enhanced by very attractive displays of pupils' work. Storage space is at a premium and it is difficult to maintain but all staff ensure that resources are easily accessible to all. In the Reception class, although children benefit from spacious and attractive outdoor provision, there is neither a dedicated secure area nor sufficient equipment for a few of the outdoor elements of their curriculum for physical development. The provision for gifted and talented and higher-attaining pupils is very good; they are continuously challenged in all subjects and achieve very well.
28. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning; some help in school and all hear their children read at home. The home/school reading links are excellent and teachers' and parents' comments are very detailed. This contributes to the very high levels of achievement in this area of learning. The teacher ensures that all children in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class have a curriculum that is very closely related to their needs.
29. The provision for ICT has recently improved and is now very good. There is now a well-resourced computer suite and pupils also have access to computers in all classrooms. Information and communication technology is very well used across the curriculum; during the inspection pupils used it to research information about Indian cultures, religions and art. In mathematics, computers are used for a wide range of problem solving and calculations.
30. The library is not situated in an area which encourages pupils' independent research or appreciation of books. Teachers compensate for this unsatisfactory element by very good teaching of all aspects of reading, research skills and standards, ensuring that pupils achieve very well.
31. Overall, resources are good. In English, mathematics, science and art and design they are very good and are used imaginatively to support learning. Storage space is at a premium and it is sometimes difficult to maintain resources and make them easily accessible to all but teachers use their initiative and manage this very well. Small spaces adjacent to classrooms are used imaginatively for support and practical activities.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides an excellent level of care for its pupils. They get very good support, advice and guidance. There are very good measures to involve pupils in the school's work and development, through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school cares very well for its pupils.
- Support, advice and guidance are very good.
- The school regards the views of pupils as important to its work.

Commentary

32. The formal policies and practices relating to health and safety and child protection are well considered and properly carried out. The arrangements for induction to Reception as well as the transfer arrangements to secondary school are well established and effective. Staff know the pupils very well and address their needs very effectively. They act quickly if a pupil is unhappy or under pressure and are careful to make sure new arrivals are helped to settle in. As a result, nearly all pupils feel fairly treated and have a good and trusting relationship with one or

more adults, as the pupil survey confirms. Pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. The exceptionally positive relationships mean that pupils work in an atmosphere free of all forms of harassment or oppressive behaviour.

33. The support of all pupils' achievement, through monitoring, is frequent, thorough and very effectively shared with pupils and parents. Where there are concerns, teachers and other staff work very closely with pupils and their parents to identify how the concerns can be overcome. Pupils know their individual targets relating to their academic progress and personal development. Staff discuss the outcomes of tests with pupils and regular marking provides helpful suggestions on how their work can be improved. This important work is underpinned by very good assessment of the pupils' achievements, particularly in English and mathematics.
34. The excellent relationships, among pupils and their teachers, create a very positive atmosphere in which to seek pupils' views. The school has surveyed pupils' views and responded positively to the issues raised. As a result, drinking fountains and a wider range of lunchtime activities were introduced. The trust placed in pupils increases steadily as they get older. In lessons, most pupils are comfortable making suggestions and asking questions, as pupils know their views are valued by staff. A school council is planned to build on this very positive picture.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are good links with parents, which make a significant contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. Links with other schools and colleges are good. Links with the local community make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links with parents.
- Links with the community are good.
- There are good links with other schools and colleges.
- The reports to parents on their children's progress lack clarity.

Commentary

35. Teachers are accessible and approachable and they listen to and usually effectively address parents' concerns. Led by the headteacher, the school seeks to work constructively with parents. For example, a parental survey identified that parents were keen to have more information. As a result, a monthly newsletter and a termly outline of pupils' schoolwork have been introduced. More information on how parents can support pupils at home is also now provided. Termly information is provided on how pupils are getting on, by holding parents' evenings in the autumn and spring terms and issuing the annual reports in the summer term. There is room for improvement in the quality of the annual reports, however. In relation to the tested subjects, reports are unduly complicated and yet do not provide parents with a simple clear indication of how pupils are getting on by national standards. As a result, the identified improvement targets lack context for parents. The school has developed a clear and effective homework policy, in response to the previous inspection report. Very good use of the home-school diary means parents and pupils are clear on set homework. As a result, there is a good level of satisfaction about homework and its arrangements. The diary is also used very effectively to share messages between home and school.
36. Parents contribute significantly to the successful partnership. For example, they deliver on their key responsibility to ensure pupils regularly attend school and there is almost full attendance at parents' evenings. Through the Friends of Lower Peover School, parents organise highly successful fund-raising events. These events also contribute to pupils' personal development and the good sense of community that prevails, as staff, parents and

pupils are involved in many of these events. The overall success of the parental links is

reflected in the positive parental survey. Only a small minority of parents have any concerns on any of the questions in the inspection survey, which was completed by most of them.

