

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKWOOD AVENUE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 131372

Headteacher: Mr Michael Jackson

Lead inspector: Mr Johnny Morris

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th April 2004

Inspection number: 257072

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	417
School address:	Oakwood Avenue Warrington
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Telephone number:	01925 635565
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Kath Bibby
Date of previous inspection:	29 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a very large primary school. Sixty-five children attend part-time in the nursery and 43 attend full-time in the reception year. The pupils' socio-economic circumstances are very unfavourable. About three quarters of them live in the seven most deprived wards within the local education authority. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average, particularly in language and social development. Pupil mobility is slightly above average. The school has resourced provision for 24 pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the whole school is slightly above the national average at 21 per cent and the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average at just over six per cent. About seven per cent of the pupils come from a variety of backgrounds other than white British but only three pupils have English as an additional language. The school received a national Achievement Award in 2003. It is involved in the local education authority's 'Writing Project' for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and works in close partnership with five other primary schools and a secondary school. A community playgroup uses the nursery facilities on Thursdays and Fridays.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23696	Mr J Morris	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education Citizenship
19342	Mr T Heavey	Lay inspector	
32596	Mrs G Phillips	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Geography History Religious education
32180	Mr D Sleightholme	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education
4989	Mr L Lewis		Special educational needs Science Art and design Design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school and it is improving rapidly due to the very good leadership of the headteacher. A programme of refurbishment and decoration and high quality display has resulted in a very good learning environment. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management are good overall. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is very successful in meeting the personal and educational needs of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. A significant factor is the very good quality learning environment.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). However, standards could be higher in all these subjects. Pupils achieve well in religious education in Years 1 to 6 and they achieve very well in art and design in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' attitudes behaviour and personal development are good throughout the school.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school.
- The headteacher is very effective and is providing a very clear lead to developments in pupils' learning, the curriculum and the role of other staff with significant responsibilities.
- The procedures to assess what pupils know, understand and can do and the use of this information to help pupils improve are unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6.
- Staff with significant responsibilities do not have enough opportunities to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects by observing lessons and examining pupils' work and teachers' planning.
- Partnership with parents, other schools and the community is good.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall. Assessment and subject leadership are still areas for improvement but this is due to significant staff changes over the past two years and the different approach taken by the new headteacher. There have been good improvements in relation to the issues concerning provision in the Foundation Stage, curriculum planning and school development planning. Teaching and learning have improved. Leadership has improved. The accommodation has been improved significantly since the appointment of the current headteacher. The school has a very good learning environment and staff make very good use of the available accommodation and learning resources.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Achievement is **good** throughout the school. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well from a well below average starting point in all areas of learning. However, they are still below average overall and well below average in communication, language and literacy by the end of the reception year. Standards are currently below average in English, mathematics, science and ICT in Years 2 and 6. In religious education they are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are above average

throughout the school in art and design. Painting in Years 5 and 6 is to a very high quality. Pupils' writing skills are particularly weak and the school has correctly made this a priority including involvement in a local education authority initiative for pupils in Years 5 and 6. In relation to their capabilities and prior learning all pupils achieve well during their time at the school, including the significant number with special educational needs and the small number with English as an additional language.

Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and personal development are **good** in all respects. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school. Predominantly good teaching was seen in the Foundation Stage and all subjects inspected in Years 1 to 6. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Procedures to assess what pupils know, understand and can do and the use of this information are good in the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 to 6. However, these procedures are unsatisfactory in other subjects in Years 1 to 6 and the use of assessment information is not good enough, particularly in the setting of pupils' individual targets. The curriculum is good and the pupils benefit from the good opportunities beyond the school day. The care provided for pupils is good. The school is a happy and safe working environment. Partnership with parents, other schools and the community is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher is a very effective leader who has a very clear sense of purpose and very high aspirations for the school. He is providing a very clear lead to innovative changes in the curriculum and the leadership and management roles of other key staff. This has already had a positive impact on the school's provision in English, mathematics and ICT. The governing body is effective.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the work of the school. Pupils are positive about their learning experiences and opportunities for them to express their views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- raise standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT in Years 1 to 6;
- improve assessment procedures, the use of assessment information and, in particular, individual target setting in English, mathematics, science and ICT;
- improve the effectiveness of other subject leaders as recently achieved in English, mathematics and ICT.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

All pupils achieve well overall throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs, particularly those in the resourced provision, make very good progress in some key aspects of their learning. However, standards are not as high as they could be in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all areas of learning and get a good start to their education.
- Pupils make good gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills in English, mathematics, science and ICT. However, standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and could be higher.
- Standards are above average in art and design throughout the school.

Commentary

1. All the children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well. When they enter the nursery they are well below average in all six areas of learning, particularly communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. The good teaching and organisation enable them to make good progress in all areas but they are still well below average in communication, language and literacy and below average in the other five areas of learning by the time they are at the end of the reception year. Very few children achieve the nationally expected standards by the end of the reception year.
2. Pupils in Years 1 and 6 achieve well in relation to their prior learning and capabilities. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. They are average in religious education. Performance in the end of Year 2 national tests in reading and mathematics has fluctuated but overall it has followed the national trend over the past five years. Performance in writing has been below the national trend. In the national tests in 2003 for pupils at the end of Year 6, standards in English were below the national average and well below this in mathematics and science. Performance was better when compared with that of schools with pupils of a similar background and were above average in English, average in mathematics but below average in science. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved more rapidly than they have nationally. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. They are average in religious education and above average in art and design. The quality of painting in Years 5 and 6 is well above average.
3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall. Those with statements of special educational needs, taught predominantly in the resourced provision, achieve very well in both literacy and numeracy. Throughout Years 3 to 6 these pupils' progress and achievement are assessed, monitored and recorded well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 with special educational needs make substantial gains in the acquisition and understanding of ICT skills. They use the mouse confidently, change the appearance of text to good effect and some of their keyboard skills are excellent in relation to their learning difficulties. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make progress at a similar rate to their peers and achieve well.
4. The headteacher has been in post for less than two years. The school has correctly identified pupils' writing skills as a significant weakness. Lessons learnt from the involvement in the local education authority's 'Writing Project' for pupils in Years 5 and 6 are having a positive impact on

standards throughout Years 3 to 6. The headteacher's innovative approach to subject leadership and curriculum development is closely linked to raising standards. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these changes, apart from in English and ICT where they are clearly having a positive impact.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.1 (14.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.2 (14.6)	13.2 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.1 (16.3)	15.0 (16.5)

There were 54 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	25.6 (26.8)	25.1 (27.0)
Mathematics	23.8 (26.8)	26.7 (26.7)
Science	26.3 (28.6)	28.1 (28.3)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good in all respects. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are positive relationships and trust between all members of the school community.
- The development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem is good.
- Staff expectations of pupils' conduct are high and pupils respond well.

