

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Overleigh St Mary's CE (VC) Primary School**

Handbridge

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111290

Headteacher: Mr P Maskery

Lead inspector: Mrs E Linley

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 257129

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	518
School address:	Old Wrexham Road Handbridge Chester Cheshire
Postcode:	CH4 7HS
Telephone number:	01244 674001
Fax number:	01244 682495
Appropriate authority:	Cheshire
Name of chair of governors:	Dr A M McMahon
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Overleigh St Mary's CE (VC) Primary School is a beacon school situated in Handbridge, approximately one mile from the city of Chester. The premises were originally designed as a secondary school. The present school was established in 1984 when alterations were made to the present building to accommodate younger pupils. The school serves areas that are characterised by both privately-owned properties and housing trust accommodation. The socio-economic circumstances of the school are mixed and pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average overall. Pupils enter the reception class at the start of the school year in which they are five years of age. Most children have attended the local nursery prior to entry to school. Pupils from Belgrave Infant School transfer to Overleigh St Mary's into Year 3; as a result, there are significantly higher numbers of pupils in the junior classes than the infants. The school also has a unit for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and junior aged pupils attend the unit from within the authority. At present the unit can accommodate up to 24 children and the school currently provides for a pupil with severe learning difficulties. The mobility of pupils into the junior classes is high owing to all of these factors. There are 518 pupils on roll of whom 60 are from minority ethnic and cultural groups; about four per cent of pupils' first language is believed not to be English and this is higher than most schools. Eleven per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is broadly in line with the national average. There are 59 pupils on the list of special educational need, of whom 18 have a formal Statement of Special Educational Need and this is well above the national average. The school was rewarded with achievement awards in 2001 and 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27281	Mrs E Linley	Lead inspector	History and geography
9883	Mr B Silvester	Lay inspector	
11472	Mr M Beale	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language and religious education
8263	Mrs M Forsman	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, ICT, art and design and design and technology
22359	Mrs J Harvard	Team inspector	Special educational needs, science, music and physical education
21585	Mr A Kingston	Team inspector	Mathematics

The inspection contractor was:

Focus Education (UK) Limited  
113 – 115 High Street  
Uppermill  
Saddleworth  
OL3 6BD

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>34</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a highly effective and inclusive school.** As a result of the very good teaching overall, pupils achieve very well. Among the eleven year olds, standards of attainment are well above national expectations in English, above average in mathematics and science and satisfactory in information and communication technology. Pupils' achievement in art and design is excellent and very good in music and physical education. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership and management are very good
- Teaching is very good
- The curriculum provided is very good; however, there are insufficient computers in the school to support the ICT curriculum well
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for whom English is not their first language, is very good
- The school provides very well for children in the foundation stage
- The school provides very well for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and they make very good progress
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning; relationships throughout the school are very good and children behave very well
- The quality of care is very good.

The school has developed well since its inspection in April 1998. The school's commitment to enable all pupils to achieve their best was rewarded with achievement awards in 2001 and 2002 and with the 'Artsmark' Gold and 'Activemark' in 2003. Excellent provision for the arts and very high provision for physical education have contributed significantly to this outcome. There was a dip in standards in Year 6 in 2003; however, pupils in this particular cohort achieved well in relation to their capabilities. Standards achieved in ICT are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection; however, this is largely due to not enough computers being available for pupils to work on at regular times during the school day.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

**Pupils' achievement is very good.** Attainment on entry is average overall. Children make a very good start in reception and the majority are likely to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of this year. Pupils make good progress in the infant classes and they are working at well above average levels in reading, writing and speaking and listening, and above average levels of attainment in mathematics and science. The number of pupils increases significantly in the junior classes as pupils from a local infant school join in Year 3 and as pupils join the special classes for moderate learning difficulties. Pupils make very good progress in Years 3 to 6 and are achieving

standards that are well above national expectations in English and above average in mathematics and science. Standards achieved in the national tests for pupils aged eleven in 2003 were below this current high level of achievement however, the results achieved reflect the cohort's capabilities. Standards achieved in ICT are currently satisfactory and in religious education, they are well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus throughout the school.

**Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** The ethos of the school is excellent. All staff have very high expectations for pupils' conduct and this promotes very good relationships in school. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning and their behaviour is very good. Pupils are very positive about school life and their attendance is well above average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching is very good overall** and this is supported well by the use of an effective range of assessment strategies to aid the next steps in pupils' learning. The school provides a very good curriculum that is enriched with an excellent range of activities, experiences and learning opportunities for pupils. Provision for pupils who do not have English as their home language, and for those who have special educational needs including moderate or severe learning difficulties, is also very good. The school prepares a highly stimulating environment in which pupils' work is clearly valued. A very good level of care is provided by staff, for the emotional and physical needs of all its pupils. Information to parents is good and parents are very supportive of the school. Links with local schools are good overall and with the community, they are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The leadership of the headteacher is excellent; he is supported very well by the deputy headteacher and key staff. Together they promote a clear vision for the future of the school that is shared by all staff and that is underpinned by an excellent ethos for learning. The overall management of the school is very good and is enhanced by many very good features of monitoring and evaluation of the performance of staff and the quality of education. The governance of the school is very good. Governors show a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they are fully committed to supporting the school and its drive for inclusion and the raising of achievement for all its pupils. The governing body carries out all its statutory duties effectively.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents expressed very positive views about school. Some parents had concerns about information and communication technology and pupils' access to computers. The inspection team judged that the school works hard to provide pupils with a balanced ICT curriculum; however, it concurs with parents' views about pupils' access to computers. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their teachers, friends, school trips and how much they enjoy learning.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve pupils' access to the ICT curriculum through enhancing the ratio of computers to numbers of pupils in line with national recommendations.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards achieved and pupils' achievement overall are very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards throughout the school are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science
- Standards achieved in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory and should be better when pupils' achievement in other subjects and their capabilities are considered
- Pupils' achievement in art and design are exceptional
- Pupils achieve well above expectations in music and physical education
- Pupils with moderate learning difficulties who are in the special classes, achieve very well and make very good progress.
- Standards achieved by pupils in religious education are well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus

#### Commentary

1. The school's results in the national tests for 2003 showed that overall standards by the end of Year 2 were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance was also well above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.4 (17.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.5 (16)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.8 (18.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.3 (27.9)	26.8 (27)
mathematics	27.6 (27)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.9 (29.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 114 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 6 showed that standards achieved in English and science were average and above average in mathematics. In comparison to similar schools, the pupils' performance was the same. The drop in standards in 2003 does not reflect the high achievement of pupils that was seen during the inspection; however, it does reflect the capability of this particular cohort of pupils. The school's trend of improvement over that last four years has been below the national trend. However, the criteria for entry into the special classes have changed since the last inspection, with a higher proportion of less able pupils being admitted, including pupils with severe learning difficulties. In line with the



school's policy on inclusion, no Year 6 pupil with special educational needs, including those in the special classes for moderate and severe learning difficulties, have been disapplied from taking the national tests for eleven year olds and this has had an impact on the school's results overall. The average achievement of boys and girls from 2001 – 2003 shows that girls in Year 6 have outperformed boys in English. The school has taken the matter seriously and has put in place a range of strategies to remove barriers to learning in English and as a result, no significant variation in the attainment of boys and girls was noted during the inspection.

