

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newton-le-Willows

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104775

Headteacher: Mr G Senior

Lead inspector: Mrs F D Gander

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th May 2004

Inspection number: 257021

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

Crown copyright 2004

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:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	437
School address:	Sanderling Road Newton-le-Willows Merseyside
Postcode:	WA12 9UF
Telephone number:	01925 224590
Fax number:	01925 220867
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Rahaman
Date of previous inspection:	29 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Newton-le-Willows Primary School is a larger than average size primary school with places for 420 full-time pupils ranging from four to eleven years in age. In addition, it has 50 part-time places in its nursery for children who are three years old. At the time of the inspection, 413 primary aged pupils were attending full time, with an additional 47 children attending part-time in the nursery. The school serves an area of East Newton, which is a low socio-economic area, with some areas being officially designated as deprived. This, along with higher than average percentage of pupils taking free school meals, puts the socio-economic background of the school as well below average. There is a lower than average percentage of pupils from other cultural backgrounds, and only two pupils have English as an additional language.

The majority of children transfer from the nursery to the reception class and then into Year 1. Their developmental levels when they enter the Foundation Stage are well below those expected for children of a similar age, with significant difficulties in language and communication and in personal and social development.

The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is much higher than the national average, at 27 per cent. In most classes at least one third of the pupils are identified as having a special educational need. It is particularly high in Year 2 where it is almost a half. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is also above the national average. The school takes a number of pupils who have been excluded from other schools in the area, and in Years 2 and 5 the percentage of pupils who did not start their education in the school is higher than the national average.

Since the year 2000 the school has gained:

- School's Achievement Award (2000)
- Healthy School's Award (2004)
- Flying High Quality Kite Mark EYS (2003)
- Edge Hill College ITT 'Partnership Plus' (2003)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21265	Mrs F D Gander	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, design and technology, special educational needs
9649	Ms J Smith	Lay inspector	
17681	Mr R Sharples	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, geography, physical education
18505	Mr D Matthews	Team inspector	English, music, religious education
15015	Mr M Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, information and communication technology

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus

BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Broughton
Notts
NG22 9HQ

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	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school is effective because pupils achieve well, especially in relation to the low starting point of a great many children. The attitudes, behaviour and community spirit of pupils are key strengths in the school. The headteacher has been inspirational in moving the school forward, and has had very strong support from a hard-working management team and a very knowledgeable governing body. Over the last two years, good improvements have taken place because of purposeful self-evaluation, careful planning for future developments, and the recruitment of keen, professional, and dedicated staff. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By the end of Year 6 pupils achieve well, and the setting of pupils by ability in Years 5 and 6 helps them to make good progress in mathematics and English.
- There is very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage.
- The leadership by the headteacher is excellent, and governors are very committed to running and improving the school.
- The provision for social and moral development is very good and pupils behave very well and become mature learners.
- The school successfully provides a happy, secure and caring environment where pupils form sincere relationships and accept responsibility.
- The information from assessment is not sufficiently analysed or evaluated by the assessment manager in order to provide all staff with detailed patterns of progress made by pupils.
- In classes where there is a very wide range of ability, teachers find it difficult to ensure that all pupils are challenged all of the time.
- There are too few opportunities to further develop numeracy and information and communication technology skills (ICT) within other subjects.
- There are very good community links.

Following the last inspection in 1998 there was a long unsettled period where there were many changes in leadership at all levels. This resulted in a decline in the standards in the school as well as the quality of the overall provision. Following the appointment of an experienced headteacher, the school was rescued from this situation and good improvements have been made. The school has addressed the issues from the last inspection, including presenting more challenge for higher attaining pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6. However, seeking ways to challenge some pupils in other year groups needs to be a continuing focus.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Pupils achieve well. Many start school achieving well below expected levels for children of a similar age, particularly in communication and social skills. When compared with all schools, standards are below the national average in English and mathematics, but they are average for mathematics and above average in English when compared with similar schools. Results are even better in science,

where they meet national averages and compare favourably with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. These results show improvement over the last two years. The improvement of the standards achieved at the end of Year 2 are not as obvious, as the improvements made to staffing and the quality of teaching have not been in place long enough to show up in the end of year results. There is no significant difference between the standards reached by boys and girls, but in numeracy and literacy where pupils are set by ability, the rate of progress and challenge is better than in other classes where there is a very wide range of attainment levels. Pupils have very good attitudes to school, learning and to one another, and in the Foundation Stage attitudes are excellent. They are polite and behave very well. **Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good, overall.** Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, but some parents do not ensure that children arrive for the start of the day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall educational provision of the school is good. Teaching and learning are good, and there are examples of very good teaching. The curriculum is good and consists of experiences that cater for the interests, aptitudes, and particular needs of pupils. Good assessment takes place, but teachers do not always have the detailed information that is collected to plan some lessons. The school provides very good care and good support, advice, and guidance. The accommodation and resources are good. Links with parents are good, and very good with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. Leadership by the headteacher is excellent, and there is now very good support from an enthusiastic management team. However, the recording of assessment, and its evaluation, is not sufficiently rigorous enough to provide information to further raise standards. The governance of the school is very good, and the school meets all legal requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Children like coming to school and feel that they are treated fairly. Parents have great confidence in the school, and an overwhelming majority think that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. A very small number reported that their children had been bullied, but the inspection team felt that the school dealt very well with any occurrence.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Provide information from the analysis and evaluation of assessment to all staff on the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Reduce the wide range of ability in some classes, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Make better use of numeracy and ICT for teaching and learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils, many of whom come into the school achieving well below that expected for children of a similar age, achieve **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well.
- Standards in Year 2 in English, mathematics and science remain below the national average despite the good progress made in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards of achievement by the end of Year 6 have improved and are equal to those in similar schools in mathematics, and better than them in English and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. When children enter the nursery, the majority have attainment levels that are well below those normally expected in all areas of development, and many have identified special educational needs. These children, and some who come into the school in the reception year, have very limited social experiences, poor language development, and start at a low level of achievement. For example, some find it difficult to sit and listen and to play in groups with other children. Some children have difficulty in understanding what is being asked of them and the majority have low levels of social and personal skills, or an awareness of safety. During their time in the nursery and the reception classes, they make good progress in all areas of development and school assessment shows that they make the greatest gains in personal and social development. This is because the teaching and learning in the three classes are of a consistently high quality, and because teachers plan together and assess and record the children's learning thoroughly. Because of the good progress children make in the nursery and reception classes their attainment levels when they enter Year 1 have improved. However, because of the low level from which many children start, the levels are still below those expected for children of a similar age.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.3 (14.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.5 (14.2))	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.1 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 67 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Overall, evidence from the work seen during this inspection shows that standards are below average at the end of Year 2 in English, mathematics and science. This is due to the very high percentage of pupils (50 per cent) who have special educational needs, and the number of children in this year group who did not start their education in the school. This latter group has not had the benefit of the secure Foundation Stage provision. In addition, some of these classes have had changes of staff during the last year due to long-term absence. There has also been some less than satisfactory teaching, and these factors have affected the progress and achievements of these pupils. Managers have addressed these negative aspects of provision during the last year, but the improvements made have not been in place long enough to have a positive effect on the standards achieved in the end of key stage tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (26.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.2 (25.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.5 (27.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 69 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Overall, standards at the end of Year 6 in all three subjects have improved over the last three years, but again the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs means that the school is below the national average when compared with all schools. However, the school's results have improved considerably when they are compared with similar schools. This is especially so in English and science where the results are above the national average. Although pupils achieve well in relation to their previous learning and make good progress, the overall standards do vary from year to year and results depend on the percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. The teachers analyse the results of tests and ongoing assessment, and from this information whole-school targets are set, which are realistic but challenging. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that overall standards have improved recently, but may not yet be as high as they were at the time of last inspection in 1998. New initiatives, such as the literacy strategy, the school's arrangements for assessment, and the targeting of pupils for additional support, and the organisation of teaching groups in Years 5 and 6 are having an effect and are beginning to ensure that pupils attain their best.
- Standards in ICT are below national expectations by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, but by Year 6 pupils reach the expected level and achieve well. Standards achieved in religious education are satisfactory. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys in relation to girls. Any small differences that do occur are identified and become part of the school's overall improvement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their previous learning. This has been maintained since the previous inspection. The pupils are meeting the targets set in their individual education plans well. The support given to individuals and small groups of pupils who are withdrawn from class has a positive effect on their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good** and a strength of the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school effectively encourages pupils to behave very well.
- The school is highly successful in fostering pupils' very good relationships with others.
- It effectively encourages pupils' very good attitudes to school life and in particular to the range of activities that it gives.
- The school is very good at giving pupils a strong awareness of their responsibilities for living in a community.
- Adults promote pupils' social and moral development very well.