Commentary

5. Pupils are eager to learn and improve their understanding of themselves and the world about them. The pupils with statements of special educational needs are fully involved in developing their literacy and numeracy skills and are eager to achieve. The high priority given to providing a very good quality learning environment has been fulfilled and there is a civilising ambience in the school. Pupils are able to thrive and they show respect for others. The incidence of bullying is low and, when this has occurred, parents are satisfied that staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Incidents during the inspection show that pupils with behavioural difficulties are successfully learning how to control their own anger and frustrations.
6. During the inspection, the school was orderly and the atmosphere was harmonious. Pupils in the dining hall were welcoming and happily chatted with inspectors. They are comfortable in these social situations. For example, they asked one inspector if he enjoyed going to school. When he said, "Yes", one pupil instantly replied, "So do I". Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of taking responsibility and showing respect, for example when acting as members of the School Council and using the Year 6 common room.

7. The development of pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness is good. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect during the daily assemblies and many lessons, including group discussions known as 'circle time'. An excellent example of this was when pupils were asked to close their eyes and to imagine what a silver box contained. Following a wide range of possible answers the teacher opened it. This brought a spontaneous gasp from the class because it was empty and the teacher explained that, "all that is in this box is your imagination". Pupils' have a clear understanding of whole-school and classroom rules. Teachers apply firm but fair control. Pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them and of right from wrong. Individual pupils respond instantly if a teacher refers to a lack of attentiveness or minor misbehaviour during lessons.
8. The promotion of cultural understanding is good and particularly evident in art and design activities, including the study of the works of famous artists and the art days, which have included the study of a range of different cultures. Pupils have prepared meals that would be eaten in places like St Lucia and numerous European countries. Calming music is played to good effect in many of the classrooms as pupils settle down to work. Work in literacy, geography and history, such as writing about Aboriginal culture and looking at relevant artefacts, contributes significantly to the pupils' awareness and understanding of the world at large.

Attendance

9. Attendance for the latest full reporting year was satisfactory overall. It was broadly in line with the national average and showed some improvement on the previous year. The school's good procedures for promoting good attendance include a good working relationship with the Education Welfare Service and make a good contribution to raising standards in the school. Parents play their part in ensuring that their children arrive in school on time. As a result punctuality is good, enabling a prompt start to the school day and avoiding any disruption to lessons by late arrivals. Registration complies fully with legal requirements.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.6
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.

Exclusions

10. The number of exclusions in the last year was very low. These were all for good reasons and were managed well.

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	300	3	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	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

The school provides a good quality education. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school but assessment procedures are not good enough. The curriculum, the care of pupils and the partnership with parents, other schools and colleges and the community are all good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Assessment is good in the Foundation Stage but unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The teaching of pupils with statements of special educational needs in the resourced provision is very good.
- Teachers plan and organise lessons well and have high expectations of work and behaviour, and there are examples of effective innovative practice.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not have a clear enough idea about what they need to do to improve because assessment is not thorough enough.

Commentary**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	11 (20%)	28 (52%)	14 (26%)	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.

11. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. During this inspection, they were good or better in about three quarters of the substantial number of lessons seen and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good with some very good features in the reception year. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6 because teachers' knowledge and skills lead to activities that motivate pupils. Consequently, pupils show good levels of interest and involvement and complete a good amount of work. Tasks are generally well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities but this could be better if assessment were sharper.
12. The quality of teaching and learning in the resourced provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good. This is because the teaching successfully develops the pupils' key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in small progressive steps. Assessment and record keeping are to a very high standard and result in very good individual target setting. Targets are changed rapidly. For example, in one lesson pupils wrote down dictated word lists. If this task was completed without error or with a best performance, a new target was set for the next lesson.
13. Assessment procedures and the use of the resulting information are also good in the Foundation Stage. Throughout Years 1 to 6, teachers collect good information about pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science and analyse the results of national and other standardised tests to successfully identify strengths and weaknesses, notably a weakness in writing. However, apart from the setting of clear individual targets for writing in Years 3 to 6, this information is not used well enough to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Furthermore, there are no easily managed, formal procedures for assessment in other subjects.
14. The introduction of a programme of activities designed to develop pupils' thinking skills is having a positive effect on their attitudes to learning. This is a good example of the school's innovative approach to many aspects of its work. The use of calming music by many teachers in many lessons is effective in creating a good atmosphere for learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. The staff take good account of new developments. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. The accommodation is good. Resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the curriculum is well adapted to meet their personal and educational needs, especially for those pupils with special educational needs.
- The school is undertaking a well-thought-out review of curriculum organisation and planning.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on creating the right conditions for learning.
- Staff use the accommodation very well to create a stimulating learning environment and provide interesting activities.

Commentary

15. There has been good improvement in curriculum planning since the previous inspection. Teachers use national guidance well to plan work in all subjects so that pupils develop knowledge and skills progressively. The provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship, including drugs education and sex and relationships education, is good. Children in the Foundation Stage have a good start to school life and, by the end of Year 6, pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Pupils achieve well because teachers mostly give them work that is at just the right level but challenging enough to make sure they

learn and make good progress. Pupils successfully use the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects. For example, in geography lessons pupils used literacy skills when they wrote explanations of the water cycle and mathematical skills when they located places on a map.