37. The school plays its part as a resource for the local community, in terms of use of its premises by the parish council and voluntary groups, such as the brownies. The before and after school clubs, housed on the premises, provide important support for working parents. Pupils' learning benefits from a good range of visitors and visits. Public services, such as the police, health and fire services, enrich the curriculum with contributions on personal safety and healthy living. Pupils take part in a range of collections and sponsored events for charity. There are close links with the nearby church. Pupils' active part in local village events, such as The Allostock Fete and events organised by the Friends of Lower Peover School, contribute significantly to their social development.
38. Links with a local Beacon primary school make a very good contribution to the learning of staff and pupils. The Beacon school leads staff development on learning styles, for example. The impact of this work is clearly evident in the strategies used by Year 5 and 6 pupils to support their learning. More able pupils in English and mathematics also benefit from extra tuition, organised by the Beacon school. There are good links with a number of local playgroups. The school has good links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. For example, the school benefits through technician support of its computer facilities. Student teachers, from Crewe and Alsager College, take part of their teaching practice at the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The governors provide good support for the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's commitment to inclusion, equality and concern for the needs of individuals is excellent.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good.
- The strength of the teamwork is a major factor in helping the pupils to achieve.
- The senior management team has a clear focus on ensuring that the curriculum provides an enhanced range of learning experiences for the pupils.
- The governing body provides good support.

Commentary

39. The school benefits from very good leadership from the headteacher, a dedicated and enthusiastic staff and a supportive governing body. The headteacher, who has high expectations for the school, has a commitment to ensuring that the working environment reflects these aspirations. The curriculum and assessment procedures are very well organised. The governors and staff work with shared purpose and are committed to the aims of the school and to high standards of personal and academic achievement. The school development plan, determined through consultation between staff and governors, clearly defines future initiatives. Financial resources are fully utilised to ensure the school makes good progress towards its priorities.
40. The ethos of the school is excellent. The school is very successful in meeting its aims. There is a positive, caring ethos that promotes high standards of academic attainment and personal development. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are happy in school and share its values. This is reflected in their work and their relationships with their peers and adults. There is a strong team spirit that is based on a commitment to sharing professional expertise to ensure that the children achieve their best. Co-ordinators have established an atmosphere that encourages an open discussion of effective classroom practice. This, together with the more formal programme of monitoring of teaching and learning, continues to improve the quality of

teaching. Although many of the subject co-ordinators have been allocated new responsibilities, they are rising to the challenge of increased responsibility and accountability. Their confidence in taking the initiative in the development of their expertise has made a significant contribution to the improvement in standards.

41. Although there were no key issues identified in the last inspection, the school has been particularly successful in raising standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science. Currently, standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are well above average. This is because the school has made significant progress in developing its marking and assessment procedures and because the quality of teaching is very good. The school has increased its information and communication technology capability significantly and standards are above average. The potential of information and communication technology to support the curriculum is being continually developed and the class-based computers and the computer suite are being used both imaginatively and effectively. The accommodation has benefited from several building initiatives.
42. The governors provide good support for the work of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties and are very successful in ensuring the caring ethos of the school. The committee structure is well established, although much of the work is left to a hard-working nucleus who visit the school regularly and know staff and pupils well. They have a clear understanding of pastoral, staffing and premises issues but are less well informed about the curriculum and standards. This has been recognised by the school and a priority of the development plan is the improvement of the curricular links between the school and members of the governing body.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	356,239	Balance from previous year	23,607
Total expenditure	364,646	Balance carried forward to the next	15,200
Expenditure per pupil	2,586		