3. Children start school in the reception class with a very wide range of ability and attainment on entry is average overall. Very good teaching in the foundation stage enables children to make very good progress overall and the majority are likely to exceed the goals that they are expected to reach in the areas of learning by the end of their reception year. Pupils continue to make good progress in the infant classes. In Year 3 a significant number of pupils join the school when they transfer from a local infant school; also pupils with moderate learning difficulties join the special classes for pupils in Years 3 to 6. As a result, attainment on entry into the juniors is more varied, but it continues to be average overall. Very good teaching in the junior classes enables pupils to make very good progress and by the age of 11, pupils achieve very well across a range of subjects.
4. Pupils with special educational needs attain levels that are below the national average, however, the majority make good progress with some making very good progress. All the pupils achieve well, owing to the extra programmes of work for literacy and numeracy, in addition to the very effective extra support provided by teachers and teaching assistants.
5. Since the last inspection the school has continued to provide Local Education Authority strategic provision for pupils from Years 3 to 6 with moderate learning difficulties. However, pupils with severe learning difficulties and pupils in Year 7 have also been admitted into the two classes which are broadly organised by age. The specialist classes are fully integrated into the life of the school.
6. Standards achieved by pupils in the special classes are being maintained and overall are as good as during the previous inspection. Although the attainment of the pupils is below national standards the majority of the pupils are achieving very well over time. A significant proportion of these pupils make very good gains in all areas of learning, in particular building their knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, the pupils in both classes are developing very good reading skills. They read with genuine enthusiasm and the most able in Year 6 can read with expression and understanding from a range of novels and information books, achieving standards just below or in line with expectations.
7. In English, pupils' standards are well above average throughout the school; very high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The celebration of language is a strength of the curriculum and is evident in the excellent displays that celebrate pupils' achievements. The school has worked hard to remove potential barriers to learning. This is seen, for example, in the very high quality provision for pupils with special educational needs, for those who have moderate or severe learning difficulties and for those whose home language is not English. As a result, all pupils achieve very well.
8. Pupils attain above expected levels in mathematics and in science and whilst this represents a slight dip since the time of the last inspection it nonetheless reflects pupils' good achievement in relation to their capability. In ICT, pupils achieve satisfactory standards. Pupils' access to computers to support the development of their ICT skills is restricted. This is because there are not enough computers available in school for pupils to work on at regular times during the school day. However, although standards are not as high as was judged at the time of the last inspection, expectations for information and communication technology have been raised in the past six years and the school is working hard to meet the needs of the curriculum in its partnership with the local high school.

9. Pupils' achievement in art and design is excellent and is evident throughout the school. Such achievement, together with very high achievement in music, has enabled the school to be successful in its award of the 'artsmark' gold. Similarly pupils achieve very well in physical education and the school has been awarded the 'activemark'. High achievement is evident in religious education where standards reached are well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. High quality provision, teaching and learning enable pupils to achieve very well overall. High achievement in the arts is greatly valued by parents and pupils alike.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

The level of attendance is **very good**. The pupils' attitudes are **excellent** and their behaviour is **very good**. The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes to their work are excellent
- The school provides a high quality and stimulating environment in which pupils learn
- The school's promotes very good relationships
- Pupils' respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others is excellent.
- The school provides exceptionally well for pupils' moral development

### **Commentary**

10. The school encourages and celebrates effort, aspiration and achievement and, as a result, pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning; they are very enthusiastic and well motivated. The collaborative and co-operative work observed was excellent and this impacts positively on pupils' progress and achievement. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, and, as a result, there is a calm, relaxed and orderly atmosphere in the school. Parents acknowledge this aspect of school life as a strength.
11. Pupils behave very well in lessons and about the school and are free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment. There have been no pupil exclusions carried out by the school. Pupils form very constructive relationships with others and are confident and have high self-esteem. The school actively promotes the personal development of those pupils with special educational needs. They are taught the differences between right and wrong in a caring manner. The behaviour of the pupils with SEN, including those with behaviour problems, is at least good, with the majority behaving very well. The pupils' attitude towards their work is generally very good. The teachers and support staff manage these pupils very effectively.
12. Teachers monitor pupils' personal development informally; however, the school actively enables pupils to develop self-knowledge and spiritual awareness and this provision is very good. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. The adults in the school are very good role models; pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and respect for each other's beliefs and values are clearly demonstrated. All pupils have responsibilities in their class and Year 6 pupils act as monitors. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and collaboratively. For example, the school provides very positive corporate experiences, such as class assemblies and residential visits. Pupils are also encouraged to take on responsibilities in other ways and they have demonstrated initiative by raising money for charities, such as the NSPCC and the Meningitis Trust.
13. The extent to which the school actively enables pupils to appreciate their own and others' cultural traditions is very good. Pupils value each other regardless of race, culture, gender or disability. The pupils' understanding of other cultures is enhanced by those at the school who originate from other parts of the world. Cultural provision is also developed through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, out-of-school visits and visiting speakers. The school's

high values and excellent ethos are reinforced through images, posters and displays that make a positive impact on the learning environment.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0.2
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.

14. The level of attendance has improved since the previous inspection. It is now well above the national average and the level of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils are punctual, with only a few pupils that arrive late in the morning.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good** overall. Strengths include teaching and learning, the curriculum, partnerships with parents and leadership and management.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **very good** overall. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is also **very good** and as a result, pupils' learning and achievement is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage and junior classes is very good; it is good in the infant classes overall
- All teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave and pupils rise to these challenges and achieve very well
- Teachers use links across subjects effectively to enhance pupils' learning opportunities.
- Teaching of pupils for whom English is not their home language is of very high quality
- The teaching of all pupils with special educational needs is very good
- Teachers use ongoing assessment very well to plan for pupils' individual needs
- Support assistants make an invaluable contribution to teaching and learning in the school.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 82 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (6 %)	31 (38 %)	37 (45 %)	9 (11 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good overall. The teachers are always very well prepared and meet the needs of individual children very effectively by constant assessment and analysis of their progress. Very good relationships and high expectations of children's behaviour and effort are rewarded by their very good achievement.

16. Teaching throughout the school is very good, although it is good overall in the infant classes. This is because on occasions teachers in the infant classes do not provide more able pupils with work that will challenge them effectively. Nonetheless, all teachers rightly expect very high standards of discipline and as a result, it is rare for pupils to misbehave in lessons. The relationships established between pupils and adults are very good; mutual respect is evident and pupils respond well, demonstrating excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are high because they know that even if they answer a question incorrectly their contribution will be valued.
17. One of the main reasons for the high achievement of pupils in the special classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is the very good quality of teaching. Of the lessons seen all are at least very good or excellent. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. The teachers have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the needs of the pupils in their care. This expertise is widely used throughout the school to support learning. The teachers and assistants work very well together with excellent relationships in both classes. The teaching assistants provide invaluable support which is excellent, demonstrating imagination and flair when organising activities.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

#### **In the class for the younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 the staff organised a Tudor Banquet to develop social skills and historical knowledge and understanding.**

This history lesson is a very good example of an imaginative approach to learning. It captured the pupils' interest and extended their understanding of events and life in the past. Initially the pupils had to sort food and lay the tables for either a banquet for a king or a meal for a poor family. The pupils then had an opportunity to dress up and join in each meal. During the activity cross-curricular skills were developed very well, including scientific skills as the pupils had to describe the taste of the food. The lesson also gave the pupils first hand opportunities to develop their emotional skills as they described how they felt when eating the poor meal and they could see others eating the rich food. During the lesson the pupils demonstrated very good knowledge of historical facts, including the names of the wives of Henry VIII and what happened to them.

