

# INSPECTION REPORT

## SHAVINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shavington

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111215

Headteacher: Mr S C Mitchell

Lead inspector: Mrs D Bell

Dates of inspection: 28 – 30 June 2004

Inspection number: 257444

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	345
School address:	Southbank Avenue Shavington Crewe Cheshire
Postcode:	CW2 5BP
Telephone number:	01270 661527
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Gibbs
Date of previous inspection:	15 June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 345 pupils on roll (190 boys and 155 girls), Shavington Primary School is bigger than most primary schools. The number has reduced since the previous inspection because of a reduction in the birth rate locally. Although the school's population is usually relatively stable, in the past three years it admitted a significant number of additional pupils, most in Year 6 last year or this. Pupils are taught in 13 single age classes, three of which are taught by two teachers on a job-share basis. Overall, socio-economic indicators are good and attainment on entry to the school is as expected for the children's ages. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. No pupils are at the early stages of learning English, although around three per cent are of minority ethnic or mixed ethnic origins. The school arranges for reception children to learn French and provides a range of curriculum courses for parents. It has a close working partnership with the local high school, playgroups, other pre-school providers, a local teacher training establishment and the village community. It has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and the Quality Mark for the Foundation Stage. It continues to work towards the Active Mark for physical education, the quality mark for inclusion, and Investors in People status. The present headteacher joined the school two years ago. At the time of the inspection, the school had been without a deputy headteacher for two terms.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16413	Mrs D Bell	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs
19431	Mr J Holmes	Lay inspector	
27677	Mrs D Davenport	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Physical education
27777	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	English Art and design Design ad technology
342182	Mr C Truman	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

A larger than average primary school, Shavington was inspected on 28 – 30 June by a team of five inspectors led by Mrs D Bell

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The very good quality of education provided by this **effective**, improving school is having a very positive effect on learning. Pupils' achievement is good. Inspirational leadership by the headteacher has created a drive for excellence that is fully supported by good teaching, very good governance and excellent inclusion. Pupils' personal qualities are developed exceptionally well. Parents and pupils very highly value this vibrant, welcoming school. It provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children are given a very good start in the Foundation Stage.
- Speaking, listening and reading are of a very high standard but writing, which is satisfactory, remains a relative weakness throughout the school.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) very effectively enhances learning in all subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good, and the quality of assessment procedures is very good.
- The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher's excellent leadership has resulted in an innovative, very rich and very well-planned curriculum for all pupils.
- The provision for special educational needs is very good. All groups of pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported in this extremely inclusive school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally good and the school's excellent links with parents contribute greatly to the pupils' learning and achievement.

Improvement since the last inspection, in 1998, has been **very good**. All school managers now have very clearly defined, well-understood roles and responsibilities. Very rigorous monitoring and evaluation have led to improved teaching and learning. Good schemes of work for literacy and numeracy are firmly embedded in the school's work; the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective; and the school provides very good information for parents.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is **good**. Children start school with levels of attainment that are broadly typical for their age. They exceed the goals expected for the end of the reception year in all six areas of learning. Pupils in Year 2 in 2003 did very well in the national tests, reaching standards that were well above all schools and similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. The trend in the school's results in this age group is above the national trend. Currently, standards in mathematics are well above the national expectation in Year 2. They match it in Year 6. Standards are above the national expectation in English and science in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 attain satisfactory standards in ICT and physical education. Standards are good in those two subjects in Year 6, and very good in art and design and design and technology. In Year 2 and Year 6, standards are good in all other subjects inspected. The national test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2003 were as follows:

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

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The trend in the school's results in Year 6 matches the national trend and there are clear signs that standards are beginning to rise again following a decline to 2002. Although the school did not do very well in mathematics and science in relation to similar schools, it did add satisfactory value to pupils' education since they were in Year 2. In the Year 6 groups in 2003 and 2004, a higher than usual proportion of pupils had joined the school after Year 2, several with learning difficulties. The school's records show, and its very inclusive approach to education ensures, that all pupils achieve well from whatever time they start. Standards in mathematics and science improved significantly between 2002 and 2003 because of the school's determined efforts, including staff training. All assessment information is very rigorously analysed and very effectively used to plan pupils' work and set challenging targets, which the school has worked very hard to reach. Numeracy, speaking, listening and reading skills are used well, writing skills satisfactorily, and ICT skills very effectively across the curriculum. Writing remains the weakest aspect of English. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. It underpins the whole ethos of the school, supports the drive for learning, and results in the pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching and learning are good, and the use of assessment to inform planning is very good. The headteacher sets the standard for this through his involvement in the classroom, his very clear perception of what good teaching is, and his perceptive monitoring of it. Excellent teaching was observed in music and French, and English and mathematics are well taught. However, teachers do not regularly encourage pupils to write freely and at length in English or in other subjects, missing opportunities to promote this aspect of English. This is particularly noticeable in science, where too many worksheets are used. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed, where activities did not fully match the learning objectives. Very well-briefed support staff make a very good contribution to learning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teaching is very effectively supported by a very carefully planned, innovative curriculum in and beyond the school day, that very successfully meets the needs of all pupils. Pupil support, welfare and guidance are very good and the school is extremely well focused on ensuring the full inclusion of all pupils in all that it does. The school has excellent links with parents and very good links with other schools and the community.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher's inspirational leadership is the major driving force in the school. It has created very effective teamwork amongst the staff, empowering those with key management roles to fulfil them well. Governance is very good, finance is very well managed, and all statutory requirements are met. This is a reflective school with a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and very good capacity to improve further.

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

Parents and pupils are **extremely satisfied** with the school and what it does for them. Parents particularly commented on the very considerable improvements they have seen in the past two years. They feel very comfortable with the school and know that their views are highly valued.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

*Alongside continuing the improvements made thus far, the most important thing the school should do to improve further, which it has already identified, is:*

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing and provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and, where relevant, in other subjects, most notably science.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Achievement is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in the rest of the school. All groups of pupils achieve equally well and standards are above the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6 with the exception of mathematics in Year 6, where standards match the national expectation.