16. The headteacher is successfully leading the staff in taking an innovative approach to curriculum review and development. The development of pupils' thinking skills, within a curriculum that is organised in a similar manner to the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, is seen as crucial to raising standards of attainment. A senior member of staff is helping to lead this development, following her recent trip to Australia to observe a 'thinking skills programme' in action.
17. Pupils with statements of special educational needs in the resourced provision follow the mainstream curriculum with heavy emphasis being placed on the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. When these pupils are included in mainstream lessons, they are very well supported by teaching assistants as are other pupils with special educational needs. Teachers have a good understanding of the different ways in which pupils learn and regularly remind pupils to, for example, use their 'thinking hats' and 'thinking keys' to help them learn. Short, regular 'brain-breaks', constantly available drinking water and healthy snacks at playtimes help pupils concentrate well. Staff are continually looking for ways to make the curriculum more exciting, for example by using ideas from the local education authority's initiative to improve writing skills to raise standards in other subjects. Whenever they introduce any changes they carefully monitor the effect of these changes on raising standards. The school provides a weekly homework club, attended by about 50 pupils from Years 3 to 6, which supports pupils' learning well. A wide variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs, many of them to develop skills needed for games, boost pupils' skills. Visits to places in the local area, for example Lytham St Anne's, Wigan Pier and Beeston Castle, and visitors to the school enhance pupils' learning.
18. The new headteacher is implementing a programme of refurbishment of the school. This is nearly finished and has created a bright and very attractive learning environment in which staff and pupils justifiably take great pride. Staff take great care to celebrate pupils' work around the school and make good use of written prompts, such as lists of 'powerful' verbs and good story starters, displayed in the classrooms, to remind pupils what they are currently learning and how to make their work more interesting. The new library includes computers with Internet access. It is used by each class once a week and by groups of pupils at lunchtime, to develop research skills and foster pupils' interest in books. Small additional teaching areas have been created, which enable teachers and support assistants to teach groups of pupils who have specific needs. The indoor and outdoor areas for the children in the nursery and the reception classes are very well planned and organised. There is a good range of resources and children have good opportunities to learn through play.

Care, guidance and support

This aspect of school life is one of its many good features. The school makes good provision for the welfare of its pupils. Adults in the school provide support, advice and guidance of a sound quality to those in their care. The school has good arrangements to seek, value and act upon the pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high priority given to health, safety and personal security matters reduces the risk of accidents and fire and promotes a sense of well-being.
- The activities of the School Council help to promote citizenship and personal responsibility among pupils.
- The assessment and monitoring procedures are not used to best effect in supporting and guiding pupils in their academic development.

Commentary

19. The school's managers take full advantage of the upgraded premises by maintaining high standards of health and safety. Regular tests of alarms and equipment, termly rehearsal of evacuation procedures, training for staff in child protection procedures and much improved school security provide an atmosphere of security and well-being. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. All adults in the school share responsibility for identifying hazards and areas of risk, while effective first aid procedures are implemented by several trained adults. There are good procedures for child protection and an effective policy to safeguard pupils when using the Internet. There are good arrangements when children start school in the nursery or join at other times.
20. The school has made a good start in preparing its pupils to take their place as future citizens, by teaching them to act responsibly and to consider the needs of others. To this end the school has made a strong link between 'circle time', when pupils in each class are encouraged to share their thoughts with their peers, and the activities of the School Council. Any issues arising from these class discussions are considered by the School Council. These class representatives, elected by their peers, take their role and responsibilities very seriously. The school listens to the pupils and has already implemented some of the recommendations made by the School Council. The School Council also conducts formal surveys of pupil opinion by the use of questionnaires. Such high levels of co-operation and trust between pupils and staff make all feel valued and respected as members of the school family.
21. The school knows its pupils well and makes good use of its assessment and monitoring arrangements when setting clear targets for pupils with special educational and/or emotional needs. The recent assessment of emotional intelligence has led to the introduction of anger management programmes for selected pupils. Teachers use 'data year books', which go from class to class as pupils move through the school, to record progress in English and mathematics. Available information is used well to set all pupils broad targets in their annual reports and to set specific targets in writing for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This good practice does not go far enough in terms of both the breadth of targets set and pupils who have them. Consequently, many pupils do not have a clear enough picture of what they need to do to improve.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The good links with parents, other schools and the community make a good contribution to pupils' education and are a strong feature of the school's provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school and say that its relationship with them has improved recently.
- The school successfully helps its pupils to explore their community and their role as future citizens.
- Good links with other schools help to ease the pupils' transition to the next phase of their education.

Commentary

22. The school has good links with parents. Those parents who completed the questionnaire, those who attended the meeting with the registered and lay inspector, and several parents consulted during the inspection, all expressed very positive views about the school. The great majority report that their children like school, make good progress, behave well and work hard. Parents feel that teaching and care are good. They welcome the improved annual reports that now include individual targets in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They think

that the new headteacher is firm but fair. Parents are happy that they can chat with staff at the start of the school day. They say the buildings and grounds are much improved. Several parents have responded positively to the offer of a six-week computer skills course, which started on the last day of this inspection. Parents feel that they are very well informed about what goes on in the school, especially through the weekly newsletters, and that they are able to express their views verbally and through questionnaires. Good numbers of parents attend the weekly 'family assemblies', which celebrate their children's successes and efforts. Because the headteacher has improved the quality of information and welcomes their views, parents feel much more involved in the school's work than they have in the past.

23. The good links established with the community help to promote a sense of citizenship in the pupils. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their involvement with the Warrington Wolves (the local rugby league club) and their participation in the annual music festival in the town. They entertain residents at a nearby home for the elderly. Educational visits to places of interest, such as Wigan Pier, help pupils to explore their local and regional cultural heritage. Within the school pupils benefit from visits by representatives of the emergency services, the health services and local churches. Visiting poets and artists contribute well to pupils' learning in literacy and art and design and promote enthusiasm for the arts. Pupils have developed a sense of social responsibility by raising considerable sums of money for charitable organisations. They take part in 'Comic Relief' events, and involve themselves in a UNICEF project and the Warrington Peace Centre, and the school choir raises money for other charities.
24. High priority is given to helping newcomers settle quickly into school routines. These induction procedures are good and include a parents' handbook, which is additional to the informative school prospectus. There are well-established, productive links with other schools and colleges, particularly those in the 'cluster group' of five local primary schools and the main receiver secondary school. Benefits to the school include not only the fruitful exchange of ideas and good practice but also the sharing of resources, exchange visits and shared in-service training projects. Oakwood Primary also welcomes students on placement from secondary schools and colleges. All such initiatives contribute well to enhancing the educational experience of the pupils and preparing them well for the future.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He is supported well in managing the school by the deputy headteacher and senior members of staff. The governing body is effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher values each pupil's development very highly and is committed to ensuring that all pupils benefit fully from all school activities. He provides a very clear lead to innovative changes in the curriculum and the leadership and management roles of other key staff.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are increasingly involved in determining the school's strategic direction.
- Staff who have significant responsibilities do not have enough opportunities to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects by observing lessons and examining pupils' work and teachers' planning.
- School financial management is secure and the school applies the principles of best value well.

