

INSPECTION REPORT

LOWTON WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lowton, Warrington

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106428

Headteacher: Mr J Howarth

Lead inspector: Mrs Laura Sparrow

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th November 2003

Inspection number: 256793

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	406
School address:	Slag Lane Lowton Warrington
Postcode:	WA3 2ED
Telephone number:	(01942) 724865
Fax number:	(01942) 721402
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Blewitt
Date of previous inspection:	September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average primary school, situated in Lowton, outside Wigan. There are 406 pupils on roll. Just over eight per cent are eligible for free school meals, which is slightly below average nationally. Only a few pupils are from a minority ethnic background or do not speak English as their first language. There are 60 pupils identified as having special educational needs, with one having a statement of need. Attainment on entry to school is average and most children have experience of attending local Nursery schools.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19382	Laura Sparrow	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Information and communication technology; Religious education; Special educational needs; English as an additional language.
11358	Victoria Lamb	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
32612	Susan Gartland	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Art and design; Design and technology.
11528	Michael Wainwright	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Music; Physical education.
2785	John Bird	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Geography; History.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	10
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	12
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective and improving school**. The headteacher, key staff and governors lead with a good heart and provide good leadership. Good care is taken to include everyone in the life of the school, and this creates a successful climate in which almost every pupil achieves well. Good, and often very good, teaching results in pupils being highly motivated to learn and do their best. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils attain good standards in mathematics by age seven and very good standards by 11.
- Good teaching is a consistent strength across the school, particularly in junior classes where it is often very good, and helps all the pupils to learn and achieve well.
- The pupils' relationships and personal development are very good and make a powerful contribution to the quality of their good work and individual achievements.
- Good leadership by the headteacher, effectively supported by key staff and governors, enables most pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- Effective use of target setting and assessment are contributing to raising standards.
- Systems for school self review are not yet robust enough.
- Management of professional development needs more focus on coordinators' needs.
- Gifted and talented pupils are well catered for but lessons do not always offer them distinct challenges.

Since the last inspection, school **improvement has been good**. Many new staff and governors have joined the school and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. The building has been extended to provide accommodation for four new classrooms. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has now become integral to the work of the school and resources have been significantly improved. A notable trend of lower achievement among girls at age eleven has been arrested and no significant differences between their performance and that of boys are evident.

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	C	C	B
Mathematics	A	A	B	A
Science	A	C	C	B

*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.*

Overall, pupils are **achieving well**. The youngest enter school with average levels of attainment and generally make good progress through the school. Most children achieve well in the goals that they are expected to reach by the end of Reception. National tests in 2003 show that, by age seven, standards are above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. National tests in 2003 show that compared to similar schools standards are above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Standards achieved during the inspection are above those expected in mathematics, ICT, music, and physical education. They are above those expected in reading and writing at age seven, but in line at age eleven. Standards in all other subjects are close to those expected, except design and technology at age 11, where they fall below. Set against their achievements upon starting school, minority ethnic pupils and those who

Speak English as an additional language are achieving well. Although they are catered for well overall, a few gifted and talented pupils do not always have extra challenge where they may be capable of achieving more than other high attaining groups. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and they are achieving well. Targets set by the governors are high. All pupils have **very good** attitudes to learning and relationships. They make very good progress in their personal development and behave very well. Attendance is **satisfactory**. There are no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the **quality of education is good**. Throughout the school, **teaching is good**, but it is particularly strong in junior classes. Teachers' high expectations and enthusiasm enable pupils to be very clear about what they need to do to learn well, and why. Lively discussions engage pupils and require them to deepen their understanding and apply what they have learned. Emphasis on literacy and numeracy supports interesting learning activities and investigational work. The curriculum is **good**. It is well planned, with strong links across subjects, for instance, through ICT. Many clubs and very good after school provision enrich what pupils learn. Visits, for example, to the Houses of Parliament, enliven study. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their independence in learning and to collaborate. Pupils' **spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good**. Effective provision for special needs results in good promotion of equal opportunity.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is good. He is aware of what the school has needed to do to improve. The headteacher has successfully led the governors and the staff through a period of significant change. Strategies to continue this work are contained in the school development plan. **The governors are well led** by an exceptionally committed chair and have a good picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They play an active role in evaluating its performance and are fully involved in strategic decisions. The head and an enthusiastic leadership team provide **satisfactory management** and are well positioned to drive forward further improvement. Although co-ordinators are well placed to be effective and to lead improvements, many of them are new. Structures to support co-ordinators' roles in school improvement are not yet sharply focused. A more robust system for school self-review, linked closely to the management of staff's professional development, is needed. Although the governors ensure that statutory requirements are fully met, a few health and safety issues identified during the inspection have been rectified following discussion with the school.

PARENTS AND PUPILS VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the school and satisfied with standards and behaviour. A few would like more frequent consultation. Inspectors found that while the school is interested in parents' views, it has not yet established a formal system to seek them. Pupils feel very well cared for.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Strengthen the school systems for:

- Self review through rigorous evaluation of the school development and other key plans in order to guide subsequent actions.

- The identification of suitable staff development and specific guidance to meet co-ordinators' needs.
- Increasing the challenges presented to gifted and talented pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils are achieving well and are attaining at least satisfactory standards in all subjects, except for design and technology, by the age of seven and eleven. In design and technology, by age eleven, they are slightly below average but are set to improve later this year. This represents good improvement compared to the previous inspection when achievement of the older pupils in music, design and technology, and information technology was too low.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils attain good standards in mathematics by age seven and very good standards by age 11.
- Standards in English, ICT, music and physical education are good.
- Standards in national tests in comparison to similar schools are above average and targets are challenging.
- An uneven trend in boys' and girls' achievement has been tackled successfully.
- A few gifted and talented pupils are challenged separately from higher attaining pupils in some subjects but not in others.

Commentary

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage with average attainment for their age. All achieve well in most of the Early Learning Goals. In physical development, where access to suitable outdoor provision is limited, their progress is reduced. Nevertheless, by the end of the Reception Year, most are likely to achieve all the Early Learning Goals. A number are likely to exceed them in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Standards in Reception over the year represent at least satisfactory achievement, and in some areas, good achievement.