18. The teachers in the special classes closely link their planning to the curriculum provided in the mainstream classes. They do, however, adapt the units of work to cater for the individual needs of the pupils. They also provide a wide range of stimulating activities to inspire and motivate the pupils. The teachers use ICT to good effect. Teachers' planning is very good overall and effective links are made between subjects. This is a feature of the development of literacy skills across the curriculum where every opportunity is taken for writing to be developed and celebrated. Pupils are provided with very good opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum and learning is not viewed as isolated experiences dependant on the subject that is being taught.
19. Teaching is enhanced by the use of specialist teachers in the school, for example in music and physical education and pupils' high achievement is seen as a direct outcome of the high quality teaching that takes place. This is a particular feature of the teaching of English to those pupils for whom it is not their home language. The specialist teaching is consistently outstanding. Lessons are exciting, imaginative and move at great pace. Vocabulary and concepts are continually reinforced and used in challenging but 'fun' ways. Extensive use is made of games and puzzles. Relationships are supportive and caring. This quality of teaching is further enhanced by the teamwork that takes place. All teachers and support staff are well briefed about the specific language needs of each child. Joint planning and frequent evaluation of progress help ensure that all pupils are provided with a very good quality of education.
20. The use of assessment to identify pupils' needs and plan effectively for their next steps of learning is a feature of the high quality teaching of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, differentiated teaching methods and resources are used very effectively to support

and challenge pupils and this is a feature of the high quality teaching and learning in the special classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The special educational needs' co-ordinators monitor the effectiveness of these arrangements through formal and informal meetings with teachers and support staff. All staff have copies of important information in a special educational needs file, including individual education plans (IEPs) to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met effectively.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good** and opportunities to enrich it are **excellent**. The accommodation is very good. Learning resources other than for ICT are also very good. Resources for ICT are satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very broad and well-balanced curriculum provides pupils with rich and exciting learning experiences.
- The school has a very strong commitment to equal opportunities.
- Exciting and innovative opportunities are planned for whole school involvement to promote learning in meaningful ways.
- Excellent and very good provision is made for pupils to participate in the arts and sports respectively.
- The school's very good accommodation is used imaginatively and effectively to raise standards across the curriculum
- There are not enough computers to provide pupils with better than satisfactory access to the ICT curriculum.

## Commentary

21. The school provides a very good and well-planned curriculum for its pupils. It fully meets all statutory requirements. It is exciting and innovative, presenting pupils with an imaginative range of experiences through which they can apply their knowledge, skills and understanding to a range of subjects in meaningful ways. This richness is designed successfully to link subjects together without losing their discrete nature and to promote enjoyment and high achievement across the whole of the curriculum. It is further enriched by the school's well-planned and creative theme days and weeks, which have a strong focus on specific areas of the curriculum and enable pupils to work alongside writers and musicians. Pupils clearly enjoy these experiences.
22. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good. There are stimulating areas set out in the classrooms for each of the areas of learning and planning takes full account of the early learning goals in each area.
23. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been sensibly adapted to the school's circumstances and the high standards attained, particularly in English, show the success of the school's curriculum in these subjects. The use of literacy and numeracy in other subjects is both imaginative and productive. Pupils have stimulating opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes and audiences, to use their reading skills to research and to use their communication skills in a wide variety of situations. Pupils' insights into literature are fostered through the creative use of role-play and drama. They are confident 'actors'. They speak clearly and with appropriate expression when, for example, they perform in school assemblies to which their parents are invited. Numeracy skills are developed through the use of graphs and charts as well as frequent opportunities to measure in science and design and technology. The vast majority of pupils speak enthusiastically about their love of mathematics. This is developed through the exciting approach the school takes to the teaching of mathematics, particularly the emphasis it places on the use and application of

number. This approach is supported extremely well by, for example, 'Maths Days' during which all pupils take part in challenges set by other classes.

24. There is a very strong commitment to equal opportunities. This ensures that the curriculum is fully inclusive. The provision for special educational needs is very strong and is very much appreciated by parents. Provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. An up to date list of pupils with special educational needs is kept and there is a strong emphasis on catering for their needs within the planning of the lessons and in groupings.
25. The special classes for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties are fully inclusive. All the pupils are valued and the individual needs of the pupils are well catered for. The teachers and support staff provide a caring, stimulating environment, with a strong emphasis on developing key and life skills through real life practical activities. For example, in a cross-curricular activity, the older pupils confidently made and served pancakes as if they were in a restaurant. The wide range of activities is having a very positive impact on developing the pupils' enthusiasm for learning and self-confidence and in developing their social skills which are very good.
26. The school's curriculum is monitored very effectively and innovative approaches to learning are encouraged. Transfer arrangements between the school and its feeder infant school are developing well. The transfer arrangements between the school and the secondary school are very good. Here, many chances are provided for pupils to visit, to take advantage of its ICT suite and to meet some of their future teachers.
27. The arts and sports have a very high profile in the school. The imaginative approaches taken ensure that extremely high levels of interest and high standards in art, music, literacy and a wide range of sports are achieved. The awards gained by the school such as the Artsmark Gold and Activemark are testament to the school's commitment to these areas of learning. The teachers, support staff and pupils are rightly proud of these achievements. There is a well established tradition of taking part in concerts, music competitions and school productions which provide opportunities for junior pupils to sing in public and to perform for a range of audiences. The quality and variety of extra-curricular activities are excellent and are very well attended.
28. The school makes very good use of its well maintained and well cared for accommodation. The purpose built hall, gym, food technology room and art room are used thoughtfully and to great effect to raise pupils' achievements. The spacious classrooms are used imaginatively to promote learning. The quality of the displays throughout the school is excellent. They value pupils' work and serve to underline and reinforce the school's expectation of high standards. Learning resources, other than those for ICT, are of high quality and plentiful. They support pupils' learning well. In ICT resources are satisfactory. They are not, however, sufficiently plentiful to provide pupils with enough opportunities to further improve their standards of attainment across the whole of the ICT curriculum, especially in those strands which focus on monitoring and control.
29. The school provides a rich and varied programme of visits for pupils as they move through the school. They have a strong link to the curriculum. For example, the Year 6 residential plays a strong part in extending the physical education programme.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. The provision of support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring, is **very good**. The involvement of pupils, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is a very caring community where pupils develop confidence and self esteem.
- Pupils like coming to school and feel secure when they are there. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the life of the school and the wider community.
- The induction of children into the school and into their next stage of education is excellent.

## Commentary

30. The school is a calm, harmonious community and pupils are encouraged to participate effectively in its life. All pupils have roles within their class and Year 6 monitors are given a wide range of responsibilities to support their personal development. Older pupils are encouraged to help the younger ones and enjoy the responsibility that is given to them. For example, in the school council that is comprised of representatives of the classes from Year 3 to Year 6 and meets weekly. Pupils show their initiative in this context by suggesting ideas for fundraising, such as for the Blue Peter Appeal. Pupils' suggestions are discussed and pursued, where practicable.
31. The school carries out regular health and safety surveys and risk assessments. There are five fully qualified 'first-aiders' and all staff have undertaken emergency first-aid training. The school nurse visits regularly to carry out health checks and to talk to the pupils. The doctor and the dentist also visit the school. The school has a child protection policy and the headteacher and another teacher are responsible for its implementation. Both have received the necessary training. Child protection issues are discussed at staff meetings, and a local education authority (LEA) representative has spoken to staff about child protection matters.
32. The pupils with statements are well cared for and supported by external agencies and teaching assistants. The school makes every effort to provide for the needs of the rest of the pupils on the list of pupils with special educational needs, including providing extra support from teaching assistants and in booster classes.
33. The school works well to integrate the pupils in the special classes into the mainstream school. They share fully in assemblies and have physical education lessons with their peers. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 4 aerobics lesson when the pupils joined in with confidence and skill. They are fully included in all extra-curricular activities, including residential visits. The more able pupils in Year 6 have opportunities to join their peers for literacy and numeracy lessons and during the inspection one pupil was integrated for these lessons. However, this strategy should include a larger number of older pupils to facilitate their smooth transition to secondary school.
34. The induction of children into the school is a strength and is recognised by parents. Home visits are carried out, if requested, and parents are invited for a pre-school visit. Children come into school prior to their entry in the autumn. A large number of pupils enter the school at Year 3, transferring from Belgrave Infant School. These pupils spend time in school before they transfer and a meeting for parents is arranged to support pupils' induction.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is **very good**. The links with the local community are **very good**. The school's links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Links with the main receiving high school are strong.
- Information supplied to parents is good
- Procedures to deal with complaints are very good.