Commentary

- The headteacher and all the adults in the school make clear to pupils that they have high expectations of behaviour in lessons and at other times. They give them guidance about how to behave and there are ample rewards for pupils' very good behaviour, such as in assemblies.

As a result, pupils are polite, courteous and respectful of others. Many go out of their way to use their good manners, as when opening doors for visitors. On the rare occasions when teaching does not fully engage pupils, they remain well behaved. Exclusions are rarely used and the school used this sanction appropriately on the five occasions which were recorded last year.

6. Because of the school's very good ethos and the value that it places on good relationships, pupils get on very well with each other and with the adults in the school. They play happily together at playtimes and the school thoughtfully supports this by enabling pupils to play games such as skipping and to use a garden area for quiet activities such as reading.
7. The high level of pupils' interest in the school's range of additional activities, such as after-school clubs, contributes well to their very good attitudes to school life in general. Most pupils enjoy doing homework and bringing it back to school. Above all they enjoy the strong feeling of 'community' that the school provides, and the sense of belonging.
8. The school gives pupils a very good awareness of their responsibilities for living in a community. It takes seriously and acts on the ideas of the school council. As a result, pupils feel that their ideas are valued and that they have a genuine 'say' in the running of the school. For instance, they suggested a water bottle for each pupil and the school has introduced this. Importantly, one pupil suggested that special seats in the playground might be used for pupils to sit on who felt worried or anxious and another pupil would talk to them. The school's introduction of this arrangement has supported its effective vigilance in dealing with the very few instances when pupils feel harassed.
9. Adults promote pupils' social development very well through, for example, ample opportunities to discuss their own feelings and those of others. Pupils learn to respect the thoughts and sensitivities of others. The school gives pupils a very good awareness of their moral responsibilities and they soon have a very clear idea about the difference between right and wrong. The school promotes the pupils' understanding of their own culture and has rightly identified that it could do more to develop their understanding of the cultural traditions of others. Pupils sometimes have the chance to use their initiative in their learning, as when Year 6 pupils arrive early in the morning to organise their own research. The school acknowledges that there might be further chances for pupils to develop independence in their learning.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	354	5	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0
Information not obtained	96	0	0

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

10. Pupils enjoy school and most attend regularly. Currently, the absence figures provided for the local education authority show attendance to be well below the national average. However,

these figures include pupils who are on the school roll but are educated elsewhere. When these pupils are removed from the calculations, attendance is shown to be close to the national average. In recent years the school's determined efforts to improve attendance have resulted in an upward trend. Good help from the education welfare officer based in the school, as well as promotion of good attendance through awards, are proving effective. However, a small number of families still fail to ensure the regular attendance of their children and this significantly hinders their achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall educational provision of the school is **good**. Teaching, learning, and assessment are **good**. The care, support, advice, and guidance are **good**, but the information from the assessment of pupils could be evaluated more effectively to provide a clearer picture of progress. The accommodation and resources are **good**. Links with parents are **good**, and there are **very good** links with the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**, overall. The assessment of pupils' progress is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are very good.
- Teachers plan and use a variety of different teaching methods so that all pupils have access to learning.
- All staff encourage pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning, and there are consistently high expectations for very good behaviour.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT for teaching and in learning.

Commentary

11. Teaching is very good in the nursery and the two reception classes that make up the Foundation Stage. All the teachers have a very clear understanding of the needs of children, and they plan a wide range of activities every day. The staff, through their teamwork and cheerful enthusiasm, create a happy environment where the children thrive, and are eager to learn and explore. In the nursery, the staff encourage the children to attempt new experiences, engage in play with other children, take turns, and develop communication skills. Staff also ensure that the children are fully engaged at all times and draw them into activities. In reception, the teaching style gradually becomes more formal and some activities are organised according to the ability of the children. This works very well, as teachers are able to meet the needs of the children, especially when providing challenge for the higher attaining children. However, when teachers are planning for the whole-class groups, they take into account the many differing attainment and developmental levels in the class, and a variety of activities are always on offer for those pupils who are unable to sustain full attention for an entire numeracy or literacy lesson. Incidental learning about listening and concentrating is good. All the members of staff have a warm and encouraging manner with the children and they take every opportunity to praise individuals who sit nicely or who work hard.

12. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and there are examples of very good teaching in most subjects. Teachers' planning is very detailed and a great deal of thought is given to the different learning needs of pupils and their achievement. These needs are based on the good assessment that class teachers carry out. This they do well, and they have developed good communication skills so that they can pose questions to pupils at different levels of complexity. This enables all pupils to understand and achieve well. Literacy and numeracy are taught well, and the grouping of pupils by ability for the teaching in Years 5 and 6 is particularly beneficial for pupils, as they are able to learn at the appropriate level. It is also beneficial for teachers who are able to better match the activities and learning objectives to the pupils' needs, because the ability range is narrower. As a result, pupils in these groups are sometimes more challenged than in classes where the range is very wide. In some classes, such as Year 2, the teachers are planning activities for, and teaching, five different attainment levels, and it is difficult to provide challenge and support with this range of learning needs.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	18 (37%)	16(33%)	14(29%)	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.

13. Teachers manage the behaviour of all pupils very well and have high expectations for good behaviour. As a result, all pupils remain on task, sustain interest in their work, display good attitudes and want to learn. In all lessons, teachers start by sharing the learning objectives of the lesson with pupils so that they understand what they will learn, and all lessons finish with a session where the teacher assesses learning by asking relevant questions. This has a good effect on the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils, as they understand what is required of them. In the best lessons, teachers set timed targets to ensure that all pupils stay on task, work quickly and do not become bored or restless. This provides a learning environment where all pupils work hard and willingly to achieve the learning objectives.
14. Although ICT is taught as a separate subject, and pupils, especially those in Years 3 to 6, achieve well, teachers do not make enough use of the these skills in other subjects. There were very few examples of ICT being used during the inspection, and there are very few examples of it in the samples of the work. Although teachers do plan for pupils to use the Internet for research, there are too few examples of data analysis and display, word processing or design work. In addition, teachers do not use ICT enough to help them with their teaching, for example to explain a concept or demonstrate a technique.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum, which is extended by the **good** range of opportunities that enables pupils to participate in learning activities outside of lessons. Overall, the quality of the accommodation and resources is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is very good.
- The organisation of literacy and numeracy lessons in Years 5 and 6 is good.
- A good range of extra activities is organised to extend the pupils' learning.
- Effective curriculum development has led to a good range of opportunities that encourages pupils to become responsible members of the school community.
- There is a lack of detailed planning to establish meaningful links between different subjects.

- Good arrangements exist to ensure the smooth transfer of Year 6 pupils to the local secondary school.

Commentary

15. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils. This is particularly the case in the nursery and reception classes where the teachers' planning of relevant and interesting activities is very good. It also applies at the other end of the school, where, in Years 5 and 6, the arrangements for the grouping and planning of appropriate activities in English and mathematics have a positive effect on the achievement of all the pupils in these classes. This helps the planning of lessons in a more challenging way. However, this is not used in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 where there is also a wide range of attainment levels in the classes, especially in Year 2. This affects the ability of teachers to plan stimulating and challenging work which reaches out to all groups of pupils.
16. The school makes good use of visits out and visitors to the school to provide additional and stimulating learning opportunities for the pupils. Based on the written accounts of pupils in Year 6, they reflect on the benefits and enjoyment gained from the team building and outdoor activities experienced during a residential visit to a nationally recognised adventure centre. Boys and girls enthusiastically participate in rugby and dance lessons after school.
17. Good opportunities, as part of the personal, social, health and citizenship education, have very effectively encouraged the pupils to become active participants in both school and community matters. Developments in this area of the curriculum have culminated in the school receiving a number of 'Healthy School' awards. The views of pupils are acted upon and there is a genuine feeling of their ideas and contributions being valued by the school. The pupils talk enthusiastically about the 'buddy system' that operates during break times and about the 'dawn patrol' that has been implemented to monitor the welfare of senior citizens in the local community. There are good links with the local secondary school that allow for plenty of liaison to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils when they leave.
18. While planning lessons teachers ensure that they use and consolidate pupils' literacy skills, for example by reading appropriate texts and writing accounts. However, the links with numeracy and ICT are not as obvious, and there are limited opportunities of where teachers links subjects together to support creativity. Although there is a dedicated computer room, there are few examples of the computers based in the classrooms being used to support learning activities in other subjects. The school has put a lot of effort over the last two years into raising achievement in literacy and numeracy, and although other subjects have not neglected the creative subjects of the curriculum, there has not been an emphasis on developing creativity. A good example of this happening was in Year 5, where a physical education lesson was used to teach a Tudor dance as part of the pupils' history topic. The pupils worked in small groups with enthusiasm, imagination and style to choreograph their own versions of a dance.
19. The good facilities and resources are used effectively to deliver curriculum subjects and social activities to all the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The school's provision for pupils' care and welfare is **very good** and there is **effective** support and guidance for pupils' achievements and personal development. There is **very good** involvement of pupils in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very safe, healthy and caring environment for all its pupils.
- Pupils facing a range of difficulties are very well integrated and supported.
- The school genuinely values pupils' views and tries whenever possible to act on them.
- The monitoring of pupils' academic progress does not firmly arise from the analysis of assessment information.

Commentary

20. Pupils know that the headteacher and all the staff genuinely care about their well-being and happiness. Consequently, they thrive and grow in confidence in the calm and secure learning environment. The school has comprehensive procedures to ensure pupils' safety, including risk assessments of activities and visits and the regular inspection of the premises. All staff, including the midday supervisors, understand the procedures for child protection and there are very effective procedures for monitoring any concerns regarding pupils' welfare. There is good supervision at lunchtime and playtimes and a staff member with a first aid qualification is always on duty in the medical room at these times to provide first aid and sympathy for pupils who hurt themselves. Pupils learn about all aspects of healthy living and the school is making good progress with the Healthy Schools Programme. There are very good arrangements for helping children to settle confidently in the nursery and in the reception classes and careful procedures to ease the transition of pupils between key stages or when they join the school from elsewhere.
21. The school meets the needs of pupils with medical, social or emotional problems very effectively. Several pupils who were disaffected at other schools have been given a fresh start by the school and now flourish within its caring and supportive ethos. The school works very well in liaison with external agencies in meeting the various needs of all these pupils. In talking to representatives from many community organisations and also to parents, it is clear that the school well deserves the reputation it has built up for its inclusive approach and the quality of care it provides.
22. Pupils know that their views count because the headteacher and other staff regularly ask them for their views on various matters. Because of the trust shown to them, pupils have a strong sense of ownership of the school and this is reflected in their responsible and mature behaviour. These responsible attitudes are particularly apparent in the school council, which provides a very good forum for discussing ideas. It also has an important say in the running of the school, particularly with regard to playground matters, such as the use of the quadrangle and the development of the buddy system.
23. The school has good assessment systems in place, and detailed ongoing records are kept by teachers and the co-ordinators of each subject. The school has introduced a computerised system into which all the results of these assessments are entered to provide the school with data on progress. However, this system is not used sufficiently to generate information on pupils' progress. For example, there is no analysis of the progress made by pupils of different ethnicity, or class, or with different teachers. In the absence of this information, the school is not able to guide and support pupils' academic achievements to their fullest.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and **very good** links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is open and welcoming to parents, and communication between home and school is very good.
- The school keeps parents very well informed.
- Parents provide good support to the school and to their children's learning at home.
- Very good links with the community and other schools enrich pupils' education well.