2. In national assessments taken by age seven in 2003, standards were above average in reading, and well above average in writing and mathematics, compared to all schools nationally and in comparison to similar schools. The standard of work seen during the inspection confirms this pattern of achievement.

3. In national tests taken by age eleven in 2003, standards were average in English and science and above average in mathematics compared to all schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools, standards were above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics.

4. Overall, pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and make good progress to attain above average standards. Observations of lessons and pupils' work confirm this picture of steady progress, particularly in English. Achievement in the junior classes is good and many pupils make rapid progress as a result of the consistently good, and often very good, teaching in subjects.

5. Pupils' skills in literacy are improving, although the evidence of this is not yet reflected in their test performance. Their skills in numeracy are good, and sometimes very good, in the junior classes, which is reflected in good achievement in lessons. Good use is made of ICT for learning across the subjects of the curriculum, so that pupils achieve well and standards in ICT are good by age seven and eleven.

6. A trend of different attainment for girls and boys has now been tackled successfully. Girls achieve equally as well as boys in lessons seen. In national tests in 2003, girls at age 11 attain standards broadly similar to boys but do slightly better in English and science.
7. Overall, the school's performance is in line with the national trend. Its targets are challenging. In 2003, the school fell just short of meeting them in English and exceeded them in mathematics.
8. Set against their achievements upon starting school, minority ethnic pupils, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils with SEN are achieving well.
9. A few gifted and talented pupils attend local high schools for enrichment activities. They have individual challenges set for them in some lessons, for instance, English, but not others, though they may be capable of achieving more. Although they are well catered for overall, work set in some subjects is not distinct from that for higher attaining groups.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (18.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.7 (16.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	18.2 (18.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 52 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	27.2 (27.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.1 (29.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.0 (28.7)	28.7 (28.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

10. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and they behave very well. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good and their moral development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Attendance is satisfactory.
- The school sets very high standards for pupils' conduct and pupils behave very well.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and very willing to take an active part in school life.
- Pupils have very positive relationships with each other and with staff.

Commentary

11. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality. Attendance is now in line with other schools and most pupils arrive at school in good time. The school has developed new procedures for tracking attendance. Staff have begun to reward pupils whose attendance is very high and to share more information with parents on their responsibilities.

12. The school helps children to become mature and responsible and gives them a very clear understanding of the principles that distinguish right from wrong. Behaviour is very good. Pupils show respect for teachers and assistants, and for special occasions such as assemblies and

lunchtime. Older pupils show consideration and act as very good role models for the youngest. Pupils support each other and watch each other's performances politely. They applaud other pupils' efforts wholeheartedly. The school has very good procedures to ensure that pupils' welfare and learning are not adversely affected by others. It has not needed to exclude any pupil for several years.

13. The very good relationships and high expectations of behaviour and application to work help pupils to develop very good attitudes to their work as they move through the school. In Years 3 to 6 particularly, pupils settle to lessons and focus on their work very quickly. This is in response to the very good techniques used by teachers to interest pupils and motivate them to want to learn. When behaviour in lessons is not very good it is because pupils do not always respond to instructions quickly enough. This is because teachers do not arouse their interest and have not ensured that they are paying attention. In Years 1 and 2 particularly, pupils are often required to sit still for too long and this makes them restless.

14. Pupils learn new skills and independence by taking responsibility for a wide range of routine, essential jobs that they carry out conscientiously and with pride. Pupils take time to help each other during playtimes when they befriend anyone who is feeling worried or who has no-one to play with. The school provides a good range of opportunities to promote individual talents that help develop feelings of self worth. Pupils take these up enthusiastically. Particularly proficient pupils work alongside staff, for example, in playing the piano during collective worship and in running a daily lunchtime club that helps younger pupils learn how to behave well in the playground. Pupils are very keen to take part in extra-curricular activities.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black African
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
395	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
6	0	0
1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

15. The quality of education provided by the school is good. The teaching is good throughout and this leads pupils to having very positive attitudes, and behaving and achieving well.

Teaching and learning

16. Teaching is a significant strength of the school. The quality of teaching is much improved since the last inspection, especially in junior classes. It is good overall, and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Specialist teaching of mathematics to older pupils is having a positive impact on standards. Good improvement has been made in the teaching of music and ICT. In design and technology there has been an overall improvement in teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan and prepare well.
- Teachers use a good range of teaching styles.
- Teachers' very high expectations are reflected in pupils' very positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils collaborate well and work well independently.
- Assessment and target setting have a positive impact on standards in English and mathematics.
- Insufficient use is made of strategies to promote active learning in some whole class activities.
- Systematic monitoring of teaching and learning is underdeveloped in some areas.

Commentary

17. The strengths in teaching far outweigh the weaknesses. The quality of teaching is consistently good for pupils in the Foundation Stage and infant and junior classes, and occasionally it is excellent. Teaching for pupils in the junior classes is often very good.

18. Planning and assessment for the Foundation Stage is of good quality and the teaching motivates children to settle easily and to achieve well. A strong emphasis is placed on the key skills in literacy and numeracy in all lessons across all subjects, which promotes pupils' progress and achievement well. As yet, the quality of teaching is not always reflected in the levels achieved by older pupils in statutory assessments.

19. Teachers' good subject knowledge underpins their ability to present subjects with freshness and energy, which is seen in the thoroughness of their planning and their enthusiasm during lessons. Most lessons proceed at a fast pace and almost every minute is well used. Good attention is given to extending pupils' skills, for example, when they use the interactive whiteboard in Year 6 to show what they have learned about writing biographies. Learning objectives are clearly defined to meet the needs of all pupils and are used as a focus for assessment. They are shared with pupils, who understand the criteria by which their learning will be evaluated. Teachers use questions skilfully and often challenge pupils to explain their thinking, for instance, suggesting alternative ways to calculate square numbers in Year 6. Support teachers and teaching assistants provide good models and expect pupils to consider their ideas carefully. This aids progress, particularly for pupils with SEN. For instance, a Year 6 pupil with SEN wrote in a small group, *'When darkness fell for two nights and days she ate snow and hallucinated'*. At times, however, a few gifted and talented pupils are not challenged separately from groups with higher attainment.