## Commentary

35. Parents are very supportive of the school and this has a positive impact on the pupils' work and achievement. The positive partnership between home and school is supported effectively by regular, informative newsletters that are sent out to parents and guardians; the school also has a website that is used for some of the communication with parents. Pupils' annual reports about their progress are informative and provide useful targets to help parents support their child's learning; however, they do not consistently relate to raising standards. Parents also have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher at least twice each year.
36. School involves parents effectively in their child's learning. At the beginning of each school year, parents are informed of the homework their child will expect and the topics for the year, so that parents can assist with them at home. Homework diaries are used well and provide opportunities for parents to have a dialogue with their child's teacher. Talks are organised for parents on subjects as diverse as reading support, personal safety, bullying and drug misuse. In addition, parents are encouraged to help in school and between 20 and 30 do so regularly. The Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) is very active. They organise a welcome barbecue for the parents as well as fundraising events, such as the Christmas Fayre, and the money raised is used to enhance the education of the pupils. The PTA also produces a monthly newsletter. Parents are invited to special events, such as class assemblies. The Year 6 class assembly, during the inspection week, was well attended by parents.
37. The school has good systems in place to support parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs. They make every effort to make sure parents are fully informed of their child's developmental needs. For example, the teachers and special educational needs co-ordinators review pupils' individual education plans on a termly basis. This information is then discussed with parents at the parents meetings or annual review. Very close contact is also kept with parents of pupils with English as an additional language. The use of homework and other communications greatly enhances the relationship and offers opportunities to extend progress.
38. The teachers of pupils in the special classes have very good links with parents, the majority giving their full support. Parents are kept fully informed and involved in review meetings. The staff work closely with external agencies, the feeder primary schools on entry and the secondary schools. The School Governing Body through the 'SEN Governors' committee' provide the special classes with their full support, They are fully aware of the issues facing the classes, including future changes and are fully committed to maintaining this special provision.
39. The school facilities are used well by the local community for tennis, line dancing and music. There are several clubs that are run commercially, for example the Caravan Club. The community is also invited to join school in their celebration of special occasions, such as at Christmas time and for the Harvest Festival services at the church. Additionally, a number of local clergy come into the school to take assemblies, whilst a link with the business community is provided by a local bank which has helped to fund projects in the school.
40. Links with local schools are good overall. Staff from Overleigh St Mary's visit the local nursery school and pre-school providers, where appropriate, to ensure that children's transfer into the reception classes is effectively carried out. Links with Belgrave Infant School are developing further to support pupils' effective induction into Year 3. Also, very good links are established with the main receiving high school. Pupils make visits prior to their transfer and the staff of the two schools work together well to ensure a smooth transition for Year 6 pupils.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT



Leadership and management are **very good**, overall. Leadership, management and governance are all **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent
- Senior leaders and managers very successfully promote a team approach to school innovation and improvement
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable and very effective
- Financial planning is very good
- School governors support the work of the school very effectively

### **Commentary**

41. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. His totally committed and very effective leadership is key to ensuring that high standards are maintained and that the school is a happy place. He provides strong professional leadership in all aspects of the school's work and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and other key members of staff. He has a clear vision of the purpose of education and the direction of the school and is committed to achieving high standards. He has many excellent qualities, including the ability to gain the trust and commitment of staff, pupils and parents. The headteacher takes a highly visible role in the day-to-day management of the school. His appreciative, warm and open manner is much praised by parents who value his consistent stance in promoting their children's enjoyment of education
42. Management in the school is very good and this contributes to the very positive ethos apparent in all aspects of school life. The school has a dedicated staff committed to providing the very best quality education for the pupils. The deputy headteacher and other strategic leaders carry out their duties effectively, promote a common vision for the school and provide excellent support to colleagues. They initiate change but involve and support others in carrying out the plans. The highly effective team structure promotes a shared approach to decision making and ensures a common and clear view of what is needed for the pupils. Staff share a common sense of direction and purpose.
43. Special needs provision is a high priority in the school. The co-ordinators lead and manage this area very well, with expertise and enthusiasm. They also lead and manage the special classes for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties very well. Working with the teachers and external agencies, they are very effective in identifying the needs of those pupils with special educational needs. They provide valuable support to the teachers and teaching assistants, ensuring they are well informed and have the necessary training.
44. The school has developed a rigorous process of self-evaluation. A thorough analysis of all available data allows the school to establish specific and measurable targets. Staff analyse in great detail the school's performance in National Curriculum Tests and internal assessments too. The results are skilfully and imaginatively used to influence curriculum planning and the formation of teaching groups.
45. There are very good procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating teaching. Senior staff regularly observe teaching and staff are involved in monitoring planning and work sampling. All staff receive appropriate and well focused training. New teachers and students receive very good support. This is achieved by very good working relationships and specific mentoring arrangements.
46. The school development plan provides a very effective evaluation of developments over the previous year and succinctly outlines proposed developments for the current and future years. It gives a clear indication of priorities and timescale. The involvement of both subject leaders and governors in this planning and the production of excellent subject action plans

promote a shared approach to decision making and shows high expectations of all those involved in the life of the school.

47. The governing body works very hard and is very effective in supporting the school. It is led in a passionate and very purposeful way by the chairperson who visits the school regularly and shows a great commitment to the whole school community. Roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined, and there are regular meetings of the highly effective committees. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have implemented the race relation's policy and monitor its implementation effectively.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,253,168	Balance from previous year	- 764
Total expenditure	1,243,895	Balance carried forward to the next	8509
Expenditure per pupil	2,290		

48. The finances of the school are very well managed and day to day administration provides effective support in this context. The school successfully links spending to the School Development Plan in providing support for the school's priorities. There are clear budgeting procedures and forward planning is carefully undertaken. Very good financial records are maintained. Governors obtain a full strategic view of the financial implications of their educational decisions and have begun to evaluate their impact. Procedures for obtaining value for money are very good. Additional funds raised by the school, together with donations, specific government grants and the school's budget allocation are very carefully spent. The school provides very good value for money.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING,

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. The standard of attainment on entry in the September of the year of the child's fifth birthday at age four is average. There are variations in the natural abilities of each year group. Some have no pre-school experience but most children enter the reception class with nursery experience.
50. By the end of the Foundation Stage the vast majority of children exceed the Early Learning Goals in all the areas of learning. Their attainment in personal and social development, communication language and literacy and in mathematical development is well above expectations. Children begin the Foundation Stage with positive attitudes to school, which are developed rapidly through the very good teaching. They clearly enjoy the challenge of learning and take pride in their accomplishments and begin the next key stage with excellent attitudes. Achievement overall is very good for children of all groups including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
51. The standards observed at the time of the last inspection have been improved significantly. A purpose built unit containing two teaching areas has been fully established and equipped to a high standard. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been fully established and is of a high quality. Assessment is being implemented according to the national Foundation Stage Profile. The quality of the curriculum is very good and includes appropriate religious education.
52. The quality of teaching overall is very good. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in the inspection particularly in literacy. Children's progress in reading and writing is very good. This in turn enables them to make good progress in other areas of learning. All staff show a very good understanding of how young children learn and use their expertise to provide the best for them.
53. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The well-established procedures for management are effective and there is constant evaluation of practice. The curriculum is in line with the guidance for the Foundation Stage and has been enhanced by a well-planned and integrated approach. The quality of teamwork is excellent and the teaching assistants provide a valuable contribution because of their knowledge and expertise. Assessment is being properly undertaken in accordance with the Foundation Stage Profile and is complemented by baseline assessment on entry and ongoing evaluation. Children understand how to improve because they have individual targets to remember. Induction procedures are excellent and enable children to settle quickly into the reception class. There are strong professional links with the nursery school.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have positive attitudes to learning.
- Routines are established quickly and are understood by children.
- Children show maturity in their consideration for others.