Commentary

24. Parents have a high level of confidence in the school and hold the headteacher in high esteem. They particularly value the school's open and welcoming approach and agree that their children are happy there. They know that the school promptly responds to any concerns they have regarding their children. A small minority of the parents who returned the parents' questionnaire considered that the school provided insufficient information about their children's progress. Inspection evidence does not support this view and, on the contrary, the information that the school provides for parents is judged to be very good. Parents receive regular friendly newsletters and each term they receive a leaflet summarising the curriculum to be covered that term which also gives guidelines on homework. Attendance at consultation evenings has steadily increased and annual reports on pupils' progress are of good quality and include targets for children to work towards. The school provides good opportunities for parents to see its work through open days and well-attended class assemblies. Parents of nursery children have particularly good opportunities for informal communication with staff at the beginning and end of each session, and also have the chance to attend weekly parental involvement sessions.
25. Parents agree that the school listens to and considers their views and suggestions. Governors also encourage parents' involvement in the school and the annual governors' meeting for parents is unusually well attended. The school plans to take consultation a step further by sending parents an annual questionnaire as part of its process of self-review.
26. Parents provide valuable support to the school through the active Parents, Teachers and Friends' Association (PTFA) and through the help which several parents give in classrooms and with after-school sports clubs. The school strongly encourages parents to support their children's learning at home and most parents help their children by supporting homework and hearing their younger children read. The school regularly runs successful family learning programmes, which provide parents with accredited training, as well as giving them ideas on how to support their children's learning.
27. The school has numerous strong links with the community and community organisations. The popular Newton Fun Club provides good care for pupils before and after school. Local sports people provide coaching in a number of different sports and this enhances the curriculum very effectively. The community policeman talks to pupils in personal, social and health education lessons. The Family Well Being Group works in close liaison with the school, targeting help for vulnerable children. The school also works very closely with local schools and colleges. There are very good pastoral and academic links with the local high school which help to ease transition for pupils. Other valued links include links with a local Beacon school, which is supporting the school with aspects of the numeracy curriculum, and the joint initiatives it is working on with other primary schools as part of the local Associate Network Learning Community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**, overall. Leadership and governance are both **very good** and management is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher guides the clarity of vision and high aspirations of other key staff.
- The governors' close involvement with the school is helping to shape the vision for the school's future, challenging and supporting senior management.
- The school is committed to rigorous self-evaluation.
- The Foundation Stage is very well managed.
- There is a close link between development planning and finances in the pursuit of improving standards.
- The assessment information kept on the computer is not accessible to all staff, nor is it evaluated sufficiently in order to help teachers plan and further raise standards.
- The workload of senior management personnel is not shared on an equitable basis.

Commentary

28. This is an ambitious school. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, new management teams have been created that share the drive and aspirations 'to put the school on the map'. The headteacher has a particularly clear vision for the future of the school. Staff, governors and pupils share this vision of a school where inclusion, equality of opportunity, confidence and independence are central to the philosophy. Pupils feel a strong ownership of, and pride in, the school. The new leaders and co-ordinators feel the excitement of launching in new directions. They feel they have been well prepared for their responsibilities.
29. The governors feel that they, too, have been well trained and are now ready for the role of critical friend to the school. They are very supportive, yet prepared to ask demanding questions to guide the school in the detail of its ambitions. For instance, they are concerned about the relative performance of boys and girls, and about the status of groups of middle ability children in a situation where lower and higher groups are well supported. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They keep a full oversight of the well-run financial systems. With the unobtrusive guidance of the headteacher, they ensure that the budget is a strong vehicle to drive the school development plan effectively. This long-term plan is a clear document that charts the school's progress over three years. It links the finances closely with staff training needs and curriculum development in the pursuit of increasingly higher standards. Spending patterns are prudent, and all monies are used to gain best value for the education of the pupils in the school. The new leaders have created very effective teams, which assist the headteacher in carrying out the very comprehensive monitoring of teaching and learning. This has driven up the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Virtually all the leaders are very good role models for staff and pupils.
30. The school's self-evaluation systems are clear and enable the staff to build appropriate targets into the overall development plan, which drives a strong cycle of continuous improvement. However, the management of the computerised assessment system is insecure. This is because access is limited to the deputy headteacher and does not allow for other staff to use it or evaluate the information to track progress. This makes the monitoring of performance unnecessarily difficult. The workload of the senior management is not shared equally, and the governors are concerned that, despite very good delegation, too much still falls to the headteacher. The school is due to consider workforce remodelling in the autumn term, in keeping with the national initiative.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1086037
Total expenditure	1106535
Expenditure per pupil	2546

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40754
Balance carried forward to the next	20256

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

31. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. It has improved since the previous inspection. It starts from the philosophy of active learning based on structured play, becoming more formal as children progress and are ready for increased challenge. During the inspection, the well-planned curriculum was observed operating very effectively. The new development in assessment is giving the teachers a good hold on children's ability and progress. This enables the staff to plan to meet the needs of individual children very precisely and overall children achieve and make good progress.
32. Teaching is very good, another significant improvement. The teamwork and cheerful enthusiasm of the staff shine out and create a happy environment where the children thrive. In consequence the children love to learn, explore their environment, make good progress and achieve well, particularly in knowledge and understanding of the world. The outdoor play area is a strong feature of the provision, making a secure adventure playground, full of learning and fun. Children enter the nursery in September, for either a morning or afternoon session. The two full-time reception classes are organised as ability sets for certain activities. This works very well, giving the teachers even better scope for meeting the needs of the children. The sensitive welcome into school, and the thoughtful transfer arrangements into the reception class, ease children's passage through this stage of education. The staff have created very good relationships with parents since the previous inspection. Parents are delighted with the provision, the contact with teachers and the very good leadership of the co-ordinator.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good achievement by children because of very good teaching and secure routines, focused on confidence and independence.
- Teachers grasp every opportunity to build on children's development.
- The reception children are very good role models for the nursery children.