20. Teachers foster good relationships and have very high expectations of their pupils, who they manage very well. Varied teaching styles and good levels of challenge and support result in pupils' very positive attitudes, and good behaviour and progress. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to work collaboratively and are well encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, for instance,

when they design slide presentations using ‘Powerpoint’¹ in Year 6. Classroom display supports pupils in working independently, with prominent focus on vocabulary and learning objectives. There is, however, insufficient use of strategies to promote active learning during some whole class activities.

21. Assessment and target setting have a positive impact on standards in English and mathematics. Teachers make effective use of statutory and other tests to monitor and assess progress. Targets for the next steps of learning are identified for groups, reviewed regularly and shared with pupils and parents. Marking supports pupils in knowing what they must do to improve and in evaluating progress towards their targets. However, assessment of learning is under-developed in some non-core subjects and many of the subject co-ordinators have included this as a priority in their action plans.

22. Although there has been monitoring of teaching and learning in some subjects, the current system lacks a strategic overview. This process is not carried out with focused objectives, reducing its potential to accelerate improvements. Opportunities for sharing some of the very good practice that exists within the school are not yet being fully exploited.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 66 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (3%)	14 (21%)	31(47%)	19 (29%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

23. The school provides a good curriculum, meeting all statutory requirements. Due emphasis is placed on the promotion of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils benefit greatly in most subjects from the very good skills and subject knowledge of their teachers. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Quality and match of teachers and support staff are good.
- Additional opportunities for enrichment are very good.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- Aspects of accommodation are unsuitable.
- Distinct challenges for gifted and talented pupils are not planned in some subjects.

Commentary

24. The main strength of the school is the quality of its teachers. They are knowledgeable in many subjects. By working very closely with colleagues in parallel classes they share their expertise very well in lesson planning and manage the curriculum skilfully. This motivates pupils well. They speak positively about their teachers and how they make learning interesting. This is sometimes despite drawbacks in the accommodation. For example, a Year 5 games lesson was taught effectively in spite of the class having to use a very small playground.

¹ 'Powerpoint' is a commercial software programme used for designing and displaying slide presentations on the computer.

25. Teachers are well aware of the learning difficulties of some pupils. Lesson planning provides well for their needs. Teachers manage any behaviour problems effectively so that pupils' learning is not adversely affected. Other adults provide good support to pupils with SEN. A Year 6 group was fully involved in a lesson in mathematics, benefiting from a very capable support assistant. However, whilst the school has identified and makes some additional provision for gifted and talented pupils, it is not evident that they are fully challenged in all lessons.

26. The school provides very good enrichment to the curriculum. This applies not only in lesson time but also before and after school, and at lunchtimes. Teachers and other adults volunteer their time to provide further opportunities in a wide range of activities. These include many aspects of music and sports, as well as literature, art and ICT. A high proportion of the pupils takes advantage of these opportunities. Activities such as these help to cement the very good relationships in school, providing a good basis for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school's very good ethos is one of caring and sharing. It is supported in activities such as circle time². A Year 5 class was heard sharing their thoughts on feelings and relationships. The teacher played a key role in this so that the pupils reflected well. Throughout the school, pupils co-operate effectively and share fairly. The oldest pupils have a sensible and mature attitude to school and to others.

Care, guidance and support

27. Staff foster very good relationships with pupils. These form the basis for the satisfactory procedures in place for ensuring their welfare, health and safety and for providing good support, advice and guidance as they move through the school. Staff value pupils' views and have put in place a satisfactory range of opportunities for involving pupils in new developments.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good relationships between staff and pupils through the school.
- Children are well prepared for starting school and moving to their next one.
- Good support, advice and guidance are given to pupils as they grow older.

Commentary

28. The school provides a caring, supportive and disciplined learning environment where staff are committed to fostering very good relationships with and amongst pupils. Children like school and trust the staff to help and take good care of them.

29. Procedures for child protection are in place in line with local arrangements. Staff are given satisfactory guidance but not all have received up-to-date training. Health and safety procedures ensure that good risk assessments are carried out for school trips. The school has begun to routinely assess the site for risks and to put in place procedures to reduce or eliminate any hazards identified. Health and safety issues identified during the inspection are being rectified.

30. Staff get to know children and their families well before children enter the Reception class. Good opportunities are provided for parents to become familiar with school procedures. Children are helped to settle in gradually and the school is very responsive to individual needs. Arrangements to help children settle into school when they join at other times are well considered and effective. A good range of links with other primary schools and local secondary schools helps staff and parents to prepare pupils for a smooth transfer.

² 'Circle time' is a planned activity where pupils learn to share their personal feelings with each other and adults.

31. Relationships between adults and children are very good. Teachers know pupils well and respond conscientiously to their personal and academic needs. Each pupil has easy access to several other adults that they can turn to throughout the school day. Staff help children to know how well they are doing, and what they need to do to succeed, by sharing information and by highlighting successes. Pupils appreciate the guidance they receive and are very keen to be seen to do well.

32. The school seeks pupils' views about school life and the world around them in assemblies, during circle time and informally day to day. Staff are interested in pupils' ideas and respond to them when possible. For instance, a suggestion from one pupil to ensure that everyone has someone to play with during breaks was put into practice and is valued by pupils. Pupils have volunteered some good ideas about how they would like the playgrounds to be improved. However, there are as yet no formal mechanisms such as a 'school council' to find out what pupils like best about school in general and to involve them in making improvements that they feel are important.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

33. The school works well with parents. Parents are well informed by the school and contribute well to children's learning. School procedures for seeking and acting on parents' views and for dealing with any concerns or complaints are satisfactory. Links with other schools and colleges are good and those with the community are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school has established a good range of positive links with parents.
- Annual written reports give parents a lot of clear information on how their child is getting along.
- Links with other schools benefit pupils' academic and personal development.

Commentary

34. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to establish a good relationship with parents and has been very successful. Parents speak very highly of the school, especially about its friendly atmosphere and the commitment of staff.