43. The school clerk provides a welcoming first point of contact and a very efficient service. The day-to-day financial management of the school is very good. This is the result of the effective partnership between the local education authority and the school to establish financial systems that are relevant and effective. The school is very aware of the financial link between numbers on roll and staffing implications but remains determined to ensure that the calibre of the applicant is the most important criterion when recruiting new members of staff. The school ensures that specific grants, for example for information and communication technology and special educational needs, are correctly spent. All expenditure is carefully tracked in line with best value principles and the budget is updated continuously to show the current state of the school's finances. Although unit costs are relatively high, the school provides very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44. Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is **very good** overall and has significantly improved since the last inspection. Children are now very well prepared for transfer to Year 1. They enter the Reception Year in the September before they are five and are taught in a shared class with some Year 1 pupils. The majority of children have attended a nursery and attainment on entry is slightly above average. The children achieve very well owing to the very high quality teaching, curriculum and excellent assessment procedures. They benefit from very high quality support from classroom assistants and parents. The curriculum is very well planned to provide an exceedingly wide range of interesting, challenging and relevant activities. It is further enhanced by a very imaginative and relevant range of visits and visitors which excite the children and make their learning very interesting. The adults are very good role models for children and establish very good relationships with them. The staff work very effectively as a cohesive team carefully monitoring all aspects of children's learning and personal and social development. The external and internal accommodation is satisfactory overall and is very effectively used to enhance children's learning. Although children have access to hard and soft play surfaces, they do not have their own discrete areas. The headteacher, class teacher and the governing body are aware of the need to improve this provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and develop very positive attitudes because of the very good teaching and very high expectations of all staff.
- The enriching range of special events and celebrations contributes very well to their understanding of Christian beliefs and of the cultures and customs of others.
- Very supportive relationships are established and most children are confident learners.

Commentary

45. Children make very good progress in this area of learning because of the very good teaching and the contributions by classroom support staff and are well placed to exceed the expected goals by the end of the year. They know what is fair and acceptable behaviour because of the consistency of routine and caring attitudes. Children listen to and participate in the many interesting activities and stories and the majority speak clearly and confidently. They are continually encouraged to feel proud of their achievements and are reminded of the very high standards of behaviour expected. They are encouraged to share and take turns and put up their hands before answering questions. Consequently, groups of children were frequently observed working very well together with minimal adult intervention. They behaved very well, shared resources, especially the wide range of books, took turns when using computers and shared construction equipment very well. The teacher and classroom support staff create a very caring atmosphere where children feel special and valued from the time they arrive in class to the end of the day.
46. Children benefit from the daily sharing time when they discuss aspects of interest and importance to home and school. One pupil brought in a map of an activity park and described the route and the places he had enjoyed. Other children devised a set of rules for keeping "Grandma's cottage" tidy.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and all staff make many opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills in all areas of learning.
- Achievement in writing is very good.
- Children achieve very well in reading because of very good teaching and very effective involvement of parents.

Commentary

47. Discussions with children and the analysis of completed work indicate that the majority of children are well placed to exceed the expected levels in this area of learning. Children achieve very well in speaking and listening because the teacher plans many varied opportunities for group discussions in all areas of learning. They were frequently observed sharing books, listening to stories and practising writing skills. The staff plan many opportunities to develop children's vocabulary through probing questions. The strong links between the school and the parents support the children's progress in reading.
48. Higher-attaining and most average attaining children read fluently and accurately with good understanding as the books chosen are well matched to their abilities and interests. They use reasoning skills very well and retell the story in the correct sequence. The majority read familiar and unseen texts equally well. The lower-attaining children read familiar text well and benefit from repetition of vocabulary and picture clues.
49. Very good relationships give children the confidence to speak and all adults listen intently and respond to their comments. The teacher has developed a very rigorous and tightly structured plan for the teaching of sounds with the emphasis on children's ability to say the sounds, recognise them in print and practise them in writing. Children are encouraged to hold pencils with the correct grip. The analysis of writing shows that most children form letters accurately and have frequent opportunities for practising letter formation and patterns. ICT is very well planned in order to develop children's understanding of spelling. Standards show a very high level of improvement compared to their attainment on entry to the school.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good and achievement is very high.
- The teacher plans a wide range of structured activities to ensure that children understand number and apply their skills to other areas of learning.
- Children have very positive attitudes and confidence in applying mathematical skills.

Commentary

50. Standards are high and children achieve very well in this area of learning because of very good teaching and rigorous assessment. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and uses excellent systems for ensuring that assessment guides planning. Children's knowledge and understanding are very good in all aspects of number, shape and space, and problem solving. Most children add and subtract using numbers to 10. Higher-attaining children count to 20, and some to 50, and order numbers accurately. Nearly all children recognise a wide range of two-

dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes. Children create interesting mathematical patterns showing a very good awareness of order, shape and colour. They have a very good understanding of days of the week and activities which take place during specific times each day. ICT is very successfully incorporated into this area of learning to develop children's understanding of number and the properties of some two dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Most children are very confident in this area of learning, enjoy the activities and work very well. The teacher plans an exceptionally wide range of mathematical activities associated with other areas of learning and this further enhances children's understanding and interest.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very enriching range of interesting activities is planned.
- Excellent opportunities for speaking and listening, reading and writing and mathematics are included in the planning.
- Children have very good opportunities for using computers.
- The Foundation Stage co-ordinator plans an excellent range of visits and visitors to enhance children's learning.