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

- Children are given a very good start in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards in reading, speaking and listening are very good but writing, which is satisfactory, is a relative weakness throughout the school.
- Information and communication technology is used very effectively in other subjects.
- Standards are high in art and design and design and technology.
- All test and assessment outcomes are rigorously analysed, and the information is used very effectively in target setting.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children start school in the reception class with the levels of attainment expected for their age and they achieve very well in their reception year. Almost all children have exceeded the goals expected for the end of reception (the early learning goals) in all six areas of learning.
2. Achievement is good in the rest of the school. It is improving steadily as a result of the headteacher's excellent leadership and the very effective teamwork amongst the staff. In Year 2, standards are above the national expectations for reading, writing and science, and well above for mathematics. In Year 6, they are above the national expectations for English and science, and in line with the national expectations for mathematics. Speaking, listening and reading are of a very high standard throughout the school but further improvement in English is hindered by relative weaknesses in the provision for writing. In Year 6, standards are well above the national expectations for art and design and design and technology, and in Year 2, they are above expectations in these subjects. In ICT and physical education, standards match the national expectations in Year 2 and are above them in Year 6. In all other subjects inspected, standards are good in Year 2 and Year 6. An overall judgement was not made about music, but in the two lessons seen, standards were above those expected nationally for pupils' ages. Parents are very pleased with how well pupils achieve in all aspects of school life.
3. In 2003, the results of the national tests for pupils in Year 2 were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and well above the results of similar schools. This reflects a big improvement in results over the previous year, and continues a trend that overall, has been above the national trend since the previous inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.2 (17.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.9 (14.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.0 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. The results of the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2003 were well above the national average in English and in line with the national average in mathematics and science. When compared to the pupils' prior attainment in Year 2, the results were above the national average



in English, but well below the national average in mathematics and science. After a period of decline, from 2000 to 2002, standards rose considerably in all three subjects in 2003, and overall, the trend in results in this age group matches the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (26.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.1 (24.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.3 (27.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. The improvement in 2003 was the result of the school's determined efforts, spurred on by the headteacher's excellent leadership, to raise standards and enable all pupils to achieve to the best of their capability. Following the headteacher's appointment two years ago, the decision was taken to improve reading, mathematics and science first. This is understandable as they were the identified weakest subjects at that time. Focused group work, extensive training in mathematics, and a greater attention to investigative work in science have paid off in improved achievement and standards in those two subjects. A much greater proportion of pupils is now working at the higher levels in them.
6. The school has an exceptionally good understanding of what educational inclusion means. A barrier to learning has been the number of pupils in Year 6 in 2003 and 2004 who joined the school after Year 2, several with identified learning difficulties. This has been very successfully tackled through very rigorous systems for assessing pupils' attainment on entry and tracking their progress from whatever point they join the school. As a result of this, the curriculum has been altered to suit the pupils' developing needs. The very successful use of 'focus groups' addresses any learning difficulties pupils may have, whatever their levels of capability, and minimises the impact they could have on the pupils' overall achievement.
7. The school works very hard to reach the challenging targets it sets itself, which are based on its very thorough analysis of all test and assessment information. It exceeded its target for English in 2003, though it did not quite make its target for mathematics. However, in both subjects, considerably more pupils reached the higher level than was predicted by the targets. Target setting and review extend down to individual levels and, because targets are very securely based on the outcome of effective marking, very good day-to-day and overall assessment, they significantly contribute to higher standards. This largely accounts for the improved achievement of boys, who now do as well as girls. Overall, all groups of pupils, including the few from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve equally well and some very good individual progress takes place as a result of the school's very well-considered actions.
8. Pupils practise and extend their speaking, listening, reading and mathematical skills effectively, and their writing skills satisfactorily, in other subjects. However, opportunities are restricted for them to write at length and, in science, the over-use of worksheets prevents pupils from recording their good investigative work in different ways. Pupils use their ICT skills very effectively to enhance their learning throughout the curriculum.

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

Attendance is **well above** the national average and pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are all **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **excellent**. All aspects of provision in this area have improved considerably since the previous inspection.

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

- Attendance is very good.

- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and they fully enjoy their work.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school.
- Pupils' personal development is extremely well nurtured through the school's excellent provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils feel highly valued because they know the school listens to them and respects and takes account of their views.

## Commentary

9. Attendance is very good and punctuality is satisfactory although a few pupils are late on a regular basis. The level of unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Parents are very good at notifying the school regarding absence and the school has very good procedures to promote good attendance and monitor patterns of absence.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-2003 (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.5	School data :	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

10. Personal development is extremely well fostered from the time children start school in the reception class. Very effective planning ensures that children learn to take responsibility, listen to, and show respect for what others have to say. Pupils of all ages enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning. They work very well together and have a very good level of trust in the adults who work with them. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Behaviour in class and around the school is very good. Pupils report that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively. No oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection and there have been no recent exclusions. Parents are highly satisfied with the school's very effective approaches to managing behaviour.
11. Pupils with special educational needs are valued and fully included in the life of the school and also have very positive attitudes to school. They and other pupils with learning difficulties respond well to the additional very good support they receive from the teachers and support assistants. They make good progress and are enthusiastic about their learning and the school is very vigilant about ensuring their full integration into school life. The same is true of the small number of pupils from minority ethnic or mixed ethnic backgrounds.
12. Pupils readily grasp the many excellent opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness throughout the curriculum. Within its vibrant learning environment, the school warmly welcomes visitors and staff and pupils are very friendly and courteous towards them. The school studies different religions and pupils are given time for reflection during assemblies and in lessons. Spiritual and moral development pervade all aspects of school life from the inspirational moral messages from the headteacher in assemblies and the calming music playing throughout the day to the very good programme for personal, social and health education. Lessons focusing on the development of citizenship strengthen the pupils' moral and social development. They know what is right and wrong, that they have choices to make and it is important for them to learn to follow rules and be self-disciplined. They participate in many fund-raising activities that extend their understanding of the need to help those less fortunate than they. For example, they have raised money over many years to provide guide dogs for the blind, and this year they have raised money to help fund a water project in Tanzania. The school's exceptionally clear understanding of what educational inclusion means helps all pupils to realise that everyone has something to offer and must be given the opportunity to do so. This was particularly illustrated in a very good assembly observed during the inspection.