35. The school provides parents with a wide range of information in a variety of forms and is particularly good at giving clear details, specific to individuals, in annual written reports on pupils' progress. However, parents would like more information about the provision for the youngest children, about homework in infant classes and literacy and numeracy. The school has recently moved an open night from the autumn term to the spring term in response to parental requests, but some parents find that this is too late in the year for them to be sure that their children are progressing well and to learn how best to help them. The school is interested in parents' views and has sought them, for instance about school clubs and traffic issues. However, it has not yet established a formal system to seek the views of all parents about what is provided, especially in preparation for new developments, that would help to ensure satisfaction.

36. Parents are welcomed into school and many take the opportunities to see the school in action, to share special events or to help in classrooms and with trips. Most parents find that staff are easily approached and particularly appreciate the way in which the senior staff are seen around the school at key times.

37. Good links with other schools help children to get to know the secondary school that they will move to, and help staff to share information and some training. The school works particularly well with local high schools, especially in providing activities for gifted or talented pupils to extend their skills through special projects.

38. The school has established a range of links within the local and wider communities that support pupils' personal development well. Visitors are welcomed into school and pupils are taken

on a range of visits to places of interest. A particularly exciting opportunity was very well used and appreciated by older pupils. They were taken to London to visit Westminster where they heard their Member of Parliament speak on a local issue. The school provides work experience and training for high school and local college students.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

39. The leadership of the school is good and the management of the school is satisfactory. The governing body is effective and makes a good contribution to the strategic direction of the school. The leadership and management have had a positive impact on improving standards and achievement. The school is well positioned to improve further.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- A committed and enthusiastic leadership team with good potential to drive forward improvements.
- Effective governing body well led by an exceptionally committed Chair.
- Structures supporting co-ordinators' roles in school improvement are not clear enough.
- Systems for school self-review and the management of staff professional development lack rigour.
- Some actions to follow risk assessments are slow.

Commentary

40. The headteacher provides good, caring leadership. The leadership team and the governing body share a clear view of the school's direction and priorities for improvement. All staff work very well together as a team, and value and trust each other. The school's culture is driven by enthusiasm and commitment towards raising achievement for all pupils in a climate where everyone succeeds.

41. The governing body has a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and a good working relationship with it. The chair of governors is fully involved and exceptionally committed to the work of the school. She meets frequently with the headteacher to discuss issues and evaluate progress. Governors are kept well informed by subject co-ordinators, regular meetings and reports to the full governing body.

42. The governors contribute effectively to strategic planning through consideration of the targets in the development plan and discussing progress reports and performance. Although they ensure that the school fulfils all its statutory duties, thorough evaluation and action taken to follow risk assessments of health and safety on the school site are not always given a high enough priority. For instance, some features of pathways identified as unsafe were not rectified until after the inspection.

43. Numerous changes to staffing have taken place, with 12 teachers appointed since 2000. Co-ordinators are now strongly positioned to make a significant contribution to improvement. Although many in this group are new to the school, there are plans in place to support their development in carrying out these roles, building upon areas of excellent practice.

44. The school development plan results from consultation among staff and governors. Co-ordinators' useful action plans and reviews support this work, and the progress being made towards most objectives is good. Pupils' achievements are tracked, and targets set for improvement are having a positive impact on raising standards.

45. Annual review of the school's work by the school leadership team is used as the basis for the next school development plan. However, although evaluation of teaching and learning are used well to inform it, the self-review process is not sufficiently rigorous in its structure to enable sharply focused improvements. Some priorities are not planned clearly for the medium term and need more

frequent review. Skills in implementing and evaluating developments are under-developed. The outcomes of reviews are not always identified as the starting points for subsequent improvements or yet linked closely enough to professional development.

46. The continuing professional development of staff is valued and staff receive training which often arises from performance management reviews. The management of professional development is supportive but is not yet rigorous enough to accelerate and check on specific improvements.

47. The deployment of staff is generally good. Currently, the deputy teaches mathematics in junior classes for half of the week and spends the remainder on aspects of school management. This enables teachers to have useful non-contact time. The school has not yet considered different ways of using such expertise in order to support current priorities.

48. Issues are efficiently addressed as they arise and the school has effective systems for financial management. A large surplus in 2003, arising from delayed expenditure of earmarked funds and staffing issues, is being spent this year.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	747,087.00
Total expenditure	672,094.00
Expenditure per pupil	1703.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	37,718.00
Balance carried forward to the next	74,993.00

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage **is good**. The children start school in the September before they are five. Induction arrangements are good. Most visit the Reception class for several afternoons during the summer term while they still are attending local nurseries. Parents and carers feel welcome and receive good information. All the children achieve well because the teaching is good and the curriculum is thoroughly planned to provide a good spread of interesting activities. The children are managed very well. There are high expectations for them to develop increasing independence through exploration of many rich learning experiences which are well matched to their needs and interests. Good use is made of assessment to plan the next steps in the children's learning. Teachers, support staff and parent volunteers work as an effective team, providing good quality support, and focus on seeing that all the children's needs are met effectively. However, although the inside areas are spacious, shared flexibly and used efficiently, the outdoor provision is unsatisfactory. There are good plans to develop the outdoor environment, which will enhance the provision this year.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching places high expectations on children to work together. They achieve well and are in line to reach, and many to exceed, the expected goals by the end of the year.
- Every lesson is well used to encourage children to contribute their ideas, develop sensitivity to others, and to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Very good relationships strengthen children's confidence and stimulate their willingness to learn.

Commentary

50. Most children enter Reception with personal, social and emotional development in line with expectations for children of their age. Almost all know what is expected of them, and behave well, as staff have worked effectively to set good models and clear boundaries for them. Most children listen well, and select and carry out independent activities sensibly. They are familiar with rules and routines. Calm and positive class management results in children sustaining concentration for long periods, for instance, as they discuss and compare different shapes hidden in the sand. Staff's enthusiasm and well-directed support encourage the children to play harmoniously together. Even the youngest are able to share resources, such as books and the computer, and use them with care. Most take turns with ease, without being prompted. Most children are likely to meet, and some to exceed, the early learning goal for this area by the end of the year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers provide imaginative approaches to capture children's interest which promote their language skills well; teaching is good.