Commentary

51. All aspects of learning and teaching are very high in this area of learning as are the standards achieved. From the very imaginative planning and discussions with children it is evident that achievement is very high. Most children already exceed the expected goals for this area of learning. In the short time since they have been in school they have become very confident, articulate and interested learners. During the inspection children enjoyed comparing the washing machines of today with the wide range of equipment needed during Victorian times. They named and explained the use of posers, washboards and graters for grating soap. They also tested waterproof properties of materials for a teddy bear's hat, carefully pouring water over each material until water permeated it. They explained their results very clearly.
52. Children's learning is very well developed by the wide range of investigations planned. They know that switches control a wide range of machines: for example, computers, CD players and washing machines. Children have many opportunities for making models from construction equipment. They are beginning to understand the order of seasons and seasonal changes.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching by the class teacher in the physical activities observed was very good.
- All staff make very effective use of the available accommodation including the hall.
- Although generally satisfactory, the accommodation and equipment for outdoors need further improvement to meet all of the curricular requirements for the children's physical development in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

53. No lessons were observed in the outdoor area. However, from the assessments, photographs, planning, and discussions with children it is evident that they are making good progress. In the Asian dancing lesson observed children showed very good hand and eye co-ordination, and by the end of the lesson had learned an exceedingly complex range of hand and eye movements. Children handle construction equipment, paintbrushes, scissors and pencils with very good levels of dexterity and accuracy. The majority of children hold pencils with the correct grip and consequently their standards of handwriting have improved very well during the year. Children identified as needing additional help are given very good support and encouragement and achieve as well as other children in the class.
54. Although the children have access to hard and soft play areas, the school lacks a discrete area that is designed to meet the needs of the children's physical development. The school is aware of this shortcoming and has plans to resolve the matter as soon as funds permit.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are excellent in the artistic aspects of creative development.
- Opportunities for storytelling and role-play are very good. This area of learning makes a very good contribution to children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Children's very positive attitudes are reflected in their knowledge and confidence when discussing their work.

Commentary

55. From the lessons observed, displays and discussions with children, it is evident that most of them are well placed to exceed the expected levels in this area. Teaching, learning and achievement are very good, and excellent in the artistic elements. Planning shows that over the year children have a very wide range of creative opportunities. They are encouraged to experiment when mixing paint and using modelling materials. A particular strength is their very good awareness of shape and texture in art. During an excellent art lesson involving many parents, children designed and painted in the style of Monet, describing his techniques and style of art. They interpreted his work very well, especially in their paintings of "Poppies", "Waterlilies" and "Monet's Garden". They produce attractive designs and symmetrical patterns. Previous work included large-scale outdoor sculptures using natural materials in the style of Andrew Goldsworthy. All staff skilfully extend children's language and encourage their imaginative and collaborative activities. They have a very clear understanding of the skills to be learned from each activity.
56. The very good teaching of the musical aspects successfully contributes to very high levels of achievement. Children sing tunefully with a very good understanding of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. Their oral skills developed well as they copied and compared rhythms when they played a wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Their musical activities also support their learning about Judaism.
57. Pupils have excellent opportunities for role-play and they participate with great enjoyment and confidence. During the inspection, they were involved in the "Class Post Office" and had previously written thank you letters to parents. The excitement of writing the letter, posting it and then watching their parents' pleasure when it was delivered were very special events for them.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Years 2 and 6.
- There is a high level of consistency in the planning and delivery of literacy teaching.
- The pupils' achievement is very good throughout both key stages.
- The school provides very good support for pupils who find learning difficult.
- Literacy is developed very well across the curriculum.
- The library is not very accessible.