13. Pupils have many opportunities to manage some of the everyday jobs around school that very effectively develop their sense of social responsibility. For example, they willingly help at break and lunch times, offering to do small jobs around the school. The pupils are very enthusiastic about the school council, seeing it as a very welcome opportunity to be involved in the work of the school and its development. Councillors take their responsibilities very seriously. They know that they represent other pupils and that their views are listened to and very much valued by pupils and staff. They contribute effectively to the overall school development plan, which is discussed with them at an appropriate level. The responsibility given to them to manage a small budget has led to a very good understanding that choices have to be made about spending and that best value should be gained from it.
14. Cultural development is very good. Residential visits very effectively promote cultural development and foster the pupils' personal, social and independent skills. The school arranges many visits and visitors that give pupils very good opportunities, especially in the arts and the humanities, to learn about local and national culture, the range of cultural diversity found in Britain today, and about world cultures. Pupils are very aware of multicultural issues and have a well-developed understanding of how cultural and religious beliefs influence the way people live.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Effective teaching is very well supported by a very rich, very well planned curriculum. Care, guidance and support for pupils are very good and the school has an excellent partnership with parents.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is **good**. Assessment procedures are **very good**. There has been very good overall improvement in teaching since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching in the Foundation Stage sets the children up very well for their work in Year 1 and beyond.
- Lessons are very well planned and the very effective use of assessment information in planning results in the full inclusion of all pupils in all learning activities.
- Speaking, listening, reading and numeracy are fostered effectively, and ICT skills very effectively, throughout the curriculum, but opportunities are missed to encourage extended and reflective writing.
- Very well briefed teaching assistants provide very good support for all groups of pupils and particularly for those with special educational needs.
- Occasionally, activities do not match learning objectives and teaching becomes unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

15. The quality of teaching is a major strength of the school. Along with pupils' learning, it is improving because it is rigorously checked by subject leaders and senior managers who are quick to identify and tackle weaknesses. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection because the headteacher leads by example and sets very high standards for the staff. Staff and parents very much welcome this strong leadership of teaching 'at the coal face' and the very positive impact it has on pupils' learning. Some very good teaching occurs in all age groups, including the Foundation Stage, and excellent teaching was observed in music in Year 4 and in French in the reception class. Overall, English and mathematics are taught well throughout the school and ICT is taught very well. The direct observation of teaching and the evidence gained from pupils' work and progress show that teaching is mostly good in all other subjects.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	13 (29%)	22 (48%)	7 (15%)	2 (4%)	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.

16. Lively, engaging teaching through very well planned practical experiences provides a good balance between teacher directed and pupil initiated learning activities in the Foundation Stage. Throughout the school, teachers' planning very effectively ensures equality of opportunity for, and the full inclusion of, all pupils in all aspects of learning. Teachers use their good and sometimes very good subject and pupil knowledge to plan challenging work for all groups of pupils. They organise and manage pupils and their learning very well. As a result, relationships are very good throughout the school, and pupils behave very well because their needs are very effectively met, creating in them a desire to learn. They usually work productively and at a good pace, and take pride in their achievements. Thinking skills are often considerably challenged in lessons as pupils are required, through effectively targeted questioning, to share what they already know and apply it to their new learning. This was particularly evident in an excellent music lesson where the layering of complex rhythms to create and communicate an effect was exceptionally well taught.

*A Year 4 lesson in which the focus was on listening with attention to detail, learning and composing rhythms and performing an action song:*

The teacher expertly adapted a game of 'Switch' in excellent warm up activities that required pupils to recognise minute differences in increasingly longer and more complex rhythms. They picked out differences not necessarily in the last rhythm they heard, demonstrating very good listening skills. Building on their previous work involving the complex rhythms in a Ghanaian song, the teacher set the pupils to work in pairs composing rhythm patterns, performing them while singing, and adding rhythmic body movements and patterns to produce a visual effect as well. She then extended this three-part work by asking a group of four pupils to compose and perform a rhythmic ostinato (repeated pattern) to accompany the rest of the class. She successfully encouraged the pupils to predict the effects that changes in tempo might have on mood and feeling, and then check to see if they were right. She evaluated the outcome with them through very effective questioning that required them to listen very carefully and answer using music vocabulary. The enjoyment and enthusiasm throughout the lesson were a joy to behold and this preparatory work led naturally into the pupils' own compositions. Some were very keen to share the compositions they had created at home as a result of previous lessons, showing the considerable impact that the excellent teaching and learning was having on them.

17. Speaking, listening, reading and numeracy skills are effectively promoted in other subjects, and teachers often link subjects together very effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend these skills. The weak link is writing, although the school has recognised the problem and made it a priority for next year. At the moment, teachers do not encourage pupils sufficiently to write for sustained periods of time in English or in other subjects, most notably science. Teachers plan very well for ICT. Following direct teaching input at the beginning of the week, the meticulous planning of the use of the mini computer suites ensures that pupils have sufficient opportunities to consolidate their newly learned skills. This very good planning extends to ensuring that what is being taught in ICT is relevant to work in other subjects and enhances learning throughout the curriculum.
18. Occasionally, the activities planned for lessons do not match the learning objectives and this leads to some unsatisfactory teaching, as was observed in one literacy lesson and one science lesson. The school's own monitoring has picked up the weakness, support and guidance has been given to tackle it, and improvement is being monitored. In most lessons, learning objectives and learning outcomes are very clear, and the very effective deployment of very well briefed teaching assistants ensures that additional support is targeted on the areas of most need. This helps pupils with special educational needs in particular, and also addresses

the identified, often short-term, learning needs of other groups of pupils. This is of particular benefit to those pupils who may otherwise be the 'hidden average' pupils for whom no special help is arranged. All withdrawal sessions are very well planned to ensure that learning is specific to need and helps the pupils to participate fully when they return to class. Teachers cater well in their planning for those pupils who are able, gifted or talented. In most lessons, teachers ensure that for these pupils, learning is appropriately challenging and is moved on at a much faster pace.