Commentary

51. Many good opportunities are provided for children to speak and listen, for instance, when they are playing at making appointments for adult patients in the doctor's surgery. Staff are clearly focused on extending the children's vocabulary while responding positively to their ideas. All adults listen carefully to the children and provide consistent encouragement for them to answer questions, offer comments and explain their views. For instance, many children were very animated, and voiced concerned disapproval that Goldilocks was '*so very naughty*', while they joined in with the teacher retelling the story, based on illustrations from a big book. A majority can identify some initial sounds, recognise their own names and attempt signing up for activities by themselves. Most can hold a pencil correctly and form a few recognisable letters in words when writing party invitations. Even the youngest children handle books carefully and know that text has meaning and goes from left to right. This results in all children making good progress. While they enter Reception with average attainment, early indications are that, by the end of the year, most children are on course to meet the expectations of this area of learning. Some are likely to exceed them, particularly in speaking and reading.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers plan interesting practical activities which enable children to achieve well in this area.
- There is a good focus on developing mathematical vocabulary.

Commentary

52. All the staff use every opportunity to promote mathematical understanding. Teaching and learning are good and all children achieve well. Many children are able to count to ten and are working at or above levels expected for their age. Good lessons encourage children to count to ten forwards and backwards to the beats of a drum or the swings of an apple on a string. Some are beginning to recognise cubes and cones hidden in 'shape socks', the sand tray and the 'feely' box. A few are able to draw squares and triangles using the computer. Observation of their work indicates that by the end of the year most children in Reception can carry out simple addition and subtraction to ten. Most enter Reception with attainment in line with expectations for children of their age. All the children make good progress and are on course to meet, and some to exceed, the expectations of this area of learning by the end of the year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers plan a range of interesting activities to promote knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Role play situations are used effectively to support this area of learning.

Commentary

53. The children enter Reception with attainment in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress and are achieving well. Teachers use good questioning skills to develop children's

understanding of their recent past and stimulate their curiosity with tasks to which they relate well. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. The 'Three Bear's cottage' and the 'doctor's surgery' are used effectively to capture children's interest and extend knowledge of their own growth and change. Adults' skilful interventions develop children's awareness of parts of the body. For instance, they sketch self portraits using mirrors to observe eye colour and consider what eyes, lashes and noses do. Thoughtful links are well planned and promote learning across different areas of learning well, such as labelling parts of the body in the doctor's surgery, or collecting class information about eye colour in order to make a chart for display. Story tapes are in constant use and children show good confidence on the computer painting 'to make the dark night red'. A majority are on course to meet the expectations of this area by the end of the year, and some are likely to exceed them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Indoor sessions are used well to develop the children's skills.
- The outdoor accommodation is too small and does not have a secure area to provide suitable opportunities for development.
- There is no fixed equipment for climbing, and resources for outdoor play are limited.

Commentary

54. No outdoor sessions were observed during the inspection, and there was only one lesson seen in the hall, although children were observed in the playground. Overall, the children are working at levels expected for their age. The outside provision is unsatisfactory as the area is not outfitted for continuous access, is too small and is not well enough resourced for play. In the hall, children are given useful opportunities to explore different ways of moving, for example, hopping and jumping like rabbits. They recognise the change that occurs to their bodies when they are active. In lessons, children develop their manipulative skills by cutting shapes, handling brushes, and using forks to fill cups with lentils at the texture table. Many are able to handle finger puppets with increasing dexterity and use small construction materials to make models to achieve a planned effect. Overall, they achieve well. A majority enter Reception with average attainment for their age. Early indications are that they are on course to achieve the early learning goal for this area by the end of the year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Well-structured and directed activities enable good learning to occur.
- Teachers' good skills in questioning support and develop children's ideas for designs.

Commentary

55. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. Most are working at levels expected for their age. A good range of imaginative and directly taught activities is planned to stimulate children's ideas. Children achieve well through exploring opportunities for role play, using paint and other media, and investigating different materials to make models. Staff encourage children to explain their choices and this promotes their willingness to learn. Many are confident to discuss their work. For example, a child making tea lights observed, '*Mine will look like*

a star, that will be good because it is a Christmas shape'. Teachers' skilful questioning enables children to share what they think, for instance, that clay is better to use than dough because it is easier to paint. Most children are likely to meet the early learning goal for this area of learning by the end of the year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Standards in writing are improving.
- Good use of language and literacy skills in other subjects
- The subject co-ordinator provides strong leadership.
- The library is underused and requires further development.
- Systems for monitoring the subject lack rigour.

Commentary

56. Standards in all aspects of English are above average at the age of seven. At the age of 11, standards are above average in speaking and listening and are in line with national expectations in reading and writing. Evidence collected during the inspection indicates that standards are rising. High quality teaching in Years 3 to 6 is having a positive impact on levels of achievement and rates of progress. All pupils across the school achieve well, including those for whom English is an additional language, pupils with SEN and higher attaining pupils. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

57. Overall, this represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection.

58. Throughout the school, staff work hard to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teachers make use of challenging vocabulary related to the subject, clarify the meaning of new words and require pupils to justify or explain their thinking. Pupils are expected to listen attentively, to respond appropriately and to value the views of others. However, methods of promoting active engagement of more pupils in class discussions, for instance, using 'talking partners', are underused in some lessons.

59. Standards in speaking and listening are above average and pupils of all ages make good progress. The majority of pupils speak clearly and confidently, and listen well. By the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6 they are effective communicators.

60. The majority of pupils read with enthusiasm and make good progress. They use different strategies to read unknown words and are able to tackle new material with confidence. Older pupils are developing the skills necessary to extract information from a text and are able to express preferences for the work of different authors. Use of home-school reading diaries across the school allows parents to support their children's learning and this makes a positive contribution to improving pupil performance.

61. In the library, while books are well organised, many of them are worn and some displays do not attract pupils' interest. Pupils' library skills are underdeveloped.

62. Raising standards in writing has been a priority for the school and there is evidence that strategies to address it are proving successful. These include:

- * High quality, imaginative teaching;
- * Systematic teaching of skills;
- * Target setting and marking that help pupils to know what they must do to improve;
- * Opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing skills across the curriculum.