Commentary

58. The pupils make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills and standards are well above average. This is because the teachers provide many exciting opportunities for the pupils to learn from first-hand experiences and to extend their vocabulary. The very good classroom relationships between teachers and pupils support and develop pupils' confidence in speaking and listening. The pupils listen well to their teachers and this enables them all to contribute to class discussions. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and confidence in public speaking, both in class and to a wider audience.
59. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are well above average in reading. The pupils make very good progress in reading because of very effective teaching based on a strong and well-planned curriculum. Each class has a daily reading session when the pupils are encouraged to read and understand a wide variety of stimulating texts that are appropriate to their level. In lessons for the older pupils, the work of a wide variety of children's authors is shared and discussed. Lower-attaining pupils benefit from a very structured approach to the teaching of reading where the early skills are very well taught. Teaching assistants play a vital role in supporting this work. Most parents reinforce the school's efforts by providing support and encouragement at home within the context of a very structured homework system, particularly for the younger pupils. However, although the school library provides a good range of modern and attractive books, its size and location do not encourage independent use, particularly by the younger children.
60. The teaching of writing has improved because of the recent initiatives the school has taken to raise standards. Standards have risen and pupils' achievement is very good. The quality of teaching is very good because staff have high expectations and provide very good feedback to pupils. Standards of handwriting and spelling are very good. Teachers plan work very well to take account of the wide range of abilities. Teaching assistants give very effective support. For example, in a class for pupils in Years 2 and 3, the teaching assistant helped the Year 2 pupils to compose a letter whilst the Year 3 pupils were being taught in the computer suite. Information and communication technology is very well used to support work on developing research skills. In every classroom and in different subjects, there is a very good range of attractive, well-presented written work. Lessons are very well planned, with a good balance of teacher input and pupil activities, although some teachers are more skilled in this than others. In every lesson an appropriate learning objective is set. Grammar and spelling are very well taught and pupils are eager to improve their spellings.
61. The recently appointed co-ordinator is developing her role well. There are very clear and well-understood assessment systems and these support the pupils' achievements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Subjects such as history, science and religious education are used very effectively to develop and consolidate writing skills. For example in Years 2 and 3, there are very good accounts of life in ancient Egypt. The presentation of this is often enhanced by using the pupils' developing word processing skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good** with some excellent features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national average overall.
- Pupils in Year 2 are well placed to achieve above average standards and those in Year 6 are set to achieve well above average standards by the end of the present academic year.
- Pupils achieve very well throughout both key stages and have developed very positive attitudes to the subject owing to the very good teaching and very high expectations of all staff.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- The assessment, monitoring and tracking of each pupil's work are excellent and contribute to very high levels of achievement.
- The very high quality of investigative work and application of numeracy to other areas of the curriculum develop pupils' understanding very effectively.

Commentary

63. There have been very good improvements in standards, the quality of teaching and learning and in the leadership and management of the subject since the last inspection. Mathematics is a rapidly improving subject across the school. There is a greater emphasis on investigative work in all classes and pupils achieve very well overall. Most pupils in Year 6 are well placed to achieve standards well above the national average, with higher-attaining pupils achieving very high standards. Higher-attaining pupils including gifted and talented pupils, achieve very well. This is a direct result of the extremely high levels of challenge made by all teachers and the links with gifted and talented pupils in other schools.
64. The high standards in Year 2 are reflected in pupils' knowledge and understanding of place value to 1000. Higher-attaining pupils understand place value to over 1000. They have very good mental recall of multiplication tables and add and subtract two-digit numbers mentally. Pupils apply their number skills very effectively to all aspects of mathematics. They tell the time, to quarter to and quarter past the hour, and classify a wide range of two and three-dimensional shapes using a range of properties including symmetry. Their data handling skills are also well developed. Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils become very confident mathematicians. They rise to the challenges set by the teachers, try different approaches when solving problems and show very high levels of mathematical reasoning.
65. Pupils in Year 6 achieve very well in all aspects of mathematics. The majority of pupils use a wide range of methods for problem solving and planning investigations; for example, their very high quality understanding of place value is reflected in their ability to multiply and divide using decimals to two places. Their understanding of equivalence of fractions, decimals and percentages is very secure. When solving number problems mentally they use a very wide variety of methods and explain their reasoning. Pupils have a very good understanding of the angle properties of triangles and quadrilaterals. They use a wide variety of strategies for solving mental and written calculations. Pupils organise their work very methodically; they justify their reasoning and manipulate numbers easily and confidently. During a discussion, the majority of pupils in Year 6 showed a very good understanding of the magnitude of numbers and the need for methodical working in calculations and investigations.