19. All the effective teaching is strongly supported by the very good assessment and recording of pupils' progress, supplemented by very effective marking and day-to-day assessment. Teachers thoroughly evaluate their lessons and pupils' learning on a daily basis and make adjustments to their planning to pick up issues as they arise. Translated to whole school level through the rigorous analysis of all tests and assessments, the information is also used very effectively to adapt medium and long term planning to meet the differing needs of different year groups and classes. The good range and quantity of carefully selected homework consolidate and promote learning throughout the school. Year 6 pupils particularly praised the use of homework diaries and the homework that is set for them because 'it helps us to remember what we've done in class'. Parents support this view and assist the school very well by helping their children at home.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **very good**. It meets all statutory requirements and the needs of all pupils. Resources, accommodation and staffing are very good and there is a very good range of opportunities for learning outside lessons.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is exceptionally inclusive and provides equally well for the needs of all pupils.
- There is a very rich variety of popular educational visits, visitors and after-school clubs.
- The very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education pervades the entire life of the school.
- Vigorous and far-sighted developments have strengthened the links between subjects and extended pupils' opportunities for ambitious creative work.
- Very good arrangements ease children into school when they first start and help them to move smoothly to each new stage of their education.

## **Commentary**

20. Vigorous and imaginative developments have made the curriculum much more effective since the last inspection. The use of national strategies and guidance has brought greater continuity to pupils' learning within a full statutory curriculum. At the same time, the school is innovative in forging stronger links between subjects and introducing greater diversity of learning experiences. As a result, the curriculum is more unified, exciting, challenging, creative, and responsive to pupils' very different needs and capabilities. French has been very successfully introduced in the reception year and there are very good plans gradually to extend this provision through the school. New initiatives such as the art week show what can be done. All pupils rose to the creative challenges posed by a variety of visiting artists and students. Everyone gained new ideas, partnerships, skills and self-perceptions, and had new achievements to show and celebrate.
21. The school works very hard to make the curriculum fully inclusive and to ensure that all pupils, across a wide spectrum of attainment, benefit equally from the opportunities it provides. Efforts to achieve the award of the inclusion quality mark have caused all staff to review and improve their work in this area. These efforts are underpinned by the appointment of an inclusion co-ordinator to keep a check on all work in this area. The very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs is rooted in very detailed assessment information, and shaped by

very well-written individual education plans. Very well-briefed teaching assistants make skilful and effective use of the plans to help the pupils achieve to the best of their capability. The very effective provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship permeates the work of the school. It contributes in very great measure to pupils' personal development and largely accounts for their overall excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

22. The quality and range of opportunities for enrichment of learning are very good. In the course of the year, over thirty clubs provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to extend their interests, aptitudes and learning, especially in sports and games, music and the arts. Most staff contribute and most pupils participate. A good and growing programme of educational and residential visits widens pupils' experience of the world, develops their social skills and independence, and extends their academic learning. Increasing links with local business and the community bring many visitors into school whose specific experiences and skills enrich learning and the curriculum. The curriculum is further enhanced by the provision of instrumental tuition which is taken up by a large number of pupils and greatly benefits their musical achievement.
23. The school invests well in its staffing provision, accommodation and resources, all of which are good. Curricular developments work very well because they are meticulously prepared for by staff training and additional resources. The strong development and impact of work in ICT provide a fine example. Support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement across the school. Learning resources are very good. The outdoor accommodation has been imaginatively improved, and includes an excellent learning area for children in reception and a very well-designed environmental area. The internal accommodation is very good, particularly where action has already been taken to minimise intrusive noise. Parents and pupils greatly praise the high quality curricular provision, the excitement in learning generated by it, and the considerable improvements made to it in the past two years.

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

Provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is **very good**. The involvement of pupils in the school by seeking and acting upon their views is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school takes very good care of its pupils. This is evident in every aspect of its work.
- The level of support, based on monitoring pupils' personal and academic progress, is very good.
- Pupils' views are regularly sought, highly valued and acted upon wherever possible.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured young people by the time they leave school.

### **Commentary**

24. The school has very successfully ensured that the care and best interests of every pupil are at the heart of all its activities. This is a very strong feature of the school's work and very much appreciated by pupils and their parents. Effective child protection procedures are in place and very good attention is paid to health and safety. The headteacher, governors and the caretaker work very well together to ensure that the school grounds and buildings are safe and secure. All statutory testing of equipment is carried out. The school is maintained and cleaned to a very high standard. Each of the many visits that take place has the same high degree of very good planning that takes due account of all risks so that pupils benefit from a rich range of experiences, including a residential visit abroad.
25. Pupils' achievements in and out of school are celebrated through awards, stickers and special assemblies. This raises pupils' self esteem and helps them to become the confident, self-assured young people that they are by the time they leave the school. The very good personal, social, health and citizenship education programme places strong emphasis on pupils taking responsibilities for their own actions and for helping others. Pupils with special educational

needs are supported very effectively through very good programmes of work and very good help from teachers and support staff.

26. Induction procedures are very good at whatever point the pupils come to the school. For children starting school for the first time, the very good systems include a booklet that sets out clearly the school's expectations, and an induction evening that includes input from the staff, the governors and the Friends of the School. Pupils who join the school at other times are given a buddy as a mentor to help them settle into school quickly so that they can achieve well right from the start. Pupils' views are sought and genuinely valued, for example, through the school council which this year has helped to improve playground games and the tree trail, and is looking at ways to improve the maze. The supervision of pupils at lunchtimes is very good. The appointment of a trained playtime supervisor has improved safety in the playground and extended the play opportunities available to pupils. The training has been cascaded down to older pupils who work hard to ensure that no pupil is left out or lonely in the playground. This is another example of the school's exceptional understanding of inclusive practice.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's partnership with parents is **excellent** and the school has very good links with other schools, colleges and the local community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's work with parents is excellent and the information provided for them is very good.
- The school has very good links with other school and community partnerships.

### **Commentary**

27. Responses from the parental questionnaire and the parents' meeting indicate excellent support for the school. It very successfully includes parents in its work through, for example, involving them in school development planning and review, and inviting them into school for assemblies and other events. These activities are very well attended. A very good number of parents help in school on a regular basis and also help out on school visits. They are proud of their involvement in creating a bright, stimulating environment for younger pupils by painting murals in the corridors. Grandparents also attend assemblies and share their knowledge and experiences with the pupils during lessons. This has a very good impact on the pupils' understanding of life in the past.
28. Parents very much appreciate the very good information the school gives them about each year group's work, and the way in which that helps them to understand what their children are doing and how they can help learning. The school holds curriculum meetings and consultation evenings each term, some of which include an open afternoon. The parents like this very much because of the opportunity it gives them to see their children's work as well as discuss their progress. Pupils' targets are shared with parents and their annual reports give parents a clear picture of their progress and what improvements are needed. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are very helpful and informative. Further regular information about the school's work is presented in friendly and informative newsletters and in the half-termly newspaper that the pupils produce. Parents find the school very approachable and ready to listen to their concerns and suggestions. The school highly values parents' comments and parents are particularly pleased with the recent improvements in the school. A thriving parents and friends association supports the school very well, raising funds, for example, for play equipment and to help out with visits.
29. Very good links exist with the receiving secondary schools, especially the one to which most pupils transfer. These links help to promote a smooth transition to the secondary phase, and include activities such as the joint week-long visit to the Menai Centre to build relationships with their new teachers, and visits to the school by pupils and staff from the secondary school. The