Commentary

33. Social training is the key plank of the Foundation Stage. The staff use all opportunities to encourage children to understand class routines, for instance in the use of a quiet signal to get all children to attend to the teachers. They encourage good sharing and working co-operatively. The children enter the nursery at a below average level, but soon adjust to the teacher's high expectations. The children make good progress in this area and by the time they move to reception, they are nearer to average on the 'stepping stones' indicators. This is good achievement.
34. In the first weeks in reception, the children are quietly prepared for the more formal work in the mornings. The children relish the challenge of 'real work', and are learning to concentrate for good lengths of time. At other times, the reception children explore the practical activities the teachers have prepared. Children select their preferred options. They follow their own lines of investigation, often with serious concentration. No child is ever bored. Reception children act as superb 'grown up' role models for the little ones, especially in the bustling outdoor area. Children learn to be busy, confident and friendly in the pleasant surroundings and warm relationships with the adults. They show how far they have advanced by the enthusiasm with which they help in clearing up. When they join older pupils, for instance in the infant

assemblies, their behaviour is impeccable. The new assessment system based on close observation of children enables teachers to track their growing maturity, and to plan additional input if necessary. Children make great strides during the reception year, and often appear more mature than the assessments measure. The assessments are accurate, and in terms of the early learning goals they still have a little way to go to reach the average. The key success of the Foundation Stage is that the children's attitude to learning is excellent, and this is a very good achievement.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables the children to achieve well.
- The provision for reading, writing and listening is well balanced.
- Staff use opportunities in all areas of learning to develop the children's language skills, and assess these well.
- Children are not given enough opportunities to answer in full sentences.

Commentary

35. The strength in the teaching is the way staff draw out language from virtually every activity. As ideas are discussed the teachers model the arrangement of sounds, what the letters look like, and how they might be written. The nursery children are intrigued by this idea, and love making marks on paper or whiteboards that imitates the teachers'. During the year they become more accurate. By the time they reach the reception class they are recording strings of letters and the top group are attempting to spell quite long words like 'umbrella'. Although standards are still below average at the end of the reception year, achievement is good because of the low level at which most children enter the nursery. This means they are reaching the middle stepping stones ready for reception to build on.
36. The teaching is very good. Teachers plan work to meet the needs of all the children very precisely. They are very supportive of children who have special educational needs, and challenging for the higher attaining children. Even at this early stage the teachers make a start on the school's policy for handwriting. The teachers are careful to encourage children to hold pencils correctly and form their print letters accurately, so that they can transfer to cursive writing quickly. Even in a single lesson the teachers expect children to move forward by measurable amounts. For instance in the guided reading sessions children build up skills that can be transferred to writing. They learn how words fit together to make sentences as they fall, like apples, from the 'word tree'. The new assessment system is geared to show what steps children need to move toward the next stepping stone. Children's listening skills are well developed by a range of lively stories delivered in an animated and engaging way. Similarly, the staff are open to listening to children's ideas as often as they want to give them. Occasionally, in their enthusiasm, the staff move on before children have had a chance to respond fully. The co-ordinator has spotted this. She is initiating a new programme devoted to oracy, to help children overcome the hurdle of speaking.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables children to achieve well.
- Teachers use all available opportunities to reinforce mathematical ideas.
- Assessment data is used well for directing progress.

Commentary

37. Teachers plan very effectively, achieving a very good balance between focused teaching sessions and the wider continuous activities set out around the classroom and outside. Children listen well and in the nursery enjoy number rhymes enormously. These help to fix the names and size of the numbers in their memories. They learn about measuring and shape during lively projects that capture their interest, for instance the snail trail. By making their own snails they judge what size of card will work best, and how to bend it into spiral shapes. They start nursery at a below average level. They make good progress, and by the end of their time there they are nearing the expected level for their age. Further good progress through reception enables the children to nearly reach the early learning goals. The slightly more formal approach in reception suits the children because they are ready for the increased challenge, and they concentrate well on 'big numbers'. They also enjoy the structured play activities, where they can explore number and shape around the classroom or outside. Activities, such as kite flying, provide children with opportunities to solve the problem of getting the right shape, and the doll's house project, involves them in estimating the size of wood needed to make chairs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables children to achieve well.
- The curriculum is enriched well by visits and visitors.
- An exciting and creative learning environment is provided.

Commentary

38. The teachers use the accommodation and resources creatively to produce a particularly stimulating environment for children. They give children very good practical opportunities to feel and handle material, in and out of the classroom. For instance, children during their earlier snail hunt brought in snails to study. 'Lesson' explanations are very clear, friendly and informal, and draw well on the children's own experiences. The follow-up activities are interesting and build on what the children have heard. The opening discussions engage their curiosity and prompt them to investigate for themselves. So the Noah story led children outside to act out the roles in the large, brick ark. Other children took chalk and drew their interpretation of the story with its pairs of animals and rainbows. Teaching of this kind is very good. The planning is very thorough and gives a good balance to elements of history, geography, science, technology and religious education. Photographs show the wide range of visits the children make, and the numerous visitors who come to extend the children's experience. The children's standards at the start of the nursery are below average, but by good progress they are much nearer to reaching the expected levels by the end of the nursery. By the end of reception, most children nearly reach the early learning goals, and a few exceed them. This represents good achievement in relation to their starting points. The use of the new computer suite is of particular benefit for reception

children's ICT skills. Nursery children love to go on their own computers. The new assessment system is increasingly able to give teachers guidance on what steps individual children need to move them through the 'stepping stones'.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good planning and teaching makes the most of very good facilities.
- The outside play area is in need of more efficient storage arrangements.