66. Throughout the school pupils of all attainment levels show tremendous enthusiasm for the subject. They are very well motivated and extremely well behaved. Pupils' relationships with each other and their teachers and support staff are very good. The school has very successfully and rigorously introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and there is a very strong ethos of mathematical challenge throughout the school.
67. The quality of teaching is very good overall and this shows a very high level of improvement since the previous inspection. All aspects of teaching are strengths. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding. This is reflected in very clear explanations and very good teaching of basic and advanced skills, which contribute to pupils' very good levels of understanding. Planning for all groups, including gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs, in most classes is excellent and is based on excellent tracking of pupils' attainment and achievements; consequently, gifted and talented pupils are very well provided for in lessons and in additional classes with pupils from other primary schools. Sufficient time is given for the revision of earlier learning and, as a result, pupils consolidate their learning very well. Teachers question pupils and use their responses to assess their understanding. They have very high expectations of pace of work and presentation. Consequently pupils know how well they have achieved and their presentation is very good. The extremely high quality of support given by classroom assistants, including those who support pupils with special educational needs, contributes to the achievement of all.
68. The very good leadership and management by the co-ordinator have successfully raised standards and the profile of mathematics in the school. The excellent systems for assessment, monitoring and tracking give all teachers secure evidence on which to plan. Target setting is very well founded on a wide range of information about each pupil's ability. Daily planning, year group organisation and curricular changes are soundly based on excellent analysis of standards. The school is constantly seeking ways of improving all aspects of mathematics. The high standards in mathematics are further enhanced by the very effective use of ICT across all strands of the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils frequently use mathematics as an integral part of their work in other subjects. This is carefully planned to match the abilities of all pupils and extend their understanding of mathematics in the world; for example, they use graphs and charts when recording data in geography and science, shape and pattern in art and design and calculations with large numbers when comparing and contrasting historical periods and important events in religious education.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and, as a result, learning and achievement are very good throughout the school.
- Procedures for assessment and the use of information to guide planning are excellent.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Standards are well above the national average overall.
- Pupils use accurate scientific language and apply their numeracy skills very well.

Commentary

70. Very good teaching enables pupils to achieve standards that are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Pupils achieve very high standards because

teachers encourage them to become scientists and plan and carry out an extremely wide range of interesting experiments and investigations.

71. From the analysis of pupils' written work, displays and discussions with them, and the lessons observed it is evident that teaching and learning are very good. Pupils were involved in very challenging investigations when they predicted, tested and recorded their observations. Teachers question pupils very skilfully, causing them to solve problems and demonstrate their understanding of complex issues; for example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 investigated the effects of the movement of the earth round the sun.
72. The majority of pupils in Year 6 have a very good understanding of environmental issues and use the terms 'habitats', 'adaptation' and 'interdependence' accurately. They develop a very good understanding of how animals adapt to different environments. They explained how the desert rat has large eyes because of its nocturnal lifestyle, a long tail for balance and a sandy-coloured coat for camouflage. They compared its appearance and adaptation to those of creatures in colder climates. These aspects demonstrate very high levels of reasoning skills and the ability to apply previous knowledge.
73. From the analysis of pupils' written work and displays, discussions with pupils and lesson observations, the teaching and learning are judged to be very good overall, with some excellent features. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are good overall and some excellent teaching was observed. In this class the planning, challenges and support for each group were exemplary and consequently children achieved very well. Pupils were involved in very challenging investigations when they predicted, tested and recorded their observations whilst comparing the brightness of torch lights.
74. In Years 3 to 6 teaching and learning are very good overall. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and give praise for high standards and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. All teachers ensure that pupils learn and use accurate scientific vocabulary and give them many opportunities for extending their numeracy skills whenever possible. This was exemplified during discussions with pupils from Years 4 and 5 when they explained how planets of the solar system move around the sun and how this affects their seasons.
75. During the inspection most pupils spoke with interest about many investigations, the importance of a healthy lifestyle, environmental issues and conservation. They have benefited from the wide range of visits and the use of the school pond and the local environment.
76. In this small school, the systems for leadership and management are very effective and the teachers work very well together and share ideas. Planning for all groups, including gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs, in most classes is excellent and is based on excellent tracking of pupils' attainment and achievements; consequently, gifted and talented pupils are very well provided for. The provision for this subject has improved very well since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision has improved significantly since the last inspection and the pupils achieve well.
- The school makes good use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum.
- The staff have a good level of expertise and are keen to make the most of new technological developments.
- The co-ordinator provides effective leadership.
- Technical support is not sufficiently robust to deal with day-to-day problems.