#### **Commentary**

54. The quality of teaching is very good because there is a proper emphasis on this area of learning as a means of accessing learning. As a result, children achieve very well in this area of learning. Specific lesson time is used for discussion of issues affecting personal, social and emotional developments. All staff observe children well and reinforce learning through praise and interaction. Children are encouraged to develop responsibility for themselves and others and to recognise the effect of their actions. Progress is very good. Children's dialogue shows that they appreciate the value of behaviour like sharing and taking

turns. They work together very well and form sociable relationships. Children achieve very well and they exceed the Early Learning Goals well before the end of the Foundation Stage.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

The quality of provision for communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- The development of writing skills is very good.
- Adults use dialogue well to extend vocabulary.
- Reading skills are developed through structured phonics teaching.

#### **Commentary**

55. The very high quality of teaching in communication language and literacy enables children to make rapid progress and children are achieving very well. By the time of the inspection most children were able to write in sentences using spaces, recognisable letters and understandable spelling. They were confident in their skills and used writing as a natural means of communicating. Very well structured learning promotes good reading skills. Adults model good speaking practice and most children are articulate and can talk relevantly about their learning. The majority of children exceed the Early Learning Goals well before the end of the Foundation Stage.

### **Mathematical Development**

The provision for mathematical development is **very good**.

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities for developing numeracy skills are integrated into many activities.
- A range of teaching strategies is used to encourage mathematical understanding.

#### **Commentary**

56. The quality of teaching is very good overall because it provides structured progression in learning. Planning combines the aims of the Stepping Stones for the Foundation Stage with the objectives for Reception year from the National Numeracy Strategy so that there is a good range of challenge for all children. All are secure in counting and recording numbers to ten and most well beyond ten. They are able to calculate using addition and subtraction up to 20 and create their own number sentences. Some are already using mental recall to solve problems. The majority of children achieve very well and exceed the Early Learning Goals well before the end of the Foundation Stage.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

The provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop confident use of information and communication technology.
- Appropriate features of early geography, history and science skills are established.

#### **Commentary**

57. The quality of teaching is at least good and learning is promoted through a wide range of imaginative and progressive activities; as a result, children achieve well. Children develop an awareness of place by the exploration of their own locality and learn, for example, the significance of addresses. Teachers use everyday materials in unusual contexts such as pasta and rice, instead of sand, so that children explore the size, texture and sound with success. Teachers also make good use of the outdoor facilities for early investigation of living things. The quality of discussion between children and adults encourages the development of the appropriate vocabulary. For example, the examination of seeds with a microscope prompted children to find suitable descriptive words. As a result of the good provision teaching and learning, children make good progress and exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

### **Physical Development**

The provision for physical development is **good**.

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- The children have regular lessons with the specialist teacher and so achieve well.
- The curriculum includes dance and games.

### **Commentary**

58. The quality of teaching and learning is at least good. In lessons in the gym children are competent in changing and controlling ways of travelling, in combining movements and in copying models. They understand the vocabulary and respond well to instructions. They move sensibly and show an awareness of safety for themselves and others. Fine motor skills are encouraged not only through the continuous provision but also through specific tasks. The development of gross motor skills is assisted by facilities in the outdoor play area and the large toys. The school has adopted a policy of providing large mobile equipment, which encourages teamwork and co-operation. Children make good progress and achieve well; as a result, they exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

### **Creative Development**

The provision for creative development is **good**

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- The integration of imaginative topics into the whole curriculum provides opportunities for creativity.
- The outdoor facilities and the garden area support imaginative play.
- The teaching and support staff use dialogue well to promote role-play.

### **Commentary**

59. The quality of teaching and learning is never less than good. Role-play is integrated into many activities and enables children to develop imagination as well as language and social skills. The topic "Pirates" offered a wealth of creative development. Children did not only pretend to be pirates but also used their imaginations to assign characters and to work out their needs even "what pirates needed to learn at pirate school". Good use is made of the dedicated area for painting, modelling and water play. Children achieve well in this area of learning and, as a result, exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

## ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**

### Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- Overall standards achieved by pupils are well above that expected for each age group
- The teaching of English is imaginative, challenging and exciting
- All pupils make good overall progress from a wide range of starting points
- Pupils participate regularly in high quality drama activities
- Literacy skills are very well developed in other curriculum subjects
- Marking provides pupils with clear guidance on how they can improve their work

### Commentary

60. The teaching of English is a strength throughout the school. The very high standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. From starting school the pupils make very good progress in reading. Parents of pupils in the infant classes are encouraged to hear their children read regularly and the school has a very good collection of fiction, poetry and non-fiction books housed in each classroom. By Year 2 pupils have acquired the appropriate strategies for reading new words and many are beginning to understand the deeper meaning of a text. Year 6 pupils are competent accurate readers who cope equally well with fiction or non-fiction texts across the curriculum. Pupils in the special classes read with great enjoyment and make excellent progress. They read with great expression and enjoy the characters and humour in the books they read.
61. The quality of pupils' writing is of very good throughout the school. By Year 2 many pupils write in sentences with spelling and punctuation that is generally accurate. As they progress through the school they make very good progress in learning to punctuate, spell and use grammar correctly. Most pupils apply these consistently in their writing in English and other subjects. By Year 6 pupils write very well in a range of formats such as reports, stories and poems. They produce interesting, evocative and moving biographies, recognise journalistic bias, and produce poems that can be humorous or sensitive and empathetic. The school encourages all pupils to see themselves as creative authors and has wonderful examples of different types of their writing all around the school. The real books produced by the pupils and published by the school are both beautiful to touch and fascinating to read.
62. Throughout the school, writing skills are taught very well. Pupils write naturally for a variety of purposes and this range is very effectively extended through different subjects. This includes writing very clear and precise scientific reports and writing reflective prayers and reports in religious education.
63. Standards of speaking and listening are very high. Pupils throughout the school are articulate and use language well. They are confident in speaking before an audience and are encouraged by all adults to express themselves and to talk about what they have learned. Teachers make extensive and highly effective use of drama in many English lessons. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson pupils took on a range of roles in a convincing and stimulating way as they simulated various responses to the potential arrival of an out-of-town shopping and entertainment complex near to a 'sleepy' Cheshire village. They became confident, fluent conversationalists and were able to explain, describe and justify their point of view. Moreover, all pupils have similar opportunities to participate in such challenging, demanding and exciting lessons, with teachers particular adept at devising and using techniques such as prompt cards to ensure everybody joins in. Expectations are high and the pupils respond to them.
64. Overall the teaching of English is very good and sometimes outstanding. As a consequence, many pupils make rapid progress. The variety and pace of lessons and the constant challenge being offered to pupils ensure an intense and productive learning environment.

Reading, writing and speaking skills are very well developed by very good teaching that provides frequent opportunities for pupils to collaborate in their learning. However the greatest motivator to the pupils is the sheer enthusiasm for teaching shown by the teachers.

65. Throughout the school there is a clear emphasis on developing and using a wide vocabulary and on writing convincingly and accurately. Teachers specifically teach the skills needed to write for a variety of audiences and purposes. For example in a good Year 1 lesson pupils worked very well with the teacher to develop a character profile for different characters appearing in the story of Little Red Riding Hood. They were given examples to analyse and subsequently could suggest interesting and perceptive ideas about other characters.
66. Pupils with English as an additional language are carefully integrated into the life of mainstream classes. They receive excellent teaching from the member of staff with specific responsibility in this area as part of an extensive system of continuous assessment of the needs of each pupil. All pupils make remarkable progress.
67. The teachers' marking in books is always positive and offers many suitable pointers to help the pupils improve. Thorough assessment procedures are in place and the information is used very effectively for future planning, predicting attainment and setting individual targets. The subject is very well led by able co-ordinators who have responsibility for English in the infant and junior classes respectively.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

68. All teachers seize every available opportunity to extend their pupils' language and literacy skills in every curriculum area. These include carefully planned and structured activities and in situations that occur naturally. Staff skilfully extend spoken language in role-play, drama and discussion activities and provide a wealth of purposeful writing activities in subjects such as science, history, ICT and religious education. Pupils write accurate reports, imaginative accounts and detailed explanatory texts. The school provides a rich literary environment and pupils use every such opportunity provided for them very well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of leadership and management are very good.
- Very good questioning skills help pupils to think very carefully about what they are learning.
- A clear focus on using and applying number during lessons is improving pupils' mathematical understanding and equipping them with an effective range of strategies with which to solve problems.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and as a result achieve well.