63. Teaching is good overall. It was never less than good in the junior classes seen and in a number of classes teaching was very good. In Year 5, for instance, the plenary was well used for pupils to justify and identify the key features of writing good instructions for food packets. Teachers have a clear understanding of the curriculum and plan effectively, identifying appropriate learning outcomes. Skilful questioning is used to assess and extend learning. As a result, pupils are achieving well and are making good, and at times very good, progress.

64. The subject co-ordinator provides strong leadership and brings expertise and enthusiasm to the role. She has a clear view of what needs to be improved and has produced a good, detailed action plan. At present, whole school monitoring and evaluation procedures do not help her to clarify those aspects of practice which need strengthening or guide how to provide support where improvements are needed. Resources for the teaching of English are satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. Opportunities to develop literacy skills through work in other subjects are good. In a Year 6 history lesson, for example, pupils worked in their literacy groups to research Greek theatre and were challenged to meet their literacy targets. Pupils' work indicates that they are given a range of opportunities to apply reading and writing skills, including those of note-taking and drafting. This represents an improvement since the last inspection and is having a positive impact on raising standards.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **very good**. The pupils achieve very well and standards are high. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' achievement is very good.
- Good teaching, particularly in junior classes where it is often very good.
- Good use of assessment.
- Very good leadership and management.
- Literacy is not always fully supported.
- There is insufficient additional provision for gifted and talented pupils within class lessons.

Commentary

66. Standards by the age of seven are above average and they are well above by the age of 11. In recent years, standards have been consistently high. Pupils are well prepared to use and apply their skills in numeracy to other areas of the curriculum and to real life. They make very good progress through the school. Their achievement is very good.

67. The high standards are clearly attributable to the quality of leadership and the time given to the subject by the co-ordinator. Pupils' attainment is assessed both frequently and thoroughly. The information obtained is analysed for many aspects so that any weaknesses or imbalances can be, and are, addressed. The grouping of pupils in junior classes is helpful in that teachers plan more closely for the pupils' needs. As a result, they are all challenged. However, this is not always the case in some infant classes where there is a wide range of ability.

68. Teaching is good overall. It was never less than good in the junior classes seen and in a number of them it was very good. Teachers understand the numeracy strategy and apply it with confidence. Teaching methods are well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils.

69. Teachers' enthusiasm and lively presentations result in pupils being captivated and anxious to learn more about the subject. For instance, pupils in Year 3 made significant gains in learning when they joined the teacher 'dancing' along the counting stick.

70. Teachers' planning is very good, with clear learning objectives shared with the pupils. Assessment supports learning well, for example, through lesson reviews which reinforce and provide checks on progress. Resources are used to good effect and pupils use them sensibly and purposefully. This is seen when some Year 3 pupils use number fans to show their quick mental calculations. In most lessons, management of pupils is based on providing them with interesting and well-matched strategies for learning. On occasions, some infant classes are insufficiently well managed for all pupils to make the best possible progress in the lesson. Pupils with SEN are identified and provided for well. The school makes additional provision for a few gifted and talented pupils but this is not evident in all lessons where these pupils might be. Teachers highlight, use and expect pupils to use correct mathematical vocabulary, and they provide additional support for this by means of helpful, explanatory displays. Some pupils, however, constantly misspell key words and this practice sometimes goes uncorrected. Whilst pupils are set investigational work they are not always required to record their ideas 'scientifically'. There are no written explanations of their findings or discovery of rules, to clarify and reinforce their understanding.

Mathematics across the curriculum

71. Pupils show their knowledge of mathematics in applying accurate measuring in design and technology. In music they count time accurately, which aids their sense of rhythm. Art displays are based on mathematical shapes and Year 3 art shows pupils' understanding of symmetry in composing repeating patterns. In a Year 5 lesson, mathematics is linked well with ICT by using the interactive screen to support effectively the pupils' understanding of angles.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning in junior classes are good and pupils achieve well.
- Investigational work is very well embedded in lessons.
- The leadership and management of science are excellent.
- Some highest attaining children need to be provided with more challenging tasks.

Commentary

72. It was not possible to observe any infant classes, but discussions with pupils, and scrutiny of their work and science displays in classrooms and around the school indicate that standards at age seven are broadly average. Achievement is satisfactory. Although standards at age 11 are broadly average, they are on course to improve as a result of the good quality teaching and learning.

73. By age seven, pupils are familiar with the investigative process and can use it appropriately. They are able to make observations, carry out simple tests and can record their findings. By age 11 they have acquired good investigative skills and a majority achieve well. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls. Almost all have a good understanding of variables and can set up and conduct their own careful experiments.

74. Teaching in the junior classes is good, with some examples of very good teaching seen. Questioning is used very well to encourage pupils to think carefully and to consider possible solutions. In Year 6, for instance, the teacher used questions very effectively to help pupils to explore ways to identify which samples of water contained dissolved materials. Lessons are always well planned and structured with clear, shared objectives and good opportunities for pupils to experiment and investigate. Tasks are varied according to the learning needs of broad groups, including those with SEN. However, a few of the very highest attaining pupils are not always effectively challenged and could achieve more.

75. Teachers have explicit expectations and insist that high standards of behaviour are always maintained with no disruption to learning. The pace of lessons is good and pupils have adequate time to investigate. Teachers' subject expertise and confidence in raising challenging questions and responding to pupils' queries help them to learn well. In Year 4, for instance, the teacher's skilful interventions deepened pupils' understanding of the effect of slope on the movement of a block.

76. The pupils enjoy science, investigate keenly and collaborate well in groups. They are able to share ideas and resources well in their experiments. They take pride in presenting their work in a range of formats.

77. The leadership of the subject is excellent. The co-ordinator has a very good overview and has established a very clear action plan that is well underway. This includes a major contribution to very good medium term planning and significant development of assessment. An excellent structure has been implemented from September for work from each pupil to be collected regularly. This is to be assessed against standardised examples and the outcomes used to plan next steps in learning. A science club is being established across the school to capture pupils' interest. The co-ordinator has evaluated the school's performance and has acted on the outcomes. Lessons have been observed and teachers provided with helpful feedback. The quality of pupils' work in infant classes has been examined and discussed. Finance has been used well to extend the range and quality of resources.

78. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection. Pupils are now consistently encouraged to make their own decisions about investigational work, including recording formats. Pupils' good skills in ICT contribute well to their knowledge and understanding in science. In the infant classes, pupils collect information about eating healthy food and store it on the computer.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Teachers' enthusiasm and expertise are good.
- The computer suite is cramped and provision across the school is uneven.

Commentary

79. Standards have improved since the last inspection, particularly in the junior classes. Pupils are attaining levels above national expectations and all pupils, including those with SEN, achieve well in lessons.

80. Even the youngest pupils log on and select appropriate folders and programs on the screen. In Years 1 and 2, they have a good level of keyboard skills. They are able to rearrange the streets on a map of a town and paint pictures of characters, for instance, 'Messy Milly', in order to write and illustrate a story.

81. In Years 3 and 5, pupils learn about 'fields' and how to enter, store and use data. Year 6 pupils confidently use 'clip art', photos and titles to enhance slide presentations for school, such as one entitled '*Lowton West is the Best*'. With help from a local high school, they gain experience of digital video while making a promotional film. Most pupils collaborate well, providing their own advice and support for each other, and are absorbed by their work.

82. Teachers' lively presentations captivate their pupils' interest right from the start of each session. Pupils know what they need to achieve and they respond enthusiastically to well focused instruction. The lessons are fast paced, every minute is well used and teachers review learning objectives frequently. They place consistent emphasis on promoting pupils' understanding of technical vocabulary and the rapid development of their skills. Teachers structure questions well and insist that pupils explain their ideas. They have received national training in the teaching of ICT and show good levels of expertise and confidence.

83. Progress in lessons is good. The recent acquisition of laptops and two interactive whiteboards in Years 5 and 6 enables effective class demonstrations and contributes well to pupils' application of ICT skills for learning in different subjects. Pupils are very willing to demonstrate their work, using these with high levels of confidence. In Year 5, for example, they used the interactive whiteboard to show others how to control a protractor in order to estimate and measure different angles.

84. The subject is well managed. The curriculum is planned to enliven and extend work in different subjects for each year group. Conversations with pupils, and scrutiny of samples of work, show that they have experience of controlling devices, modelling, using graphics and word processing. New class record sheets provide assessments of pupils' skills based on the learning objectives of the planned units of work and help to identify the next steps in learning. A portfolio of work to exemplify standards for each year group has been started by the co-ordinator, who also provides useful support to teachers.

85. Although the school's provision has been steadily extended, lack of space in the computer suite and limited access to computers in some classrooms slows progress in some areas. Where ICT is used for subject teaching, it enhances learning well. Although the sharing of equipment across year groups is an efficient way of using resources, all pupils do not have easy access to the Internet, e-mail and use of digital photography across the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. Good use is made of ICT to support skills in geography and mathematics, and in design and technology to illustrate books for English. Presentations are prepared, and research is undertaken by older pupils which combine word processing, graph work and databases. There are also good links with literacy and numeracy.

HUMANITIES

In humanities, four lessons were seen in **history** and **geography**. It is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision but there is evidence from pupils' work that standards are broadly average.

87. In Year 2, very effective use was made of a visitor to discuss seaside holidays in the 1950's and to explore the similarities and differences compared to pupils' own experiences. Pupils showed sound historical knowledge, for instance, of steam trains, Punch and Judy, and souvenirs. In Year 6, pupils researched Greek theatre and shared their findings using the interactive whiteboard.

88. Pupils in Year 2 were able to recognise local geographical features from maps. They made good use of the relevant geographical vocabulary and used resources well. In Year 6, the teacher used questions well to develop pupils' understanding of deserts and high rainfall areas. The pupils had satisfactory knowledge and could use appropriate vocabulary.

89. Pupils are enthusiastic and focus on their tasks. They clearly understand their learning targets, make good progress and achieve well. Activities are well linked to the development of their literacy skills.

90. Leadership is satisfactory. Co-ordinators are involved in some monitoring and evaluation of lessons and provide useful support in their subjects. Effective long and medium term planning supports progress in learning. A system for assessment has recently been introduced, but it is under-developed.

91. Only two lessons were seen in **religious education** during the inspection so a judgement about provision has not been made. Evidence from discussions with pupils and observation of their written work indicates that standards of attainment are in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

92. Year 1 pupils are inspired to gain appreciation of the importance of caring for others. In Year 2, they learn about the life and parables of Jesus. Pupils in Year 6 are successfully encouraged to understand that beliefs are subject to interpretation over time, for instance, when they compare Luke and Matthew's written accounts of the marriage of Mary and Joseph. Visits to the Jewish Museum and Manchester Cathedral contribute to developing pupils' awareness of faith. Visitors from a local mosque and Hindu temple explain the significance of major festivals and holy days.

93. The curriculum is planned satisfactorily and has suitable links to other subjects. The co-ordinator provides support for planning, intends to monitor standards later this term and is purchasing some additional resources. However, these are limited. Valuable opportunities are missed to link aesthetic and spiritual awareness as suitable artefacts and pictorial materials are underused to enrich teaching.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Only three lessons were seen in **art and design**. It is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision. Further evidence was collected from pupils' work, talking with them about their learning and discussions with the co-ordinator.

Commentary

94. Standards are broadly average throughout the school. Over the year, pupils receive a broad curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study and contributes to pupils' cultural and spiritual development. Staff are highly enthusiastic and pupils take pride in their work. Skills are developed through a variety of activities. Towards the end of a project, pupils have the opportunity to apply them in a creative context.

95. The subject co-ordinator brings expertise to the role and is starting to be instrumental in raising standards. He provides excellent support for colleagues and encourages them to explore challenging techniques and activities, as seen in displays produced as part of a special project linked to the theme of texture and pattern. Year 1 pupils produce weaving using colours and materials from the environment, while Year 6 pupils select items from the school grounds to create designs in their mouldings which were formed out of clay.