Commentary

39. The teachers make the most of the outdoor play area, and do so successfully. Children love playing outside and the resources enable them to extend most of the classroom learning on a larger scale. There is not enough storage for the wide range of equipment. Teachers also make very good use of the school hall so that children experience both the formal setting and the informal exploration of appropriate adventurous equipment. The teachers' planning is very good so that all activities have a purpose to move children's physical potential on. This applies equally to large-scale movement and the smaller scale as children improve control of their fingers to manipulate a wide range of tools and writing equipment. The assessment system is now capable of measuring the outcomes. Observing the confident skills of reception children indicates that they have achieved above the expected levels of large physical movement, but are still a bit below the average in fine finger control. Overall standards are in line with those expected and children achieve well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good development of children's imaginations in a wide range of contexts.
- Very good preparation in all lessons and good resources for practical sessions.

Commentary

40. Teaching is very good because teachers plan very well to provide a rich experience on which children can draw to stimulate their imaginations. The role-play situations draw out children's language well as they imagine themselves running the home corner, building arks, booking holidays or exploring the small world toys. They share ideas and create new ones, sometimes inventing a new language to do so. A strong area is painting. The children have a natural inclination to explore colour and subject composition imaginatively. They enjoy music and are often humming and singing contentedly to themselves. They observe the materials the teachers have provided for craft activities, and add their own stamp of inventiveness, for instance in the gingerbread men they create. Their standard is below average on entry to nursery. By the end of reception they are flowing with ideas that they take confidently into Year 1. They progress near to the early learning goals, and that is a good achievement.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good because it gives pupils the necessary English skills to make good progress.
- The co-ordinators have a good impact on the subject.

Commentary

41. Four teachers co-ordinate the subject well and they have a good impact on pupils' learning by introducing teaching strategies that work well. Two noteworthy examples are:
 - the school's focus on handwriting is having a significantly good impact on the quality of pupils' work;
 - the recent emphasis on letter sounds and the way pupils link them is beginning to impact well on their reading skills and on their spelling abilities. These measures are helping the school to address the key issue from the last inspection to provide pupils with more opportunities to develop and use reading skills.
42. As a result of the strong focus on handwriting, pupils throughout the school are developing well their abilities to join letters from an early age. The quality of handwriting is mainly good, especially for the average and the brighter pupils in most year groups. Lower attaining pupils generally write with a lack of skill in joining their letters. This is not always the case, however, as some pupils with special educational needs achieve very good self-esteem through carefully presented writing. A focus on the sounds that letters make is beginning to improve some pupils' limited skills when they meet unfamiliar words in their reading.
43. The quality of pupils' writing is below national averages at the end of the infants and the juniors because not all writing skills have been developed as well as handwriting. For example, spelling abilities are sometimes below expected levels, notably by the end of Year 2. However, these skills are improving well as teaching focuses more and more specifically on ensuring that pupils know the sounds of letters and how to use them when writing. Sometimes Year 6 pupils do not punctuate their writing as accurately as expected for their age.
44. Reading is generally below levels expected for pupils' ages, notably at the end of the infants. Year 2 pupils try hard with new text and they look at the pictures to help them to make sense of their efforts. Some know that it is often helpful to read the whole sentence when attempting to work out a new word. However, the school's effective focus on helping pupils to learn letter sounds and how to use them when tackling new text has yet to make a full impact on raising standards. As a result, reading standards have not risen as much as those of writing at the end of Year 2. Year 6 and Year 2 pupils speak of their enjoyment of reading. Many Year 6 pupils use the local library and teachers enable them to use a satisfactory range of reference books from the library service and from classroom collections for their work across a range of subjects. The school's library provides pupils with only a basic range of books and teachers have rightly identified this area as needing enrichment so that pupils can use it more effectively to gather information for their work in other subjects.
45. Speaking and listening skills broadly reflect those found nationally for pupils' ages. Most pupils throughout the school are confident to share their ideas and opinions because teachers value what they say and they expect other pupils to listen respectfully. Some Year 6 pupils, however, speak too quietly to be heard at times and their speech is occasionally indistinct.

46. Teaching is good. Teachers set a very good example to pupils with their writing on the board and in pupils' books. Pupils respond well by taking great pride in their own work. Teachers carefully identify pupils who are poor at using letter sounds, and provide good opportunities to read unfamiliar words, thus helping them to improve. In a very good lesson the support assistant enabled a group of Year 3 pupils to develop their knowledge of letter sounds well by making new words through changing letters. Sometimes teachers miss the opportunity to enable pupils to check their spellings independently, for example by having simple dictionaries that they can easily access to see if spellings are correct. When they mark pupils' work, teachers praise pupils and tell them what they need to do next to improve. One wrote, for instance, "You need to work on your opening sentences." Pupils' reading records are not always effective, however, in pointing out to parents what pupils need to do to improve their reading, notably in the infants. Unlike the previous inspection, teachers now give pupils ample chances to speak and to listen to others. These include assemblies and times when pupils share their feelings and opinions with the class. In a religious education lesson, for instance, all Year 2 pupils explained why they liked the night. One pupil responded, "I like it because the owls come out to fly." Just occasionally, teachers do not cater as well as they might for the wide range of pupils' capabilities in some classes. For instance they sometimes give lower attaining pupils work that does not challenge them sufficiently, such as colouring in pictures in Year 3 or a 'word-search' that is too easy in Year 6. On rare occasions, work is too hard, as when a lower attaining Year 3 pupil could not identify without support the sounds of certain letters. Teachers sometimes give the same spellings to Year 2 pupils regardless of their abilities. At such times, progress for a few individuals slows for a while.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. The satisfactory links between English and other subjects are an improvement since the last inspection when the use of English across the curriculum was underdeveloped. They now include strong links between English and science that effectively support pupils' learning, about famous scientists for example. In geography, pupils write letters about local traffic issues, and in history they write about Florence Nightingale. The school has wisely identified that there are further opportunities for linking English with the range of subjects to make pupils' learning even better. ICT, for example, is not planned rigorously to support pupils' learning in English despite some satisfactory word processing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below the national average but more able pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve well.
- The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment information to plan pupils' learning activities.
- There is a lack of planning to ensure that mathematical skills are used in other subjects, and there is limited use of computers in lessons.

Commentary

48. Although the standard of pupils' work is below the national average by Years 2 and 6, their achievement is satisfactory. This is because of the relatively large number of less able pupils in the classes. In fact in the 2003 national tests the overall performance of pupils in Year 6 was the same as that of pupils in schools serving similar areas and the number of these pupils reaching the higher standards in the tests was above the average for similar schools.
49. Year 5 and 6 lessons are effectively organised to ensure that pupils of all abilities are provided with appropriate and challenging activities. The teachers set a good pace in the lessons and

they can focus the activities at the correct level for the pupils. In one Year 5 lesson the more able pupils are presented with complex mental problems to solve about percentages, while at the same time in another lesson more staff support and the use of calculators enable less able pupils to answer the same questions. The teachers in these lessons have more time to concentrate on the specific needs of the pupils and this results in all of them making good progress and achieving well.