Commentary

77. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with the levels expected. The pupils make good progress because lesson plans are detailed and well focused upon the developing pupils' skills. The school's commitment to training all staff has led to increased confidence and a willingness to use information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum. The school's computer suite is timetabled regularly for each year group to ensure that the basic skills are taught systematically and this is working well.
78. The quality of teaching is good overall. The development of the teachers' expertise and knowledge in this subject has been well managed and this has enabled the new resources to be used to good effect. The curriculum is carefully structured to enable the pupils to be taught in discrete year groups. This enables all of the necessary skills to be taught systematically. Assessment procedures have been introduced to provide staff with clear information about each pupil's progress. In one good lesson, on multi-media presentations, the teacher had high expectations of the work the pupils were going to produce. She gave clear guidance on the development of their presentation on France, so that the pupils knew where their learning was taking them. The teacher's explanations and instructions were clear, and when she found misunderstandings these were dealt with quickly. This meant that the pupils were kept busy and involved in their work. These factors, together with the quality of the relationships, which enabled the pupils to feel comfortable about sharing their mistakes, created a successful positive learning environment.
79. The school has a good number of computers for the number of pupils and most other resources are readily available. However, the school's arrangements for technical support are inadequate and this results in valuable teaching time being lost when faults develop. The subject leader presents a very good teaching model and her pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. She has a clear and appropriate vision of how standards in ICT should be raised and how its use in other subjects will be achieved. The improvement made since the last inspection has been very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. The school is making good use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum. For example, the youngest pupils use computer programs to sort and classify two-dimensional shapes. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are using computers to research the habitats and feeding habits of different creatures. In literacy lessons, pupils take turns to word process their work. Older pupils in the junior classes are researching information about outer space and the customs and traditions of India. Throughout the school, good use is made of the digital camera to record special events such as Red Nose Day.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

The provision in history and geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- There is a very good range of visits to enhance the curriculum.
- A good range of literacy skills is used to help the pupils to learn.
- Consistency of pupils' progress is ensured through clear schemes of work and year group planning.

Commentary

81. From the lessons observed, the wide range of pupils' work displayed and discussions with pupils, standards throughout the school are judged to be above average in Years 2 and 6. Because the quality of teaching is good and the curriculum is rich and exciting, the pupils achieve well. For example, junior age pupils were very enthusiastic about their recent visit to Chester when they explored the city walls and had the opportunity to parade as Roman soldiers. Pupils talk confidently about what they have learned of the Victorians, Tudors and Romans. They are able to search for information from a variety of sources including making good use of the schools' computers to explore a variety of history web sites.
82. Both subjects add well to the range of pupils' literacy experiences. For example, in a Year 2 and 3 history lesson, the teacher used the theme of Grace Darling to enable the pupils to think about character and descriptions. Research skills are enhanced through the use of books, information sheets, CD-ROMs and the Internet. The pupils are often taught to write accounts in their own words and in different styles such as letters, postcards and leaflets.
83. From the three lessons observed, two in history and one in geography, it is clear that the quality of teaching is good. The teachers are skilled in helping the pupils to remember what they have learned in previous lessons. For example, in a lesson about exploration in Tudor times, the teacher helped the pupils to imagine the perils faced on the voyages and on the sailors' arrival in unfamiliar territory. Displays of work and artefacts are used effectively to help the children to learn and understand the past. For example, in the class for pupils in Years 1 and 2, a display of toys traces the changes between Second World War and the present day. In Years 5 and 6, the teacher ensures that all the pupils are challenged by matching the work set to the pupils' level of understanding. Not only did the lesson stretch the pupils' understanding of routes and capital cities but it also required the pupils to calculate journey times and take account of different time zones.
84. The subjects are well planned. The curriculum and teaching take full account of the mixed age classes and enable each group of pupils to achieve well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

The provision for art and design is **very good** and has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very enriched curriculum where pupils have the opportunities to use a wide range of media and work in the style of many famous artists.
- The teaching, learning and achievement are very good throughout the school.
- There are excellent displays where pupils' work is very highly valued.

Commentary

85. From the lessons observed, the wide range of pupils' work displayed and discussions with pupils, standards throughout the school are judged to be very high and pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 already exceed national expectations in this subject.
86. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a wide range of techniques and media including pencils, crayons, paint and fabric. During the inspection they produced weaving of an exceptionally high standard using a wide range of papers and fabrics very imaginatively. Their observational

skills and design develop very well over the two years. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 used pastels to produce sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh. Their portraits are very detailed and show very effective use of shade, texture and proportion.

87. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also develop their skills very well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have produced excellent paintings in the style of Paul Klee. They used mixed media when painting flowers and very well taught artistic techniques. They are educated to work as artists by using a palette and mixing their tones from primary colours. During the inspection, pupils copied intricate patterns with fine detail based on Asian art. Others used ICT for researching many aspects of Indian art. Pupils in the Year 4 and 5 class achieve very high standards using a wide range of media.
88. Pupils are surrounded by very high quality art and are influenced by art from many styles and cultures. The challenges for gifted and talented pupils and the support for those with special educational needs are very high; consequently, they achieve very well compared to their previous attainment.
89. The very good leadership and management of the subject contributes to the very high profile of art and design in the school. Pupils benefit from visiting art galleries and the influence of artists in schools. Consequently, the subject makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including multicultural development.