96. A weekly art club gives pupils from Year 2 the opportunity to experience an interesting range of activities while also providing a valuable introduction to working with older pupils. Resources for teaching and learning are good and reflect a commitment to improving the quality of the provision. Computer software is used to support learning.

97. Monitoring and assessment of learning are under-developed at present although the subject action plan indicates that this is a priority for development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The timetable is organised to enable more effective teaching and learning.
- Teaching of the subject is improving.
- Monitoring and assessment are underdeveloped.

Commentary

98. Standards are average for pupils at the age of seven and slightly below average at the age of 11. The performance of older pupils reflects previous weaknesses in provision that have now been addressed. Teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes good. This represents an improvement overall since the last inspection.

99. Teaching is organised in blocks to allow longer sessions and the opportunity to complete a worthwhile project during a half term. This promotes positive attitudes to learning, and pupils apply themselves with enthusiasm and are proud of their achievements. Many are able to work independently and co-operate well with their peers. They are well supported in their activities by teachers and teaching assistants, who are joined by parents who give their time voluntarily.

100. Planning booklets are used throughout the school to support pupils in researching, designing, making and evaluating their work. As a result, the majority of pupils are able to talk confidently when describing the process and are clear about the purpose and outcome of any activity. Pupils in Year 3 were engaged in designing and making a sandwich. They had conducted a class survey and had interviewed a member of staff from a local supermarket. They were observed agreeing the criteria for evaluating their own sandwich and recording their ideas in the booklet. Sketches and diagrams were clearly labelled and details of resources were included.

101. Pupils are taught to use a range of tools and equipment , and in Year 1 were discussing health and safety before using tools to grate and peel food. Use of ICT to support learning, either through planning, modelling or control, is at an early stage and is recognised by the school as an area for further development.

102. Leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides good support for the staff and has worked hard to improve the resources, which are now satisfactory. However, there are no formal systems to assess or record the development of skills, and monitoring of the subject is under-developed.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **very good**. This shows very good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils have many opportunities to make and enjoy music.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good leadership and management.
- The curriculum is good.
- Good teaching of singing, resulting in above average standards.
- Very good extra-curricular provision.

Commentary

103. There has been significant improvement in the subject since the previous inspection. Music has a high profile in the school. This stems from a very lively and hardworking subject leader. She is well supported by other teachers to provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities. These include choral singing and drama, and recorder groups for pupils of various ages. A recently introduced Music Club, led by another enthusiastic teacher, provides a group of Year 2 pupils with opportunities to further their skills and knowledge of the subject.

104. The co-ordinator's enthusiasm is infectious, not only in encouraging her colleagues to support her but also in her singing classes. She teaches singing across the school and her high-quality teaching results in above average standards throughout the junior classes. Lessons are well planned and songs are selected with great care so that pupils sing with enthusiasm, very harmoniously and with dramatic expression when appropriate. A particularly fine example of this was seen when Year 5 and 6 pupils performed the 'witches' song from Macbeth - singing, playing and choral speaking with very good dramatic effect.

105. Class lessons provide pupils with opportunities to compose music, listen to it and appreciate it. However, opportunities are missed in assemblies to reinforce what is taught in lessons. When a Year 6 class dramatised a 'Just-so' story, some very appropriate music from the Carnival of the Animals was played, but no reference was made to it.

106. A very large number of pupils are receiving individual instrumental tuition in string, woodwind, brass and keyboard instruments. Links have been made with the Halle orchestra and the school choir participates in local music festivals. Various music ensembles visit the school so that listening to folk groups, wind bands and jazz ensembles widens the pupils' experience. Workshops such as 'African Skies' extend pupils' knowledge of the music of other cultures. Some Year 6 pupils bubbled with enthusiasm when recounting memories of the special Music Day. They speak confidently about different types of music and their own composing experiences, explaining musical terms such as a 'rondo'.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**. Pupils are encouraged to participate enthusiastically and co-operatively. This makes a very good contribution to their personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching, particularly in the junior classes, resulting in above average standards.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good.
- Good extra-curricular provision.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Assessment currently only takes place in swimming.

107. Standards in swimming are above average. All the current Year 6 pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres. Around 25 per cent of them swim in excess of this. Standards in dance at the age of seven are similar to those seen in the majority of schools. Standards in both dance and games at the age of 11 are above average. Achievement is good. This is due to the good quality of the teaching.

108. The subject co-ordinator, although inexperienced in her role, provides an excellent role model for her colleagues. In her dance lesson the pupils behaved impeccably and performed without inhibition and with evident enjoyment. They reflected the attitude of the teacher, who was actively involved in all parts of the lesson. The pupils used space sensibly and showed a good sense of rhythm in their imaginative machine-like movements. Boys and girls were partnered and collaborated very well. Pupils showed appreciation of others' performances in their positive comments.

109. In games lessons, pupils learn basic skills well because teachers know their subject. Learning is progressive and has a sense of purpose as pupils move on to apply their skills in small games. Teachers set standards in dress, personal involvement and fairness so that all pupils are included and collaborate very well in teams. Pupils have additional opportunities to participate in further practices, and competitively. Extra-curricular clubs include those for rugby, soccer, netball, fencing and other sports, for which various teachers volunteer their time. Year 6 pupils who go on a residential visit experience a wide range of challenging activities.

110. The subject leader does not currently have the opportunity to observe lessons across the school. She has plans to further raise standards and to provide staff training. These include the introduction of formal assessment of pupils' acquisition of skills. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

111. In art and design, history, geography, physical education and religious education, the role of the co-ordinator is not consistently developed. Most are knowledgeable about their subjects but their roles in school improvement are limited by lack of a strategic system for whole school self- review.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Commentary

112. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection so judgements about provision have not been made. The arrangements for personal, social and health education, including drugs education, are satisfactory. A draft policy and scheme of work have been made available to guide teachers, and support has been provided by a new co-ordinator. The programme is taught partly through other subjects. For instance, in science pupils learn about healthy eating and in physical education, about the importance of exercise. Circle time and other opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school have a positive impact on their personal development. Visitors, such as the school nurse, add to the quality of the provision. Visits to the Houses of Parliament provide pupils in Year 6 with first hand opportunities to observe the democratic process at work.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	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).