school has very good links with the community, including the emergency services, a road safety unit and a cycling proficiency unit. It invites the local community in to see shows and to see the school at work, provides harvest gifts to local senior citizens, and organises a raffle at Christmas to buy presents for them. The school provides work experience places for pupils from the local secondary school and initial teacher training placements for a local college. It has good links with and some sponsorship from local businesses all of which contribute to the very good overall quality of education for the pupils.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Key staff and governors carry out their roles and responsibilities very well and management is very effective.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is the driving force in the school, directing it very effectively as it strives for excellence.
- Subject leadership and management are good. This is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement across the school.
- Leaders act quickly to identify and tackle weaknesses in teaching and learning, both of which are very effectively monitored.
- Governance is very good and governors have a very good understanding of how to achieve best value from their spending.
- Very effective management systems support all aspects of the school's work and help it to achieve its aims.

### Commentary

30. Leadership and management are much better than at the previous inspection. The headteacher's excellent vision and high expectations have had a very positive impact on teaching and learning since he took up his post two years ago. His perceptive, well focused monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, which he leads by example, clearly identify areas for improvement, and provide very good guidance to help staff tackle their weaknesses. This has established very good teamwork throughout the school and a common approach to planning and assessing pupils' work that is paying dividends in some very good individual progress and overall improved achievement. All test and assessment outcomes are very rigorously analysed to identify weaknesses in learning. These are addressed as a whole school where relevant to ensure that all pupils achieve to the best of their capability. Examples are the work done so far on mathematics, science, ICT and the arts, and that planned for writing in the coming year.
31. The school's very good ethos is very firmly based on its excellent understanding of inclusion. This in turn is very effectively supported by a very rich curriculum and very good attention to the all round personal development of the pupils alongside their academic development. Although the school has not had a deputy headteacher for two terms, the headteacher has been effectively supported by the senior management team and a very committed team of staff and governors. Together with governors, parents and pupils, they play a full part in reviewing and developing the work of the school. Subject leaders have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, which they fulfil well. They take a much greater and more effective part in leading and managing their subjects than at the last inspection because they are given the time to plan, to check teachers' planning and pupils' work, and to observe teachers teaching. All subject leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and have drawn up carefully considered action plans showing how to improve provision in them. The information forms an important part of the school development plan.



32. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The co-ordinator maintains all appropriate documentation very well. Her very good liaison with external agencies ensures that pupils receive all necessary support. Staffing and finances are very effectively targeted on the areas of greatest need. As a result, the pupils are fully included in all that the school has to offer and make very good progress towards the very well-written targets in their individual education plans. Similar very good practice extends to supporting all groups of pupils through the very well-managed 'focus' groups.
33. Governance is very good. The governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and very effectively support the work of the headteacher and staff. They have a very good understanding of their role in evaluating the work of the school and of how to apply the principles of best value. Very clear strategic planning and very effective management of the school's finances ensure that pupils' learning and overall achievement are kept at the forefront of the school's work. Financial management and control are very good. Governors plan the budget with care and check that the school's spending is helping pupils to achieve as well as they can. The school has a falling roll situation but the governors' very good strategic planning of the school's finances has ensured that surplus monies are to be used to help maintain its current level of provision.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	671,620
Total expenditure	702,132
Expenditure per pupil	2041

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	76,153
Balance carried forward to the next	45,641

34. Day-to-day management and administration are unobtrusive and support teaching and learning very effectively. The school has risen well to the challenge to learning presented by the increasing proportion of pupils joining in Years 3 to 6 in recent years by working very hard to ensure their good progress from the time they enter. This is achieved through the very high commitment of all staff to improving pupils' achievement and raising standards throughout the school. Overall, this is an effective and improving school running at slightly below average cost yet enabling pupils to achieve well through very good leadership and management and effective teaching. It therefore provides good value for money.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

35. The overall provision for children in the reception class is **very good**. Children come to school from a large number of pre-school settings, including play groups and nurseries. Most children start school with overall levels of attainment typical for their age. They achieve very well because of the very good teaching they receive. As a result, the majority are on course to exceed the standards expected nationally for the end of the reception year (the early learning goals) in all areas of learning. Very good induction procedures and information for parents ensure that children settle very quickly into school routines.
36. Curricular planning is very good. A wide range of practical activities is very well matched to the children's needs. The very caring, well organised, and stimulating classroom environment contributes very positively to the children's learning, as do visits and visitors. Leadership and management are very good. The school is justly proud of its recent award of the Quality Mark for the Foundation Stage. All staff and parent helpers work very effectively as a team and have a very good understanding of how children of this age learn. Individual children's progress is meticulously recorded and the information is used very effectively in planning. The excellent outdoor accommodation is used very well to provide continuous learning throughout the day. There had been very good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

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

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

- Very good teaching promotes very good attitudes to school and very good behaviour.
- Adults provide very good role models and are sensitive to the children's needs.
- Children work and play very well together.

#### **Commentary**

37. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development permeates all areas of learning. Teaching is very good. Children achieve very well and greatly exceed the early learning goals. The happy and secure learning environment has helped the children to settle quickly into school life and they follow established routines well. Children work and play very well together because of the very good relationships they form with each other and with adults. They are developing good personal skills and independence as they put on coats and aprons, work independently of adults and take on small classroom responsibilities. The children work very well together in groups, take turns, and handle equipment and resources with care. They show very good attitudes in lessons, listen attentively to adults and to each other and follow instructions carefully. The staff know all the children very well. They are sensitive to the children's individual needs, and use praise well to boost children's confidence and foster enjoyment in learning.

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

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

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

- Teaching is very good and as a result, children achieve very well.
- Work is very well matched to the different abilities of the children.