Commentary

25. The leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher is always around the school and is readily available to pupils, staff, parents and governors. His interest in each individual's development sets a very good example for others to follow. He is a very good listener and keen to hear the views of pupils and parents. When pupils in Year 6 said they would like a common

room he considered their request carefully and, with staff and governors, set about creating a special area for these pupils. The mutual respect between staff and pupils is exemplified by the mature way in which the Year 6 pupils have responded to this special provision.

26. The headteacher's vision and sense of purpose are shared by staff and this is reflected in the way they go about their work. They fully support the direction the school is taking in moving to a more innovative curriculum and approach to staffing structure. Staff are united in their desire to provide the best educational experience possible for all pupils and they have supported the headteacher and governors in making considerable improvements to the school learning environment, through a programme of refurbishment and redecoration. This has included a new ICT suite and provision of new software to enable pupils to cover all aspects of the ICT curriculum and use their ICT skills to support work across the curriculum.
27. The school is a happy and harmonious learning environment where pupils achieve well because of the provision that supports their academic and personal development. For example, the significant number of pupils who have special educational needs follow specific programmes of work and have individual education plans that enable them to make good progress, in well-defined steps, within the school's enhanced provision, or in classrooms. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management to an effective teaching team. There is a very good policy and pupils' statements of special educational needs are reviewed annually as required. There are well-thought-out plans for individual teachers, particularly those based in the resourced provision, to take full responsibility for the formal reviews of pupils' progress and setting of their targets.
28. The governing body is effective and does everything it should to fulfil its duties. The governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are increasingly playing a greater part in shaping the direction of the school, through involvement in the creation and evaluation of the school improvement plan. This plan is effective in reflecting the school's ambitions and goals and managing change but could usefully include more detail beyond the current year. The governing body is well led by an experienced chair who gives good support to the school's efforts to raise standards. Governors are always prepared to challenge proposals in order to ensure there is sufficient rigour in school policy and practice.
29. Overall, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection because the school is now very well led, the school improvement plan has clear priorities that are monitored and evaluated, and governors are able to evaluate the effectiveness of spending against pupil progress. However, there has been insufficient improvement in the role of subject leaders because they do not have opportunities to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons and by examining pupils' work and teachers' planning. At present, subject leaders are working effectively in English, mathematics and ICT but their collective view of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching are gathered from the headteacher, who has completed a cycle of general rather than subject-specific observations. Consequently, their role is still underdeveloped.
30. Financial management is efficient and secure. There are good procedures in place to ensure funds are used wisely and accounts are monitored. The school works closely with the local education authority in planning and monitoring the budget. The principles of best value are applied well by securing competitively priced contracts, by comparing the school's performance with others locally and in sharing good practice with them. The school also consults with parents through a questionnaire where they identify three things they like about the school and one thing they would like to change.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,156,226
Total expenditure	1,117,283
Expenditure per pupil	2,829

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	64,834
Balance carried forward to the next	38,943

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

31. Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good** overall. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, particularly in the development of the children's language skills. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. The children achieve well in all of the six areas of learning, but their attainment is still below average overall and well below average in communication, language and literacy by the end of the reception year. Very few children achieve the nationally expected standards for their age (the 'Early Learning Goals'). Teaching and learning are good in all six areas of learning. Lessons are well planned and new facts and skills are taught well. Leadership and management are good.
32. In the nursery, the provision is satisfactory with good features. The teacher and two support staff work well as a team and make good use of student and voluntary helpers. The provision in the reception year is good with very good features. Two teachers and two support staff work very well as a team. Although there are two class groups for registration, the children are often taught in three ability groups to good effect. Resources and organisation are good overall and very good use is made of the ample outside facilities both in the nursery and reception classes.
33. All staff in the Foundation Stage work effectively as a team, led by one of the reception teachers. Planning and organisation of lessons are good and follow the nationally recommended guidelines closely. The procedures to assess what the children know, understand and can do and to measure and record their progress are good and are particularly effective in identifying children who have significant difficulties with the basic skills of speaking and listening. Children with special educational needs or English as an additional language receive good support.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong and successful commitment to young children learning through structured play and exploring materials. Occasionally adults do not interact enough with children when they are involved in these 'free' activities.

Commentary

34. Teaching is good and all children achieve well. However, standards are below those expected by the end of the reception year. Some of the children have extremely poor skills and understanding when they start in the nursery. They quickly learn school rules and routines and make rapid progress in learning how to behave in group situations. This is because they are treated sensitively by the staff and are helped to understand that they cannot 'do their own thing' all the time. In the reception classes, the children have good opportunities to express their views and opinions in class discussions. They all have a good understanding of the complex organisation of groups and activities and happily comply with classroom rules and routines. During choice time, the reception area is a hive of busy, productive activity. However, a small number of children still have difficulties during group sessions and at times some call out rather excitedly when it is not their turn or lose concentration and do not follow what the teacher is saying. The nursery teacher was very excited when a girl had built a bridge out of large wooden blocks and bounced over it. Staff sometimes miss such opportunities to interact with children involved in choice activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The key skills of speaking and listening and key skills for reading and writing, including phonics, are taught well through short group lessons and very well organised and stimulating choice activities.

Commentary

35. The previous inspection report judged progress in this area of learning to be unsatisfactory. Teacher assessments show that the children make good progress in communication, language and literacy. The evidence from this inspection supports this. Many children clearly have very poor skills of speaking and listening when they start in the nursery. In spite of the good teaching in the nursery several children still have poor speaking skills at the end of the year. They have a poor vocabulary and the way they structure their sentences is weak. By the end of reception, the good direct teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and well-planned exploratory learning activities are beginning to have a positive effect on the children. Most of the children are confident speakers and use full clear sentences when interacting with each other and adults. They are making good progress in reading and writing simple sentences. All children are learning to read up to 45 key words. These are displayed in the classroom on five rockets and the children's names are stuck to the rockets to show who knows which words. Although teaching and learning are good and children achieve well throughout the Foundation Stage, many are still well below the standards expected for their age by the end of the reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to learn about numbers and other mathematical ideas every day.