### **Commentary**

69. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Although results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been slightly lower than in previous years there are reasons for this. At the end of the juniors, the overall results of these tests are affected by the high level of pupil mobility and by the fact that a high proportion of pupils have special educational needs. The school is aware of these factors and has implemented effective strategies to ensure all pupils achieve to the best of their abilities. As a result, pupils achieve well in mathematics.
70. Standards of attainment are above average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well throughout the school. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs

is very good. Teachers and teaching assistants give them very good support. They know their needs and ensure that each pupil understands the content of the lessons.

71. The emphasis on problem solving is resulting in pupils improving their understanding of mathematics and in the acquisition of skills. The most effective lessons provide pupils with the right balance between direct teaching and opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding of number through investigational work. This is a strength of the mathematics provision. There are numerous illustrations of this type of work. For example, Year 2 pupils explore number patterns, record the information in a range of meaningful ways and use the information to calculate the number of pancakes which can be made from a predetermined number of eggs and pints of milk. Pupils in Year 3 demonstrate high levels of systematic recording in their attempts to break down complex problems into manageable pieces when finding the age of mice. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are highly competent in using decimals, percentages and fractions and in applying their knowledge to working out solutions to new problems. This approach to the teaching of mathematics has resulted in pupils throughout the school becoming enthusiastic, confident and competent in the application of mathematics across all aspects of subjects.
72. The quality of teaching in the infants is in the main good. In the juniors it is very good with higher attaining pupils receiving effective challenge. Throughout the school all lessons are characterised by the very good use of time, stimulating pace and the very high level of pupils' interest and productivity. The use of individual white boards further ensures all pupils are fully included in lessons. Teachers use them effectively to assess pupils' understanding and to determine when further direct teaching is needed. All teachers use questions carefully to ensure that pupils give logical reasons for the strategies they use for problem solving.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

**In an excellent Year 4 lesson** the teacher challenged pupils to test, record, justify and explain their solutions to a simple but worthy and interesting investigation into generalised statements such as, 'If you add three consecutive numbers together the answer is always a multiple of three. Is that true?' A group of pupils working together showed amazing insight as to how numbers work and concluded: "It's right. It always works because if you take one from the biggest and add it to the smallest it makes each number the same as the middle one. You just have one number three times. You don't even have to add them together do you? All you have to do is take the middle number and times it by three? It must be a multiple of three. Every time!" This group then went on to quickly find and prove a rule for finding the sum of an even number of consecutive numbers. The teacher's infectious enthusiasm inspired pupils to learn and to find out more and deepen their understanding of number systems.

73. The school has clear and effective procedures for assessing pupils' achievements and progress. The teaching of mathematics in clearly defined groups according to pupils' learning needs and the high expectations of what they can all achieve has a positive impact on standards. Marking is at least good. It is often interesting to the reader, informative and, by asking questions to which the pupils are expected to respond, is frequently interactive.
74. Leadership and management are very good. The analyses of pupils' performance and tracking of their progress are allowing the school to focus on areas of weakness and target pupils in need of further support to reach the next level of attainment. The teaching and learning arrangements and the very strong focus on investigations all contribute to the good achievements.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

75. All pupils have good opportunities to consolidate what they have learned in mathematics in other subjects. For example, they use measuring skills in science to record temperature, in



geography pupils arrange information in charts and graphs and in art and design they explore and put their knowledge of shape to very creative use.

## SCIENCE

Provision in Science is **good** overall

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good overall and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good for the pupils in Years 1 and 2 and very good for those in Years 3 to 6.
- There is good emphasis on investigative work.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning is very good; they are highly motivated and work well in collaboration with others and independently
- There is effective ongoing assessment.
- The pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, including those in the special classes for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties.
- Science is very well led and managed.

### Commentary

76. The emphasis that the school places on practical and investigative activities is a key factor leading to high standards. This was also a strong feature in the previous inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of key facts and principles are very good and they are particularly proficient in carrying out scientific investigations. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well, especially those in the special classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, where the teaching is stimulating and challenging.
77. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average, sustaining improvement over the previous years and in line with the previous inspection. Pupils in years 1 and 2 make good progress as a result of a well-balanced curriculum and challenging teaching. Good use is made of the local environment to teach science. For example, Year 1 pupils investigating plants can make key observations about plants in the school grounds. As the result of carefully focused questioning, the pupils are able to describe the parts of the plants seen and recognise that plants require light and water to grow. They can also describe similarities and differences of the plants and their stages of development. Pupils are developing their scientific skills and knowledge well.
78. Pupils build on their knowledge and skills in later years so that by Year 6 they have a very good grasp of scientific concepts and are able to plan investigations themselves, make predictions and draw conclusions from the evidence seen. The pupils use scientific vocabulary very well. Setting arrangements for teaching the theoretical aspects of science in Year 6 are helping all pupils to be appropriately challenged. The teacher working with the more able group is in a good position to challenge the pupils because his own subject knowledge is strong. For example in a lesson on the changing state of materials, he asked challenging questions on distillation, evaporation and chromatography. A very positive learning environment was quickly promoted with pupils helping each other to understand the changing state of materials.
79. Teachers take many opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in science lessons. For example, a Year 4 class were encouraged to research their space topic for homework. This information was then used very well to support learning during the lesson. In all the lessons seen the teachers extend the pupils' scientific vocabulary effectively. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils played "Chase the Answer" game to enable the pupils to remember the

properties of materials. All the pupils took part demonstrating good listening skills and scientific knowledge.

80. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Lessons are planned very well with activities matched very well to the pupils' prior attainment. Most lessons are challenging and inclusive. Teaching assistants provide valuable and effective support for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and present information in a confident manner, motivating pupils to do their best, carefully explaining the outcomes of the lesson and using time well to indicate what is expected through each part of the lesson.
81. Pupils are very enthusiastic and highly motivated. They work well in groups and collaborate effectively. They have a good ability to listen and confidently discuss their ideas with others. Pupils continually show good levels of curiosity and interest and talk enthusiastically about their work. They organise themselves well and respond to the challenges set.
82. The school has two subject co-ordinators, one for the pupils in reception, Years 1 and 2 and the other responsible for Years 3 to 6. They lead and manage the curriculum and resources very effectively. They are very enthusiastic, well qualified and work very well together to promote higher standards in this area. The curriculum is successfully planned to ensure that the pupils have access to all aspects of the subject, including those pupils in the special classes. Pupils' work is reviewed and a careful analysis takes place of termly assessment results and the end of year national and optional assessments. The quality of learning in the subject is regularly monitored.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils demonstrate good skills in using information and communication technology to communicate and to present information.
- The computer: pupil ratio does not meet the national expectations.
- Information and communication technology is used regularly to enhance other subjects.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in the special classes in Key Stage 2.

### **Commentary**

83. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of both Years 2 and 6. There are obvious strengths in exchanging and sharing information and a number of pupils attain standards above expectations in this aspect by the time that they leave the school. Attainment in other aspects of the curriculum, such as control and monitoring, is not as well advanced and standards in are in line with national expectations overall.
84. Pupils in Year 2 use information and communication technology well to present poems and extended stories and demonstrate refined skills in using paint programs, for instance in copying the styles of painters. Pupils in Year 6 are very confident in their use of multi-media frequently creating individual presentations incorporating sound and images. Younger pupils create graphs to present the results of their surveys and the oldest pupils know how formulae can be used for calculations in spreadsheets. Although younger pupils are familiar with programming a 'floor robot' and directing a 'screen turtle', the older pupils have limited experience of the control and monitoring aspects of the curriculum that are appropriate for their age. The required curriculum units have been covered in sessions at the high school in previous years and are now planned for the summer term in school with new resources.