## Commentary

38. Children achieve very well and exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning. The quality of teaching is very good. The very well planned range of interesting activities promotes language skills very well. Speaking and listening skills are very effectively promoted through the many opportunities created for the children to talk about their work and personal experiences, and through very carefully planned role-play activities. Children listen with interest and enjoyment to the teacher's very expressive reading. Through her good use of pictures and text, they are developing a love of reading and show a good understanding of the main points of stories which they re-tell in the correct sequence. Children have a good knowledge of letter sounds, form letters correctly and use them consistently well in their writing activities. They use basic punctuation correctly and make good attempts to write in simple sentences. The very well briefed support staff and parent helpers contribute in great measure to the children's progress, successfully encouraging them to use their language and literacy skills in other areas of learning. The weekly French lessons, a very successful enrichment of the Foundation Stage curriculum, have a remarkable impact on children's learning. Excellent teaching and very lively, fun activities ensure the children very much enjoy the lessons, find them exciting and make excellent progress in learning to speak a new language.

## Mathematical development

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very well planned practical activities and very good teaching promote good learning.
- Children have very good attitudes to their work and show good levels of concentration.
- Children have good counting skills which they use well to solve simple number problems.

## Commentary

39. Children achieve very well and exceed the early learning goals for mathematical development. They have a good understanding of number patterns. All count accurately to and from 10 and the majority count on and back from 20. Most count accurately in 10s to 100. The children show a good understanding of concepts such as 'more than' and 'less than' because of the teacher's challenging questioning during mathematical activities. They accurately name two and three-dimensional shapes, use simple measures in their sand and water play and solve simple money problems in every day situations. The very good emphasis placed on learning through practical activities makes learning fun. Therefore children concentrate very well and, supported very well by all adults, develop a good mathematical vocabulary and consolidate their understanding of number through rhyme and song.

## Knowledge and Understanding of the World

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of well-planned practical activities stimulates the children's curiosity.
- Very good resources and visitors to the school enhance and enrich this area of learning.

## Commentary

40. Very good teaching develops the children's observational skills well. Children achieve very well and exceed the early learning goals in all aspects of this area of learning. A visit from a local vet during the inspection very effectively taught the children care and respect for their pets and other animals. This linked very well to recent work on caring for the school environment. Children learn appropriate scientific vocabulary as they carry out plant investigations and test

the properties of a range of different materials. They accurately sequence events in the past and develop a good understanding of basic religious beliefs and values through assemblies and by listening to, for example, Bible stories. During the inspection, the excellent outdoor area was used very effectively to reinforce road safety. The children's work with construction kits and games introduces them very effectively to modelling and making structures. Children show good mouse control as they move icons round the computer screens, and use computer programs to learn to write and spell, and to draw and paint pictures.

## **Physical Development**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of practical activities is planned to promote physical development.
- The excellent outdoor area is used effectively to develop the children's physical skills.

### **Commentary**

41. The children develop their manipulative skills well through their regular access to construction materials, jigsaws, writing and painting and cutting and sticking equipment. They show good levels of concentration and perseverance in their tasks, as seen in a paper weaving activity during one lesson. The excellent outdoor play area is used effectively on a daily basis to allow the children freedom of movement. Their co-ordination and control skills are developing well as they climb and balance on the large apparatus and use the wheeled toys to steer accurately and avoid collisions. No physical education lessons were seen during the inspection, but the teacher's planning shows a good range of skills are taught during the year. Children achieve very well and exceed the early learning goals for physical development.

## **Creative development**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of well planned activities are linked very effectively to other areas of learning.
- The learning environment is very effectively enhanced by the children's art work.

### **Commentary**

42. Teaching is very good and the children enjoy the many opportunities provided for them to draw, paint and make pictures and models from a variety of media. Their work is very well linked to other areas of learning as, for example, they paint self-portraits, make observational drawings of spring flowers, design and print their own T-shirts and construct a large three-dimensional dragon to celebrate Chinese New Year. Art work is attractively displayed and demonstrates the children's developing understanding of colour and texture and of how to use a computer program to make pictures. Children engage whole-heartedly in imaginative play, using masks to re-enact the story of the 'Three Pigs' and pretending to 'treat' pets at the vet's surgery. They enjoy music. Singing is tuneful and enthusiastic, and children have a good understanding of how to create loud and quiet sounds as they add accompaniments with a variety of percussion instruments. Children achieve very well and considerably exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall because of good teaching, and standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are above the national expectation.
- In most year groups, many pupils reach high standards for their age in spoken English and reading. However, in writing, standards are markedly lower and achievement is less consistent.
- Pupils who find literacy difficult have good support and usually do well.
- The hard work put into improving resources and the use of assessment information is paying off in better individual progress.

#### Commentary

43. Attainment is above the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6, but lower in writing than in reading, speaking and listening. This has been the case for some time, although overall standards are significantly higher now than when the school was last inspected.
44. Standards in speaking and listening are well above the national expectation across the school. Pupils achieve well, even though the use of assessment and target setting is relatively limited in this area. Teachers often create good opportunities in different subjects for pupils to confer in small groups to develop, agree and express their ideas. Many pupils are highly articulate and they contribute well to both formal and informal discussion. They often set a standard in learning activities, thereby leading the learning of others who are less articulate. In reading, provision is very good and pupils develop secure basic skills through well established reading routines that lead to very good attitudes, confidence and understanding. Standards are high in most classes and parents help pupils to achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils discriminate sensitively between authors, and use books skilfully to aid their learning in various subjects. Many show advanced skills in reading 'between the lines' and in explaining how certain language features influence the reader's response. The school gives pupils good variety of opportunity in reading, and it carefully tracks and maintains individual progress.
45. In writing, standards are at the national expectation, and therefore relatively weaker than the other aspects of English. The school is investigating the causes of this and is planning to carry out remedial action as part of the school development plan for next year. Currently, progress is less consistent than in reading, speaking and listening, and the range and quality of opportunity more restricted. The development of the basic skills of handwriting, punctuation, spelling and presenting work is good overall. Pupils also learn to plan and redraft their writing, and to fit different styles and structures of written language to different purposes. Pupils share teachers' clear expectations that they should use these skills to make each piece of writing the best they can do. Teachers' marking mostly supports good progress in these aspects. However, written tasks are usually short and not always complete. They are often technical exercises in constructing sentences or paragraphs to a formula rather than writing freely and at length. Oddly, given the school's very strong emphasis on creativity and personal development, pupils have few opportunities to write imaginatively. They lack opportunities to organise more extensive information or to combine different styles in more extended compositions. This restricts the achievement of fluency and control in writing, particularly for the more able pupils.
46. Teaching and learning are good overall, though they range from very good to one lesson which was unsatisfactory. This was because the activities did not match the learning objectives and pupils made little progress in literacy. In the best lessons, teachers develop new learning with clarity of focus, pace, enthusiasm, engaging rapport and high but realistic expectations for