50. The whole-school system for checking the amount of progress that pupils make in their mathematical development has only been in place for a short period of time. The information obtained each half term is recorded but is not used effectively to inform the planning of the areas of learning that require more of a focus. It does not influence the decision on the grouping of pupils who have similar learning activities.
51. The two co-ordinators for the subject work well together. They are aware of the need to refine the assessment procedures, so that they can use this information to organise the grouping of pupils and include the use of ICT to support learning..

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. The development of mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding through other subjects is not given enough emphasis. In a Year 4 science lesson the pupils produce bar graphs to record the speed of differently shaped boats. No use of computers was seen in any of the mathematics lessons during the inspection.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- The teaching and learning are good.
- The science curriculum is well planned but not enough emphasis is placed on the reinforcement of literacy, numeracy and ICT within lessons.
- The introduction of group co-ordination provides new staff with good support.

Commentary

53. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific skills, understanding and knowledge, and to achieve well. The results of the tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 show improvement over the last three years. The standards at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were in line with the average of other schools, and the school is above average when compared with similar schools. Pupils achieve well overall and there are no differences in the standards achieved in the different aspects within science.
54. These standards have been achieved because improvements have been made to the quality of teaching and learning, especially to teachers' knowledge of the subject and the emphasis placed on investigation. In each class, the teachers are promoting observational and investigational skills, and there is a high emphasis on knowing the key words associated with science, as well as the development of different ways of recording observations. Pupils' enjoyment of the practical side of science is evident and contributes well to their good progress in the subject. The behaviour of pupils is very good in most lessons and this can be directly attributed to good behaviour management. The good behaviour means that pupils can be trusted to work in small groups on their investigations. Teachers pay particular importance on encouraging pupils to draw conclusions from their activities. Assessment of pupils' work is good and teachers and co-ordinators have a clear picture of standards achieved.

55. Improvements made to the science curriculum have also ensured that the pupils have many opportunities to plan, predict, observe, and consider what has happened during their investigations. All areas of science are given appropriate coverage and teachers build on this knowledge and understanding in other subjects, such as in design and technology. This is providing pupils with opportunities to transfer and reinforce their learning. However, not all teachers when planning their lessons give enough consideration to how they may reinforce literacy or numeracy within the lesson. The use of ICT within science varies across the school, with some teachers, especially in the classes for older pupils, making good use of it for research but not for monitoring changes or recording information and displaying data.
56. Until recently the subject has been led by one co-ordinator; however, along with the general improvements made to the co-ordination of the subject it is now co-ordinated by a team of three teachers. This approach has been particularly beneficial to teachers who are new to teaching and who are at the early stages of understanding the complexities of co-ordinating and managing a subject. This also provides newly qualified teachers with very valuable experience, training and encouragement, whilst maintaining high quality leadership.
57. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because the standards have risen and the school now achieves at better levels than similar schools.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and teamwork have brought about much improved provision.
- Pupils' achievement is now good but standards in Year 2 are not yet high enough.
- Good medium-term planning ensures consistent progress.
- Very good training and support have given staff confidence to use the computer suite more.
- Pupils' skills are not used enough to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

58. Standards in Year 2 are below those expected for the pupils' age. Their work folders show that they make sound progress in the work covered but they do not remember everything they have done. Many pupils' skills rely heavily on the teacher's support and presence. Nonetheless, this is a satisfactory achievement, as pupils generally started from a low baseline, and the improvements in the teaching of ICT are recent, and have not had the full impact yet. Standards have risen since the previous inspection. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with those expected for the pupils' age. They make good progress through the junior years and Year 6 pupils achieve well.
59. Strong leadership has encouraged staff to adopt an enthusiastic 'can do' approach to ICT. It has provided good training that enables teachers who are less confident in technology to tackle the more demanding parts of the syllabus. Teaching was only observed in two year groups, Years 4 and 5. This teaching was satisfactory. The planning for ICT is much stronger than at the time of the previous inspection. It gives teachers the structure to work through a series of steps. Each lesson is designed to introduce new skills, or build on existing ones. Teachers set clear objectives at the beginning of the lesson and check at the end of the lesson how well they have been achieved. This gives pupils a picture of their developing progress. Pupils also evaluate their achievement on personal assessment sheets. This is good practice, but the sheets do not at present give pupils an idea of the levels at which they are working. Teachers rightly maintain assessment files. The information in these does not figure sufficiently in their lesson plans. For instance, they do not guide teachers to write separate objectives for two or

more ability groups. This means that while the lower attaining pupils are well supported and make good progress, the higher attaining pupils do not move ahead as rapidly and make only satisfactory progress.

60. The work in the older pupils' folders indicates that teaching is better than satisfactory at the top of the school. Year 6 pupils are becoming very proficient in control and modelling software, and are adept at making multi-media presentations, things that pupils in many schools still find difficult. All pupils seen in the computer suite behaved well and persevered with their work. Year 6 pupils work well on the computers outside lesson times, and can be trusted with a minimum of supervision. This is part of their training for personal responsibility. There is scope to extend this kind of independence and initiative further in lessons, in order to meet the rigorous requirements of level 5. The two new co-ordinators have made a very good analysis of the status of ICT in the school. Their clear evaluation has enabled them to present a sound action plan that covers the points made above and sets ICT provision on a firm footing.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. The pupils' work folders indicate that some teachers use computer skills and applications developed in computer lessons. For instance, computer art features in most year groups and research on the Internet is frequently used for history projects. Some use is made of word-processing skills, because text is a frequent means of recording and communication in many subjects. Mathematics, too, is at times well supported, for instance in the Year 1 project on block graphs. Overall, however, the computer is not used sufficiently in most subjects. Computers based in classrooms tend to be neglected. The planning to ensure these subject links are wide ranging and profitable is not yet systematic.