85. The majority of pupils are achieving satisfactorily and some are achieving well but the restrictions of access and resources limits the opportunities for pupils to reach higher standards. The school has not yet reached the recommended computer: pupil ratio and most classes have access to two computers at any one time.
86. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' skills are challenged by the present arrangements but they demonstrate confidence and competence in the subject. Teachers in both the infants and juniors have devised strategies to teach whole classes but these often mean that pupils can only take notes and have little opportunity to use the computers in the lessons. Subsequently, pupils work in small groups on a rota basis and often have to complete tasks in breaks and lunchtime. When more pupil involvement is made possible, teaching is good or better because teachers challenge and stimulate interest. The transition arrangements with the high school provide some extension to the school's provision for the oldest pupils but access is not sufficient for reinforcement and extension.
87. The quality of leadership and management is good. The co-ordinators are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and have developed an appropriate action plan for the immediate future. Necessary precautions have been taken for Internet safety. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is largely informal but some structured procedures have been undertaken. The co-ordinators support colleagues well and ensure new equipment, such as the interactive whiteboards, are successfully used for pupils' benefit.
88. The quality of assessment is good because pupils' attainment is monitored regularly. Considerable portfolios have been built up demonstrating the range of work. These do not as yet indicate levels of attainment.
89. Although standards are not as high as was deemed at the time of the last inspection, expectations for information and communication technology have been raised in the past six years. Improvement has been satisfactory because the curriculum has been securely established and teachers' subject knowledge has kept pace with the developments in technology.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

90. The provision for information and communication technology across the curriculum is good. Information and communication technology is used frequently to provide reinforcement for literacy and numeracy. In addition there were many examples of pupils' work where computers were used well to show the results of pupils' learning through research, multi-media presentations and word processing. The scheme of work provides valid links with other subjects such as art and design, history, geography and science and teachers are alert to these opportunities. Pupils in Key Stage 1 used a paint program to create a face that was then used for the puppet they made in their design and technology task. The Key Stage 2 project "Passport to the World" provided a web-based scenario by which pupils could plan and research journeys around the world and used email to read and send instructions. The school's web site is regularly updated with pupils' reports of events, such as their residential trip. Pupils across the school recognise information and communication technology as the natural tool to use in a range of tasks but are restricted in their access.

### **HUMANITIES**

91. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on provision in **history** and **geography** and so these subjects have been sampled. The extensive evidence in portfolios, however, indicates that the school covers all elements of the curriculum very well for all pupils including those with special educational needs.

## Religious education

Provision for Religious Education is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well above average standards at Years 2 and 6
- Good or very good teaching in all lessons
- Pupils are very responsive to the experiences provided
- Very good understanding and respect for the views of others
- Very good knowledge of the values underpinning different faiths and beliefs

### Commentary

92. By Years 2 and 6, standards are well above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus throughout the school. The quality of provision is supported effectively by the leadership and management of the subject which are very good. This reflects the judgement made at the time of the last inspection.
93. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school. In the infant classes they become aware of acceptable moral behaviour. By Year 2, pupils have a detailed understanding of Bible stories from the Old and New Testament and know many of the stories Jesus told. They learn about the major festivals of the Christian calendar and the customs and celebrations of the Jewish and Hindu faiths. Pupils write their own prayers, describe the importance of religious clothing in Judaism and make impressive pop-up cards for different celebrations. By Year 6, pupils have an excellent knowledge of Christianity and other faiths such as Hinduism. They have a very good appreciation of the importance of faith and ritual across a number of different religions and make appropriate comparisons between them and their own lives. They are, for example, able to write sensitively about how an understanding of the Good Samaritan can influence and change their own behaviour around school.
94. Teaching is good overall with many very good features. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and detailed planning ensures that pupils are introduced to specific religious concepts and encouraged to explore the meanings behind them. In one very good lesson pupils explored their own and others' views about the purpose of marriage. They learnt about the ideas and ceremonies of different faith groups and were given the opportunity to make a personal response to the content of the lesson. All contributions were received sensitively and valued. All lessons are imaginatively presented and written tasks are always purposeful and challenging, frequently supporting and extending the pupils' very good literacy skills. For example after studying different events in Jesus' life, Year 4 pupils were encouraged to think about how these reflected contrasting aspects of his personality. They identified phrases and responses to pinpoint character traits and wrote impressive postcards from those witnessing the events that demonstrated this understanding. The teaching of religious education is very well supported by stimulating displays of photographs, posters and artefacts which help to bring the subject to life.
95. Pupils are attentive and responsive to the experiences provided in lessons. They are keen to answer questions and to participate in discussions. Pupils particularly enjoy the role-play used in many lessons as it enables them to become actively involved and promotes deeper understanding of complex stories. Pupils are supportive of one another and co-operate in various situations, such as listening to one another or reflecting upon an idea. They respect each other's feelings and views.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

96. It was not possible to observe more than one lesson in **design technology** and this subject has, therefore, been sampled. It is not possible, therefore, to make a firm judgement on provision.
97. The very extensive evidence in the portfolios indicates that the school covers all elements of the curriculum very well for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
98. Pupils experience a wide range of materials and techniques and develop skills to a high level. Teaching provides opportunities for investigation, for example in winding mechanisms and axles before the design process begins. This enables pupils to apply their experience and to design from a better knowledge base.
99. The design element is given a very proper emphasis and there is a high degree of evaluation and reflection. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 produced a wide variety of "Rattletrap" vehicles, which were planned to meet given criteria, and which were tested and recorded. Older pupils designed and made model chairs to match specific needs. Whole school projects such as "Granny's Purse" provide admirable opportunities for work on a similar theme but with a different focus for each year group.

## **Art and design**

The provision for art and design is **outstanding**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision is a strength of the school.
- Standards achieved at the end of both key stages are exceptional.

### **Commentary**

100. The quality of Art in the school has been recognised by the award of the prestigious Artsmark Gold last year. This provides external validation of the quality of provision in all aspects of teaching and learning including extra-curricular and community enhancements, multi-cultural stimuli, the development of teachers' subject knowledge and expertise and the value of local partnerships.
101. Achievement at all ages is excellent. From an average entry level pupils make exceptional progress to the very high levels of attainment at the end of their school experience. Pupils' critical appreciation of artists is well-established in the infant classes and is expanded throughout the juniors. Teachers select artists for study with an expert appreciation for their interest for pupils.
102. Despite the large numbers of teachers, the quality of teaching is very good overall and is often excellent. Teaching is genuinely stimulating and challenging but at the same time offers thoroughly enjoyable learning. Pupils are consistently offered the opportunities to work in a range of media but on the same theme. For example, Year 2 pupils work on boats, influenced by Arthur Wallis, included clay, pastels, charcoal and stone.

## Example of outstanding practice

**In a Year 3 class, pupils developed designs based on Gaudi's work and used a range of different media, such as watercolours, batik, clay, acrylic paints and ink.**

This art lesson is an outstanding example of the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and its impact on pupils' learning. Aply supported by a parent helper, the class teacher's interaction with pupils enabled them to reflect on their work continually; the teacher's high standards of expectation were well understood and appreciated by everyone. Pupils were provided with an excellent range of learning opportunities to develop their skills in art and design. Pupils sewed 'detail' onto batik, and they made clay tiles and painted fine detail with ink; resources to support the teaching and learning that took place were of very high quality. Pupils' dialogue demonstrated that they had excellent knowledge of techniques and of artistic vocabulary; for example, they spoke about 'cross hatching' and 'clay drying'. The opportunities provided captured the pupils' interest and enthusiasm and enabled them all to achieve very well.