Commentary

36. Children achieve well in both the nursery and reception year but most of them do not achieve the standard expected by the time they start in Year 1. Teaching and learning are good. All children make good progress in basic sorting, counting and sequencing skills and in learning about numbers, shapes, colours, simple measurement and time. Basic numeracy skills are taught well directly on a daily basis, and classroom activities are organised to include many opportunities to develop children's understanding of mathematical concepts, such as simple addition, and language, such as position. The least able children in reception put objects into lines and count correctly up to about seven or eight but have considerable difficulty with simple ideas such as 'one more'. More able children can count to 20 and beyond, identify numbers and put them in order and complete simple addition calculations.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in reception. This is done through a very well planned theme that covers a wide range of activities, knowledge and skills.

Commentary

37. Teacher assessments show that children achieve well in this area of learning. This is supported by the findings of this inspection. At the time, a 'babies theme' was used for much of the work in the reception classes. This was really helping the children understand how they are growing and changing themselves and even the least able children correctly identified things they can do that babies cannot. Good teacher-led group activities were observed. Children were successfully prompted to suggest questions that both mothers and nurses might ask at a baby clinic. Children were fascinated to learn about baptism and what a font is. One of the two recently constructed role-play areas was set up as a baby clinic. This was a popular activity at choice time, although the children lacked some sensitivity in handling the baby dolls. Two mothers visited with their babies to make this activity real and help develop the children's skills. The children talked well about differences between two boys who visited, a very young baby and a toddler, but surprisingly had not learnt their names. Still on this theme, children used a range of simple tools, techniques and materials satisfactorily to make mobiles to hang over a baby's cot. Children often choose to have a go on the computer and use the mouse, and occasionally the keyboard, to play simple word and number games or draw a picture. In spite of the good teaching and learning, standards are below average at the end of the reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Daily use of the very good outdoor facilities contributes significantly to the children's physical development.

Commentary

38. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. In both the nursery and reception every opportunity is taken to get the children outside. There is a large facility outside the nursery with a marked tarmac area, and a good range and number of wheeled toys and other activities are provided, including painting, sand play and a washing line. There is also a stimulating area with trees and flowers. Similarly, there is large area outside the reception classes with markings and a good range of good quality play equipment. The children understand the rules in these areas and play happily. For example, they aim, throw, catch and kick balls with some success and accuracy. They use large construction equipment purposefully and show reasonable control as they ride bikes and cars round the track. They know when to stop at the garage to get petrol or have the engine fixed. In both the nursery and reception these outdoor facilities are used well to develop other skills. Language skills are reinforced well when reception children, for example, search for hidden words, and mathematical skills are consolidated when they play skittles. Creative and social skills develop well when nursery children work together on big paintings. These outdoor activities, classroom activities and sessions in the hall successfully develop the children's physical skills. They show increasing confidence and co-ordination as they move in different ways and at different speeds, change direction, jump on and off low benches and climb and balance on apparatus. They learn how to

handle a range of tools correctly including pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and glue spreaders. Nevertheless, standards are below those expected nationally at the end of the reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception classes are confident and skilful when painting.

Commentary

39. Children achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. Standards are below national expectations at the end of the reception year. Inspection evidence shows that children make significant gains in the basic skills of drawing and painting. The more able children in the reception classes complete interesting and quite complex paintings including, for example, one of a landscape with a rainbow and another of Mickey Mouse. They use different colours and brushes well and know how to stop the paint from running. Several girls explained very clearly what they were doing and engaged in lively conversation with an inspector without stopping painting. There were few examples of musical activities observed but those that were seen and discussions with the children show that they enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes, including number rhymes, and playing percussion instruments.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although pupils achieve well overall, standards could be higher, especially in writing.
- Teachers plan lessons to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills well.
- Although procedures to assess what pupils' know and understand are good, pupils do not always know how they can make their work better.
- Subject leaders do not have a clear enough picture of the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

40. Standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. They are lower than at the time of previous inspection because pupils' attainment is lower when they start in Year 1. Although standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated, they have improved at the end of Year 6 at a faster rate than they have nationally. This is because of the good strategies teachers have implemented. All pupils achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress at a similar rate to their peers. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 with statements of special educational needs, who are taught predominantly in the resourced provision, achieve very well in reading and writing. This is because teaching and learning are good overall and in the majority of the lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching in Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory. Overall there has been good improvement since the previous inspection and most of the identified weaknesses have been successfully addressed.

41. Staff have correctly identified raising standards in writing as a priority throughout the school. As a result, teachers have implemented several different strategies, many from a local education authority initiative for pupils in Years 5 and 6, which successfully develop pupils' speaking and

listening skills and stimulate their ideas for writing. Pupils become increasingly confident in discussing their work, expressing their views and listening to the views of others. As a result standards in speaking and listening are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Teachers plan interesting and challenging sessions when pupils talk about their work before writing. For example, in a Year 3 lesson pupils took on the roles of a councillor and resident in a discussion about the problems of litter. As a result, pupils used the specific words and phrases required in letters of apology. Year 6 pupils acted out possible openings to adventure stories and discussed the ways they could make their writing more interesting. Their descriptive writing showed that they had understood the importance of using imaginative words to capture the reader's interest and short sentences to build up the suspense. One pupil wrote 'A big burly man shot from the bushes like a bullet. Paul fled from the scene.' A poet recently worked with each class and pupils in Year 6 talked enthusiastically about how this had helped them to write humorous poems.

42. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have individual targets for writing and all know how they can improve their writing. Towards the end of a writing lesson in Year 6 pupils checked through their own work and that of another pupil to identify the good points and one area which could be improved. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good teaching and because they have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. This is particularly true for the pupils in Years 3 to 6 who are taught predominantly in the classes in the resources provision. However, this practice is not used consistently across the school so some pupils do not know how they can make their work better. There are insufficient opportunities for all teachers to check that they are making consistent judgements on the standards of pupils' writing.
43. Leadership and management by the recently formed English leadership team are good. They have identified strengths and weaknesses correctly and have put in place several good strategies to promote learning and to improve standards. Procedures for checking the progress of individual pupils are good but insufficient use is made of the resulting data. The two key members of the team do not have a good enough overview of the teaching and learning in the school because they do not observe lessons or examine pupils' work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Overall, there is good use of language and literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, Year 2 pupils clearly explained their reasons for wanting to meet someone from a different country during a religious education lesson. Pupils frequently use their writing and reading skills in other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote up the findings of their investigations about circuits in science and Year 6 pupils wrote newspaper reports about the killing of John Lennon, showing a good understanding of the features of report writing. Although some examples of word-processing were seen, not enough use is made of ICT.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not as high as they could be.
- Good teaching is enabling pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- Problem-solving skills are improving because teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to practise the skills.
- The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good but their use is unsatisfactory because pupils are not given targets to help them understand what they need to do to improve.
- The two subject leaders understand what needs to be done to raise standards.

Commentary

45. Standards are currently below those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Year 2 have made good progress in developing mathematical skills since starting school and they have achieved well because of good teaching. Pupils' performance in national tests in 2003 showed good improvement on the previous year. This was largely due to the number of pupils performing at a level above that expected at this age. In the current Year 6 standards are higher than in 2003 but they are below national expectations overall. This is because a significant proportion of pupils are working at a level lower than expected for their age. However, pupils are making good progress in their learning and are achieving well, because they are taught well and they work hard in lessons. Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capabilities. In the school's resourced provision, pupils in Years 5 and 6 with a statement of special educational needs are taught very well and, as a result, achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. Pupils who have English as an additional language achieve well, in relation to their prior attainment. The school is aware of some differences in the attainment of girls and boys. For example, boys' overall performance was significantly better than girls in the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2003. There were no significant differences in the achievement of girls and boys in lessons observed during the inspection.
46. The quality of teaching is good overall and this is helping to develop pupils' confidence in lessons. As a result, pupils develop their mathematical skills well. For example, in an effective start to a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used an interactive whiteboard to engage pupils' interest in playing a game of 'multiplication bingo'. Questions were presented at speed, appearing on the interactive whiteboard for a few seconds only. Pupils responded well to this challenge because they wanted to be the first to shout "Bingo!" In this pacy session, pupils' skills of mental agility were developed well because they were given an opportunity to practise them and a reason for doing so.
47. The school has correctly identified developing pupils' problem-solving skills as a priority. During a good lesson with the more able Year 6 pupils, the teacher focused on discussing the strategies needed to solve the problem of costing a family day out at a fairground. Pupils were reminded they needed to establish what the question was asking them to do by reading it carefully and by underlining the key words. Pupils worked with partners co-operatively to calculate the cost of each item before finding the grand total. This took them a significant amount of time as the teacher continued to add further tasks to the original challenge and increased the level of difficulty for those capable of attaining at a higher level. The school's desire to raise standards through developing problem-solving skills was evident in nearly all the lessons observed. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils were finding a number that lies between two others and developing the concept of 'halfway'. When they had answered a number of questions successfully they tackled problems written as words rather than just numbers. These additional activities extended the learning of the more able pupils and, through skilful questioning, the teacher ensured all pupils were able to participate fully in the lesson at a level well matched to their ability.
48. Leadership and management are good. As part of their monitoring role the co-ordinators have looked carefully at teachers' planning and given feedback on ways of making this more effective. Samples of pupils' work have been examined to identify individual strengths and weaknesses in different aspects of mathematics. The results of the most recent national tests of Year 6 pupils have been carefully analysed. However, the co-ordinators have not made recommendations to other staff based on this analysis or had sufficient opportunities to observe and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, they do not have a clear enough picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching. New procedures for assessment, that successfully track pupils' progress from year to year, have been implemented. However, this information is not used effectively to set individual targets for improvement. An audit of resources has enabled the co-ordinators to identify gaps and fill these, following the allocation of additional funds. Resources are now adequate. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use and develop mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum, particularly ICT. For example, pupils in Year 2 in science have created block graphs, to represent the distance cars travel down a slope in work on forces, and in geography they have measured scaled distances on maps and expressed these as kilometres.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress in their last two years at school but standards are not as high as they could be.
- The development of pupils' understanding of the methodology of scientific experimentation is consistently good from Year 3 on and this is very good by the end of Year 6.
- Insufficient emphasis is given to monitoring teaching and to assessing pupils' progress.

Commentary

50. Standards are below average throughout the school. They have been consistently below or well below average for some years. Inspection evidence is that they are improving. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but it gets progressively better from Year 3 to be very good by Year 6. Pupils' understanding of scientific experimentation improves well from year to year. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a very good understanding of scientific methods and conventions. There is a sharp contrast in pupils' presentation of their work, which was poor in Year 5 and very good in Year 6.
51. Teaching and learning are good overall. There are very good features in Years 5 and 6, including the teaching of a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. However, assessment procedures and the use of information about pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not used to best effect in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. The Year 6 pupils make sensible predictions about the outcomes of experiments and support these with quality reasoning to support their choices. Experiments are carried out carefully, with some very good examples of data collection and presentation. Pupils draw accurate conclusions and give clear views as to why these are made. This is less well developed elsewhere in the school. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were given clear guidance on magnetism and understood that opposite poles attract and like poles repel. However, the planned experiment was not well conceived, lacking appropriate challenge, for these well-motivated pupils. A very good Year 5 activity met all of the requirements of a fair test. The pupils were required to make wire hoops through which to blow bubbles and predict which would produce the most bubbles. Many of the pupils correctly identified the inherent difficulties in controlling the way hoops were constructed and that this could make a significant difference to the predicted outcome. Teachers give a good emphasis to scientific vocabulary when introducing new work. This was very evident in a Year 3 lesson where words such as 'variables' and 'controls' were explained in great detail. Questions to pupils later in the lesson revealed their understanding of such terms in their responses. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the learning.
52. The leadership and management of science are good overall although the arrangements for examining pupils' work and observing lessons are not sufficiently rigorous. Work is planned well, based on the National Curriculum programmes of study and guidelines. Resources are good and readily available. The imminent arrival of a second digital microscope and staff training to use these will enhance the use of modern technology in science. A very good link

has developed with Year 7 science teachers from a neighbouring secondary school who work with Year 6 pupils and assist with assessment procedures. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Achievement from Year 3 to 6 is now very good. Resources for learning are good and still improving. There is now a good scheme of work in place for all year groups, although there is a risk of unnecessarily duplicating some topics, especially in Years 5 and 6.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are highly motivated and currently make good progress but there are gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- An innovative approach to subject leadership is having a positive impact on provision and outcomes.