different groups of pupils. In most lessons, they make good use of pupil talk to check, share and improve the quality of new learning, particularly at the end of the lesson. However, occasionally, there is a tendency to focus more on teaching and teacher talk than on pupils' learning, and missed opportunities or weak methods prevent the reinforcement and checking of pupils' learning during and at the close of some lessons. A significant strength in a very good lesson in Year 5 was the skilful interweaving of activities, so that speaking, listening, reading and writing skills supported each other directly to reinforce and develop pupils' skills in persuasive argument.

47. The subject is well led and managed and teaching and learning are perceptively monitored by the headteacher and subject leader. The very good use of assessment information to identify weaknesses, to track individual progress and to set targets underpins the school's success at helping all pupils to achieve well. It has also resulted in the plans to take strong steps to improve writing in the coming year. It also significantly contributes to better individual progress and largely accounts for the improved achievement of all pupils including boys, who now do as well as girls.

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

48. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their good skills in reading and spoken English to enhance learning in other subjects. The increasing use of ICT across the curriculum benefits both reading and writing. By Year 6, pupils know how to use information books and the Internet to find things out by reading. There is some good writing in subjects such as history and geography, but elsewhere, there is little that is clearly shaped by common policy.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**

### **Main strengths and weakness**

- Assessment information is used very effectively to track pupils' progress, to inform planning, and to identify where additional support is needed.
  - The quality of teaching is good and the very effective use of ICT enhances pupils' learning
  - Problem solving skills are a key element in all lessons and considerably aid pupils' achievement.
49. Achievement, which is good overall, is very good up to Year 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 are now well above the national expectation and considerably improved since the last inspection. Standards in Year 6 remain, overall, in line with the national expectation, as they were at the last inspection but are improving as a result of the high priority given to mathematics in the past two years. Staff training, good teaching and the effective deployment of the learning support assistants have contributed to this success.
  50. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge effectively to plan a good range of practical problem solving activities that successfully challenge all groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons. They, and other pupils who find particular mathematical concepts difficult, benefit from very well planned, focused withdrawal sessions with learning support assistants, and from carefully phrased questioning by the teacher in whole class lessons. Follow-up activities to these sessions are very well matched to the pupils' levels of capability. The good use of praise by teachers and learning support assistants, and their gentle encouragement show pupils that their contributions are valued. This has a positive effect on learning for all pupils.
  51. Throughout the school, pupils acquire a good knowledge and understanding of number through the effective mental and oral starters to lessons. They are successfully challenged to apply this

knowledge and understanding to, for example, handling and interpreting information presented in tables, graphs and charts, and in activities that cover shape, space and measure. Precise explanations and good demonstrations by the teachers are consistently followed by high expectations that pupils will use appropriate mathematical vocabulary as they explain how they have solved problems and arrived at their answers. By Year 3, they know that division is the opposite of multiplication, use the correct term (inverse operation) to describe this, and use the knowledge to check the accuracy of their answers. In all lessons, there is a good balance in lessons between explanation, discussion and practical activities. The step-by-step approach used by most teachers has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher emphasised the importance of identifying key words as the first step in solving problems. Pupils then underlined the key words in the problems they were given, and used this knowledge well to decide how to solve the problems. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher's practical approach to demonstrating the meaning of 'mean', 'median', 'mode' and 'range' when interpreting data, very effectively challenged the pupils and considerably improved their understanding of these mathematical terms. In another Year 6 lesson, the high level of challenge given to the upper set very effectively improved their understanding that pie charts showed percentages and fractions in a more visual way. In both lessons, the group work tasks were very well planned to the pupils' levels of capability and further consolidated their new learning as they applied it to everyday life using the data they had collected from a recent survey of rubbish collected at home.

52. The subject is very well led and managed by the temporary subject leader. The very perceptive monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning includes direct observations in class alongside the scrutiny of pupils' books. The information gained from this, and from the very rigorous assessment procedures is used very effectively to set targets, to inform the school development plan, and to adapt the curriculum to the pupils' learning needs. The school holds numeracy evenings for parents which parents report help them to help their children learn more effectively.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects. Good examples were noted in science, where they measured the length of shadows and used a Newton meter to measure forces, in history, geography and design and technology displays, and in ICT where a good range of mathematical concepts were explored using the computers. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to enhance pupils' learning in mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good although there are some inconsistencies in Years 3 to 6.
- Good emphasis is placed on developing investigative skills through practical activities.
- Information and communication technology is used very well to support teaching and learning, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities in their written work to show the depth of their knowledge and understanding.
- Leadership and management are good and assessment procedures are very good.

### **Commentary**

54. Achievement is good and standards are above the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because of the good support they receive. Pupils enjoy science. They talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about their work, especially the practical activities, which they find interesting and fun. This is because teaching

is good and strong emphasis is placed on providing a good range of practical activities that develop pupils' enquiry skills well. As a result, pupils have a secure scientific knowledge, use a suitable range of technical vocabulary and develop good skills for making predictions and carrying out a fair test. They work well together, sharing resources sensibly, discussing ideas and considering the opinions of others. Year 6 pupils in particular show an obvious pride in the presentation of their work.