103. The quality of leadership and management in the subject is excellent. The co-ordinators are passionate about their subject and strive to maintain very high standards for all pupils. Work is displayed about the school in imaginative and interactive ways. Pupils can be in no doubt that their efforts are valued. The school has adopted a practice of selecting pieces of work to be professionally framed and displayed about the building. In many instances these pieces stand comparison with the commercial pieces next to them. Framed works are presented to the children when they leave. The high quality sketchbooks, which are used by all pupils, provide ready material for assessment.
104. The provision of resources is excellent. The school pursues a policy of providing the best resources it can afford from the very basics of paper and brushes upwards. This policy also allows generosity of scale. Pupils are skilled at transferring designs from their sketch- books to A3 size paper and above. This practice of offering wide variations in scale ensures that pupils are not inhibited by always having to work at a set size. Pupils in Year 6 created fantastical 3D headdresses, some of which were nearly a metre high but were sturdy enough to be worn.
105. Teachers frequently use the stimulus of other cultures. Portfolios contain many examples of work reflecting the influences of Islam, Asia, Africa, Native America and Central America, as well as Europe. Consequently the subject is a major contributing factor to the quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the school.
106. The enhanced breadth of the curriculum and the continuing professional development of the staff have improved the outstanding provision observed at the last inspection further.

## Music

Provision in music is **very good** overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils reach a very high standard in the junior classes
- Pupils' achievement is helped by the specialist teacher's ability to challenge and inspire the pupils.
- The school has recently received the Artsmark – Gold Standard in recognition of the very high standards in the arts, including music.
- Music is fully inclusive, with all pupils, including those in the specialist classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, encouraged to take part.
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular musical activities.
- There is good instrumental provision – orchestra, recorders and peripatetic violin, brass and woodwind tuition.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to perform within and outside school.

## Commentary

107. It is not possible to make a secure judgement of the standards for the pupils in Years 1 and 2 as only one lesson was seen. However, the standards achieved by the pupils from Year 3 to 6 are very good. By the time they reach year 6 they have accumulated a wide range of skills in reading, composing and playing music. They can describe, compare and evaluate different types of music, using appropriate vocabulary. They are very good at composing. For example in a year 5 lesson the pupils worked very well collaborating to produce harmonious melodies. The effective work by the specialist teacher in the subject is mainly responsible for the high standards. She has very high expectations and uses the resources and time very well. The specialist music teacher teaches music throughout the school and is therefore fully aware of pupils' abilities and is able to plan accordingly. Work is very well organised to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupil achievement is assessed and recorded well.
108. There is a strong musical culture throughout the school that inspires the younger pupils into wanting to take part. Pupils enjoy music. They all join in enthusiastically in the lessons. Pupils who are learning to play an instrument are highly motivated; they concentrate well and show good levels of perseverance. The singing by the choirs and in assemblies is very good and on occasions excellent. For example, when singing "You Alone", over 300 pupils sang the hymn in harmony.
109. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Pupils know what is expected and participate fully in lessons. The teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that the work is challenging
110. The school provides a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a large orchestra with over 70 participants, two large choirs and recorder groups. The specialist music teacher, ably supported by other teachers in the school, leads these well. In addition, lessons are available from peripatetic teachers for brass, woodwind and violin instrumental tuition. The school places a high priority on performing. All the pupils have an opportunity to perform in front of the school and parents, including the younger pupils in the Christmas Concert. The choir and the orchestra perform on a regular basis both within the school and in the local community. The school recently received the Artsmark –Gold Standard in recognition of standards in the arts, including music.

## Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **very good** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is led and managed very well by a very well qualified, enthusiastic specialist teacher.
- Teaching is very good.
- The school provides an excellent range of extra activities to support learning.
- The school has recently received the Activemark –Gold Award for the second time
- The lessons are fully inclusive and provide equal opportunities for boys and girls and pupils achieve very well.
- The school needs to review provision for swimming lessons as pupils' access is limited.

## Commentary

111. No lessons were seen in physical education in years 1 and 2. It is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on teaching, standards or achievement for the younger pupils. However, from the games, dance and gymnastic lessons seen during the inspection pupils in years 3 to 6 attain standards above expectations and achieve very well over time. By the time they reach Year 6, the pupils are able to prepare gymnastic routines using precision, control and

fluency. They work very well collaboratively, demonstrating their skills, techniques and ideas. In games work the pupils take part in a wide range of activities, including, football, hockey and netball. The pupils have developed very good skills and tactics within each area. They can receive, control and send a ball with confidence. They can also employ basic skills and tactics to attack and defend. For example, the group that played hockey, were able to dribble the ball, change directions and challenge their opponent with accuracy. The specialist physical education teacher and class teachers are mainly responsible for the effective work in this area. Standards are the same as in the last inspection. However, the school has recently been awarded the Activemark – Gold standard for the second time, in recognition of the very good provision and standards achieved.

112. Physical education provision is very strong throughout the school. The pupils can join in a wide range of sporting activities both in lessons and as extra-curricular activities. All the pupils enjoy P.E. and join in enthusiastically. There are equal opportunities, with both boys and girls having access to the same sports. The pupils in the special classes are fully included, joining in with confidence and enthusiasm.
113. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Pupils participate fully in lessons motivated by the enthusiasm, knowledge and skills of the teachers. They have very good strategies for providing indoor activities during wet games lessons. For example, during a Year 3 and 4 games lesson one teacher led an aerobics lesson that was very much enjoyed by over 50 pupils in the hall. Ably supported by teachers and assistants, the pupils learnt challenging dance routines to popular music.
114. The teachers, including the specialist teacher, provide an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Sports clubs include football, netball, basketball, tag rugby, cricket, tennis and athletics. The school teams take part in competitions against other schools. The clubs are well supported by local teams. For example, Chester Jets Basketball Club provides training for younger and older pupils. Lunchtime activities provide opportunities for physical activity, for example, with the introduction of Fizz Kids the pupils can play games under the supervision of the mid-day staff. Residential visits for Years 5 and 6 provide the pupils with opportunities to go rock climbing, canoeing and white water rafting. The school also organises sporting activities for the local community, including a Cheshire Challenge Fun Run.
115. Physical education is very well led and managed by the specialist teacher who has excellent qualifications and skills in this area. The resources for physical education are very good. The school has an on site gymnasium, large playing fields and floodlit tennis courts, with a wide range of play and sport equipment suitable for all age groups. However, pupils' access to swimming lessons is restricted due to the temporary closure of the school swimming pool for maintenance. The school has worked very hard to ensure the re-opening of the pool however, due to delays the school needs to develop a long-term plan for improved swimming provision.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship**

Provision in Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good** and pupils achieve very well.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Pupils have very well developed discussion skills.
- There is a very effective school council.



## Commentary

116. Pupils' personal development is underpinned by the whole ethos of the school. It is very well supported by the very good links with the parish and community and the school's commitment to inclusion. This is demonstrated, for example, in the creation of opportunities for pupils of all ages to discuss such topics as rules, healthy eating and how the lives of other people around the world are influenced by the work of organisations such as UNICEF. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to give their opinions and air their concerns in an atmosphere of sympathy and support. PSHCE also forms part of other lessons and deal, for example, with issues of how people should be treated. School assemblies also deal openly and clearly with issues that concern pupils.
117. Teachers are very skilled at developing pupils' personal qualities through their general teaching and through discrete PSHCE lessons. Through such provision pupils are provided with chances to discuss feelings and beliefs such as caring for one another within the school and considering how they can help children living in other countries where they may not have the same life chances as themselves. The school's policy for sex education was arrived at only after extensive discussion with governors and the church and is working effectively. The school council provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop citizenship skills and awareness.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