Commentary

53. There were many positive aspects to the provision in ICT during the inspection. Leadership and management are good. The leadership team comprises a team leader, four other teachers and a staff governor. This is proving to be an effective way of developing provision through the shared enthusiasm and expertise of several staff. They have produced a good quality subject action plan and are well placed to move teaching and learning forward rapidly. However, discussions with the leadership team and pupils, and examination of pupils' work, show that much of the good practice has been in place for only a short period of time. Some staff lacked confidence prior to recent training. The school now has an impressive new ICT suite, after about six months without this facility, and all classes are timetabled to use this facility at least once a week. The school is making good use of a highly structured commercial scheme to develop the pupils' ICT skills across all elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study. There are additional computers in all the classrooms but these are not used to best effect to consolidate and extend skills learnt in the ICT suite or to make use of modern technology in other subjects.
54. Teaching and learning are good overall. They were good in most of the eight lessons observed and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Lessons were seen in most year groups from Year 1 to Year 6, including groups of pupils with special educational needs. A very good lesson, in which Year 6 pupils with special educational needs very successfully completed a word-processing task, was led by a very competent teaching assistant. The most significant factor in the pupils' learning is their enthusiasm and interest in ICT lessons. They are keen to learn, listen well to the teachers and get on with the stimulating tasks diligently. Sometimes the pace of learning is slowed down because pupils do not have the expected skills and understanding for their age and have to seek help. All staff observed were competent and most of them were confident in their knowledge of modern technology.
55. Because much of this good practice is relatively new, there are some gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, many pupils in Year 5 do not know the difference between the 'shift' and 'caps lock' keys on the computer keyboard and several of them opened the same program more than once. When creating patterns using a graphics program, Year 4 pupils showed that they knew how to 'copy and paste' but they had no prior knowledge of the symmetry tool. Standards are below average throughout the school. However, standards were average in the specific aspects being taught during lessons seen in Years 2 and 6. All pupils are now making good progress but their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their prior knowledge and capabilities. The use of the commercial scheme is enabling teachers to record and assess pupils' attainment and progress, and to identify and eliminate

weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. The development of links between ICT and other subjects is a high priority in the subject action plan. At the time of this inspection this was satisfactory. Several lessons in the ICT suite featured good links with other subjects. A lesson involving Year 6 pupils with special educational needs was very successful in developing their skills to help them improve the content and presentation of their writing. Lessons in Year 5 on databases made good links with work in mathematics. Lessons in Year 4 made very strong links with art and design and contributed to pupils' cultural awareness. Lessons in Years 1 and 2 made good links with science and literacy. However, examination of pupils' work and observation of other lessons show that this is not happening often enough in the classrooms.

HUMANITIES

57. Religious education was inspected in full and is reported on below. It is not possible to make reliable judgements about the provision, including teaching and learning, in geography or history, because there was insufficient time to observe any lessons. However, inspectors looked at pupils' work and talked to pupils in Years 2 and 6 and to the geography co-ordinator.
58. In **geography**, pupils' skills and knowledge develop well from year to year, for example through the study of maps and finding out about the local environment, other parts of Britain and other countries of the world. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to develop a good understanding of geographical vocabulary when they label features such as cliffs and mountains on a map of the imaginary Isle of Struay. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study different areas of the world, for example St Lucia, and compare them with the local area. Pupils in Year 6 have a satisfactory understanding of the water cycle and use correct geographical language, such as 'source', 'tributary' and 'estuary', when they write and talk about rivers they have studied. Teachers plan work so that pupils build on what they have learnt before, which is a good improvement since the previous inspection. However, there is still no consistent approach to checking pupils' progress or helping them to improve their work. The geography co-ordinator does not have enough opportunities to evaluate the teaching and learning as she does not observe lessons or examine pupils' work.
59. In **history**, pupils in Year 2 talked enthusiastically about Florence Nightingale. They knew that she helped the soldiers by making the hospitals cleaner and explained some of the differences between hospitals then and now. Pupils in Year 6 have a satisfactory understanding of some of the differences between the lives of the rich and poor children in Victorian England. They explained that they learnt about the very poor conditions for children working in the cotton mills when they visited Styal Mill. There is no co-ordinator for history at present due to staff changes and the different approach by the new headteacher.
60. In both geography and history, teachers make good links to other subjects, especially literacy. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote an explanation of the water cycle, including a labelled diagram. Year 6 pupils said that the visits to Wigan Pier and Styal Mill made the work come alive and "helped them to remember things".

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers explain work in exciting ways and give pupils interesting activities.

- Pupils use skills from other subjects well.
- There are no agreed procedures for assessing pupils' progress or recording the skills they have learnt.
- The co-ordinator does not observe lessons or regularly examine pupils' work to enable her to have a clear picture of standards across the school.

Commentary

61. As at the time of the last inspection, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. There has been good improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection. They are good throughout the school and, as a result, all pupils achieve well. However, there are no agreed procedures for assessing what pupils' know, understand and can do. Consequently, this reduces the effectiveness of teachers' planning for pupils of different abilities.
62. Pupils achieve well because teachers make lessons exciting. For example, the teacher in a Year 1 class immediately captured the attention of the pupils when she showed a book about David and Goliath, in which the characters were animals. At the end of the story the pupils said that Goliath was a bully and one pupil said, "It's not good to be a bully. You must be kind to everyone." In a Year 3 lesson pupils showed empathy with the characters in a story about Hanukkah when they answered questions posed by other pupils. For example, when a pupil asked what it felt like to go to war one pupil replied, "A bit angry, a bit sad and a bit brave." Teachers in Year 5 used salted water to explain that Christians and members of other faiths believe that God's presence, just like the salt, is everywhere even though it cannot be seen. Pupils learn about Christianity and other religions when they visit places of worship and when visitors come to school. For example, pupils in Year 5 learnt about some of the ways Hindus celebrate Diwali during a visit by a member of the Hindu faith.
63. Literacy skills, in particular, are used well in many lessons. For example, pupils in Year 6 talked about the similarities and differences between some of the major religions around the world. In several lessons, particularly in Years 3 to 6, pupils use their reading and writing skills well. For example, in Year 6 pupils skimmed the information about different festivals of light then wrote a summary using bullet points. In Year 3 pupils used the computer to write up the story of Hanukkah.
64. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and supports her colleagues effectively because of her good subject knowledge. She has purchased a wide range of resources, including books and artefacts. These are well organised and easily accessible and successfully enhance pupils' learning. She examines teachers' planning to ensure the correct coverage of topics. However, she has had no opportunities to monitor teaching and learning by observing lessons or regularly examining pupils' work. This reduces her effectiveness in gaining a good grasp of the subject's strengths and weaknesses.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