HUMANITIES

62. A total of three lessons were observed in this area of learning. There were two in religious education, one in geography, and none in history.
63. It is not possible to make overall judgements about the overall provision in **history** and **geography**. Pupils' previous work in both subjects indicates that the curriculum offers an appropriate range of learning activities and that the pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teachers' planning documents and discussions with Year 6 pupils confirm that there is a range of practical situations, such as field study trips, used to make the topics relevant and exciting. In the Year 6 geography lesson the pupils were asked to vote on whether or not the high street in Newton-le-Willows should be closed to traffic. They held lively debates in groups to consider the facts. This suggests an improvement on the last inspection, when the lack of practical activities in geography was highlighted as a weakness. During discussions with Year 6 pupils, they spoke with enthusiasm about their study of the 1960s and 1970s and about different mountain ranges in the world. The subject co-ordinators are aware of the need to develop and improve the methods of assessing pupils' achievements in history and geography.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Resources are used well to support learning.
- More emphasis could be placed on the differences between the religions.
- Links with ICT are not as effective as they could be.

Commentary

64. Teaching is good overall and the examples of good teaching contribute well to pupils' learning. In a Year 2 lesson, for instance, teaching developed pupils' good understanding of God's Creation and a sense of wonder in the natural world because resources were well used. This enabled pupils to reflect and share their thoughts. When discussing the creation of night and day, one pupil explained, "I like the night because you can see owls flying". The school makes good use of knowledgeable visitors to enliven teaching, such as in an animated Year 5 lesson, where the visitor engaged the pupils well through the use of humour. This helped pupils to remember the main characters and the order of events in the Old Testament.
65. The planning of the curriculum, however, does not ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the nature of different religions. Although the school makes use of outside speakers, pupils rarely benefit from visitors representing different faiths to support their learning. As a result, some pupils of all abilities in Year 6 confuse the characteristics of the religions that they have studied. While most know that places of worship include churches, mosques and synagogues, even higher attaining pupils are not sure which religious people worship at which building. Pupils know about religious books such as the Torah but some are unsure about which religions might read it.
66. There are some useful links with ICT that support pupils' learning. For example, pupils use the computer room to find out about religious ceremonies, such as weddings. The team of teachers who co-ordinate the subject lead it well and are aware that links with ICT do not yet fully support pupils' learning. Steps are being taken to develop its use. Co-ordinators have identified that some teachers have insufficient knowledge of faiths, other than Christianity, to give pupils a sufficiently clear understanding of the significant features of the religions selected for study from the local syllabus.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. A total of nine lessons were observed in this area of learning, too few to make reliable judgements about provision and teaching in art and design, design and technology and music. Evidence from other sources, including pupils' work and discussions with them, was also gathered.
68. No lessons were seen in **art and design**. Examination of curriculum documents shows that lessons are planned well and that there is coverage of the different aspects on a rolling programme in all year groups.
69. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 in **design and technology**, and only lessons in Years 3 to 6 were seen. Provision for this aspect of the curriculum for older pupils is good.
70. The quality of teaching and learning was good in the lessons observed in Years 3 to 6. Teachers begin projects with a helpful and searching discussion in each session and this produces lots of ideas that contribute to the design process. Teachers continue to discuss the pupils' ideas with them at every stage so that they increase their knowledge about processes they may want to use. Teachers ensure that pupils have made decisions about the equipment that might be needed in the making of the products. Pupils and the activities are well organised so that they work either in groups or pairs and this helps to promote co-operation and support. Teachers successfully promote basic skills, such as measurement, making lists and planning an order of work. Safety and hygiene are always prominent considerations in teachers' planning for and management of lessons. The subject is very well co-ordinated by an experienced subject leader who has continued to improve and develop the subject within the school. Curriculum development has ensured that all elements of subject are planned for and taught, and satisfactory assessment of pupils' achievements takes place.

71. From the teaching observed in music, and from discussions with pupils and the headteacher, the following effective features are clear:
- the school has introduced effective steps to address weaknesses from the last inspection;
 - it uses well the expertise of a specialist music teacher to benefit pupils and staff.
72. The last inspection found some unsatisfactory teaching, a lack of teacher confidence in music and weak planning for the subject. The school has improved planning and teaching by using the skills of a specialist teacher. The specialist provides good teaching for pupils while other teachers observe her lessons to develop their own teaching abilities effectively. She sets a good example through her own very good singing and gives pupils useful guidance about how to improve theirs, such as developing their breath control and diction. Her very good relationships with pupils result in their good attitudes to music. Pupils sing joyfully and appreciate the variety of music that they listen to, notably in Year 6 where pupils talk about 'The Blues'. The specialist music teacher's very good knowledge and understanding enable her to give good advice and guidance to pupils, such as how Year 1 pupils should hold their instruments correctly. Similarly Year 6 pupils learn what an 'ostinato' is. On rare occasions, a task is over-challenging for some pupils as when some Year 6 pupils were unsure how to record sequences of sounds using symbols.
73. While the subject has no significant weaknesses, there are times when access to particular percussion instruments would improve pupils' understanding of the sounds that instruments make, as in a Year 6 lesson. The subject is effectively enriched with chances for pupils to become involved in additional music activities including learning an instrument and joining the choir.
74. From the teaching observed in **physical education**, observation of after-school sports activities and from discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator, the following features add to the effectiveness of the provision:
- teaching overall is good;
 - there is a good range of activities both in lessons and outside school time;
 - there is good leadership and management of the subject.
75. Teaching overall, including the out-of-school activities, is good. In a very good Year 2 games lesson the teacher makes good use of a demonstration by a pupil to illustrate the correct technique for passing and stopping a ball. The pupils are challenged by a well-devised game that tests the skills they have been taught. In a Year 5 lesson the teacher displays good creative planning to link the composition of a Tudor dance with the pupils' history topic. The pupils are keen to participate in the rugby, badminton and dance sessions organised after school.
76. The enthusiastic co-ordinators have ensured that there is a good balance of activities in the physical education curriculum, including abseiling, orienteering and team raft building on a residential stay at an outdoor activities' centre. The co-ordinators are keen to provide the staff with appropriate opportunities for professional training in a range of sports and make good use of visiting coaches. They are aware of the need to develop assessment procedures to check on the pupils' achievements and progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

77. Only two lessons were observed in this area during the week of the inspection and so no judgements are made about the overall provision. However, the school sees personal development as being very important part of its work. The inclusion of it on the timetable, both as discrete lessons and as 'Circle Time' sessions, supports the very positive ethos in the school. This is based on a belief and expectation that pupils of all ages and abilities can become mature, caring and independent learners. The school appropriately includes areas of

healthy eating, personal safety, consideration for others less fortunate than themselves, and taking care of their environment. In order to promote these positive values and attitudes the school makes good use of the school council, the local community, and the inclusion of successful sponsored events to raise money for charities.

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	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
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	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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