Design and technology

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very interested in this subject.
- Art has a very positive influence on the subject.
- The influence of the subject on other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

90. No lessons were observed during the inspection but the quality of work on display reflects very good teaching and learning. Year 1 and 2 pupils designed and made sandwiches and wove baskets in an activity related to a geography and literacy activity based on the text "The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch". They investigated the many ways in which the shape and colour of paper could be changed. They applied these skills very successfully to weaving in art and design.
91. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 studied the purpose of designs and the suitability of materials used in their topic on India. The work seen showed very effective links with science, history, geography and art and design. Throughout the school, pupils have a very clear understanding about which subject they are studying but very successfully apply skills and knowledge learned in other subjects. For example, in science they learn how living things are adapted to different environments and in history why cobbles were used on the roads in Victorian times.
92. The learning planned is very purposeful and ideas are successfully carried through to the final product. The items are designed to meet a specific need yet give pupils a very wide range of opportunities for creativity. During the process of design and making, ideas are tested and then enhanced or remodelled until they reach high standards.

MUSIC

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities for performing in church and the community.
- The instrumental learning observed was very good.
- The opportunities to participate in and learn about music from a wide range of styles and cultures are good.
- There is no co-ordinator for this subject.

Commentary

93. No judgements have been made on standards or teaching and learning as no class lessons were observed during the inspection. During singing in assembly and hymn practice, pupils sang tunefully with generally accurate pitch and good dynamic range. Evidence from planning and discussions with pupils show that the curriculum is broad, balanced and enriching. They have opportunities to perform in church during the Christingle and other religious celebrations. The choir and handbell ringers perform for a local charity. Pupils benefit from extra-curricular recorder lessons and opportunities for instrumental tuition.

Physical education

Provision for this subject is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average overall and very high in swimming.
- Teaching, learning and achievement are very good overall and excellent in dance.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities and residential visits is very good.
- Pupils participate and succeed in a wide range of games and athletics competitions with other schools.
- The size of the hall restricts some physical education activities.

Commentary

94. From the lessons observed teaching, learning and achievement are judged to be very good overall and excellent in dance. Pupils moved with very high levels of co-ordination and worked very well to develop individual skills and group achievement. School records and discussions with the co-ordinator show that standards in swimming are very high, with the majority of pupils swimming distances of 800 metres by the end of Year 6. Most pupils know the importance of warming up and cooling down exercises in relation to muscle tone, heart beat and breathing.
95. Pupils demonstrate increasing control and use of speed, tension and flow to express feelings and moods in the Year 1 and 2 dance lesson. In this lesson pupils used hand movements to emulate the contrasting flicks and smooth flowing swimming movements of a wide variety of fish. They scurried like crabs and in groups changed direction and height to resemble the changing shapes of jellyfish. Pupils showed excellent levels of performance in the group work.
96. Pupils in a Year 4 and 5 gymnastics lesson combined balance, poise and elevation in linking movements in complex sequences. The school places strong emphasis on developing physical activity, a healthy lifestyle and very positive attitudes. Very good community links are formed with other local schools as pupils participate in district football, netball, cricket and athletics competitions, where they have achieved successes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 created

group sequences incorporating symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes and balance into their group performances.

97. During the inspection, pupils learned some movements from traditional Indian dancing incorporating a contemporary style of music. The very well planned visits to Shropshire and Wales give pupils very good opportunities for participating in outdoor and energetic pursuits.
98. Girls and boys and pupils of all abilities are given very good opportunities to take part in the curriculum planned for their age groups. The provision for gifted and talented pupils and the support for those with special educational needs are very good.
99. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and involved in a range of activities. The very good scheme of work promotes clear, effective planning and ensures that a full range of physical education activities is covered. Resources and the outdoor accommodation are good; however, the hall is too small for gymnastics or dance lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision for this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This subject is taught very effectively through a range of subjects.

Commentary

100. At present the provision is very effective in the ways in which pupils' attitudes, achievements and self-worth are valued and promoted. The very high quality of teaching and curricular enrichment, including a wide range of visits and visitors contributes to pupils' knowledge and understanding of how some elements of the community and society work. Aspects of a healthy lifestyle, for example, drugs awareness, health and safety and sex education, are well covered in the curriculum planned. Circle time gives pupils opportunities for voicing their opinions and concerns. The headteacher and staff have sought and acted on pupils' opinions. The school plans to involve the pupils in the decision-making aspects of the school more formally. There is no policy for Citizenship Education at this stage nor plans for school or class councils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	1
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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