65. Art and design was inspected in full and is reported on below. No lessons were seen in design and technology, music or physical education and it is not possible to make reliable judgements on provision in these subjects.
66. In **design and technology**, examination of teacher's planning and a brief discussion with the co-ordinator indicates that the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The work saved in pupils' folders and on display was insubstantial and insufficient to make any further comments on the school's provision.
67. In **music**, the co-ordinator is keen to give music a higher profile and has introduced a new commercial scheme to support non-specialists. The effectiveness of this provision is to be

evaluated at the end of the current school year. As music has not been a priority in the school improvement plan there have been no opportunities for the co-ordinator to check on the quality of teaching and learning or to undertake monitoring activities. The co-ordinator recognises the value of using computers in music and, following her attendance on a recent course, intends to use the new ICT suite for work on composition.

68. A recently formed choir is very well supported, with over 60 pupils involved. The choir has taken part in services at two different churches in Warrington. A small number of pupils receive instruction in playing the violin and cello and this group regularly performs in assemblies. There are separate weekly singing practices for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and pupils in Years 3 to 6. A session with pupils in Years 3 to 6 was led by a competent musician who engaged the pupils' interest by choosing songs they particularly enjoyed singing. They enjoyed 'warming up' their voices to 'Boom-Chick-a-Boom'. They followed the teacher's very good lead by copying her singing style. In singing 'Give It All You've Got' they participated enthusiastically because the words included the name of the school. Their singing was loud and the tone was a little harsh, but nevertheless they remained tuneful.
69. All teachers use background music during lessons to create a good atmosphere for learning. As a result, pupils experience a very wide range of calming music in classrooms. Some teachers are using music in other parts of the curriculum. For example, in a very good Year 3 religious education lesson, pupils had to add words to a song about the Jewish festival of Hanukkah. They used their literacy and musical skills well by finding words that fitted the rhythm and by singing tunefully.
70. In **physical education**, pupils participate in the full range of activities required by the National Curriculum, including outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils in Year 6 visit an outdoor centre and pupils in Year 5 have a residential experience. The school is actively involved with others in a 'school sports co-ordinators partnership'. This fosters good links between schools and increases the opportunities to share skills and expertise. The school is keen to promote sport and has close links with the Warrington Wolves Rugby League Club, whose players offer coaching to pupils in Years 5 and 6. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including 'high five' netball, football and rugby. The school meets the national requirements for the teaching of swimming.
71. The co-ordinator is keen to promote physical education activities and to develop the subject further, particularly in athletics and dance. The staff follow the policy and scheme of work well to ensure that skills develop progressively. As the subject has not been a priority in the school improvement plan there has been no opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and the quality of pupils' paintings in Years 5 and 6 is well above average.
- A good range of range of media and activities is used effectively, including special art days, working on large canvases and using modern technology.
- Leadership successfully enables teachers to deliver exciting learning experiences.
- Good, frequent use is made of the works of famous artists to successfully develop pupils' skills through copying a range of styles.

Commentary

72. All pupils achieve well. Standards are generally above average. They are well above average in painting in Years 5 and 6. This was most striking in the displayed acrylic paintings on large canvases. Displays in corridors and classrooms also showed a wealth of work in a range of media by pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils have produced high quality work using paint and clay, and in creating features in woven willow.
73. Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 3 to 6 they are sometimes very good. Inspirational teaching was seen in a lesson in Year 3 about the work of Georgia O'Keefe. Pupils examined a range of paintings of large flowers and they discussed the techniques used by the artist. When pupils sketched a poppy in the style of O'Keefe, the quality of draughtsmanship was very good and pupils successfully worked on a large scale. When asked to close their eyes and to reflect on the colour red, pupils reported feelings of anger, fire, and warmth. Pupils successfully used their sketches as a basis for finished pictures of a poppy using a range of other colours to create different tones in different areas of the red petals. The finished work was then hung to show how well the pupils had understood the concept of size.
74. Leadership and management of the subject are to a very high standard. The good resources are used very well. The subject leader has produced a clear policy statement and planning is based on the recommended national exemplar materials. The very good curriculum includes two whole days that have an art theme. The most recent theme resulted in high quality work inspired by the study of Aboriginal and Caribbean art and culture. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements in the curriculum, including the study of a wide range of famous artists representing different cultures and styles.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A high priority is given to developing pupils' personal skills and their understanding of rights and responsibilities.

Commentary

75. Recent developments are having a significant impact on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve well. Every class has timetabled lessons. These are planned using the national guidelines, a good commercial scheme and the outcomes of a teacher's recent visit to Australia, which has led to the introduction of an exciting new approach to developing pupils' thinking skills. Teaching and learning were good in the two lessons seen and teachers effectively included short activities at other times to stimulate and develop pupils' thinking skills. Computerised images were used well in a Year 6 lesson on thinking skills. A Year 2 lesson about decision making and consequences was planned well and conducted at a good pace. There were good opportunities in these lessons and at other times for pupils to express their views and opinions. There are good links in lessons in other subjects, notably literacy and religious education. The election and work of the School Council contribute strongly to pupils' involvement in school life and decision making, and to their understanding of the principles of democracy. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving rapidly. The new subject leader has quickly got to grips with the role. Planning, resources and plans for development, including involvement in the Healthy Schools initiative, are well thought out and organised.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Grade

Inspection judgement

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
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	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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