55. In most lessons, effective questioning helps pupils to build on what they already know. Time is used well, resulting in good pace and productivity in learning. Teachers usually explain clearly what they expect pupils to find out and they prepare and organise resources well to stimulate curiosity and support learning. Occasionally, teachers' subject knowledge is not secure enough to promote effective learning and the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This happened in an unsatisfactory lesson where follow-up activities did not allow pupils to show or use the depth of scientific knowledge and understanding gained in their investigative work. The over-dependence on worksheets limits opportunities for pupils to show initiative or use their writing skills when recording their findings. They do, however, use their numeracy skills well as they read temperature charts, time physical activities and measure pulse rates.. Information and communication technology is used very effectively, especially by Year 6 pupils, to research scientific information and to record, interpret and present data in the form of graphs and charts. However, opportunities for Year 2 pupils to research information are limited.
56. Teachers' written marking gives good guidance to pupils about how well they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. All test and assessment information is rigorously analysed to identify any weaknesses, to set targets, to inform planning and to ensure that pupils who need it, receive additional support. After-school clubs, together with the good use of resources, the school and local environment and visits such as those of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust and the annual residential fieldtrip, positively enhance pupils' scientific learning.
57. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject through the effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Science is set to continue as a priority in the next school development plan to develop investigative work further. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good** and has improved very considerably since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good and standards are above the national expectation in Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is very good and pupils' work is very clearly based on their prior learning and levels of capability.
- The very effective use of the 'mini-suites' in each area of the school facilitate the overall very good use of ICT across the curriculum.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

58. Although only two full lessons were observed, shorter observations took place across a range of sessions where teachers were very effectively teaching pupils the skills they would be expected to use and consolidate in the rest of the week. Where teaching was observed, in full or shorter sessions, it was very good, reflecting the time and effort the school has put into developing teachers' skills and improving resources. Pupils in Year 2 reach the nationally expected standards for their age. They successfully learn to use computers to consolidate their spelling and sentence work, to create pictorial graphs, and a simple database. They have



a well developed understanding of the functions of all the frequently used keyboard strokes and a good understanding that the information they can retrieve from a database is only as good as that which is put into it. As the week progressed, they consolidated these skills very well as they took their turns at the computers.

59. Standards are above the national expectation in Year 6 and throughout the school, pupils' learning is well matched their stage of development in this subject. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported through work that is planned specifically to develop their learning in ICT alongside, for example, their literacy and numeracy work. Higher attainers are swiftly moved on to more demanding work, and very well-planned independent and collaborative work very successfully encourages more competent pupils to help less confident ones. This occurs in a variety of lessons as pupils take turns to work in the mini-suites while others remain in class. Teachers have very high expectations of the pupils' work rate and behaviour and, because the pupils are clear about what they have to do, they get on with their work with minimal supervision. This ability is fostered from an early age as they learn to listen carefully and apply what they are told as a whole class to their work at the computers. Word processing skills are very good. By Year 4, pupils successfully use a wide range of fonts, styles and graphics to produce eye-catching, informative posters and present information for specific audiences. This work culminates in the very effective multimedia presentations put together by Year 6 pupils.
60. The subject is very well led and managed. It has a very high profile in the school, and a very perceptive audit clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses. The enthusiasm and expertise of the subject leader is driving the teachers' expertise and the pupils' learning forward at a very good pace. Book scans and lesson observations are carried out regularly and pupils' progress and achievement is very carefully tracked. The information gained from the very comprehensive assessment procedures is used very effectively to plan teaching, to identify staff training, and to adapt the curriculum to suit the school's needs. The subject leader supports the staff very well in using ICT to help pupils with special educational needs. Internet safety, and all other health and safety issues, are given good attention including, for example, the heights of the chairs for the pupils, and their distance from the screen. Empty ink cartridges are re-cycled, fostering in the pupils a good understanding of the effect of indiscriminate waste on the environment.

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

61. Pupils make very good use of their ICT skills in other subjects because teachers plan very effectively for them to do so. A considerable amount of work involving literacy and numeracy was observed in all year groups, although there were no examples of pupils using computers directly to draft and edit extended pieces of writing. In addition, pupils' work demonstrates the very effective use of ICT, including the use of digital cameras, to extend and enhance learning in science, geography, history and art and design.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

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

- Achievement is good and standards are above the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and the subject is well led and managed.

## Commentary

62. Geographical skills are taught effectively from an early age. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the main features of their own area and the influence it has on the way people live and the jobs they do. For older pupils, this is extended to the study of different countries around the world, and pupils in Year 6 have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of how climate and geographical features affect the way different peoples conduct their lives. Pupils use their mathematical and ICT skills effectively to analyse geographical data. For example, they collected data on waste, analysed and categorised it and used the information to devise an action plan to tackle the issue of waste in our society. The pupils' work in geography very effectively develops their cultural awareness and their sense of social and moral responsibility. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support to help them keep up with the class through, for example, the use of writing frames to help them record their learning, and through the teachers' clear explanations of the meaning of newly introduced geographical vocabulary. The success of this was evident in a Year 3 lesson where the pupils used their new vocabulary well in a whole class session at the end of the lesson, showing the very good progress they had made.
63. The subject is well led and managed. Teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated effectively and a thorough subject audit clearly identifies the areas for development. Marking supports learning well by showing pupils how to improve. Assessment procedures are good and the information is used to inform planning and the curriculum, as is seen in the recently updated scheme of work, which links history and geography topics effectively. Resources are satisfactory overall and the subject leader has rightly identified the need to improve these to include more atlases and maps. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All groups of pupils achieve well and standards are above the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6..
- Teaching is good and pupils' enquiry and observation skills are developed well.

## Commentary

64. There has been good improvement in history since the last inspection. The good teaching includes different, often imaginative ways of developing pupils' understanding of the past and present. As a result, pupils in Year 6 are well informed about a wide range of historical topics and show a good level of empathy with historical characters. For example, in their work on World War 2, pupils in Year 6 showed a well-developed understanding of the plight of evacuees, gained through research and through well-structured role play. The Year 2 teachers' very good planning linked history and geography topics very effectively as pupils studied old photographs of seaside holidays and compared the changes in the way people dressed, the activities, and the environment 50 and 100 years ago, with their own. They very successfully dated the photographs using clues gained from their discussions, their choices securely based on a very good understanding that some things remain the same and others change over time.
65. The high priority given to the subject is evident in the school's own interactive history museum, complete with official opening times, questionnaire cards and a range of stimulating experiences that enhance the pupils' understanding of the passage of time and encourage close observation, enquiry and further research. There is a very good balance of teacher given information and pupil research in the lessons observed, and a very good emphasis on using literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in a very good lesson, pupils were very successfully

encouraged to use their skimming, scanning and indexing skills, and their knowledge of time lines to carry out some well planned research on Egypt. Their work was very carefully matched to their levels of capability and pupils with special educational needs were very well supported by the learning support assistant. Although activities are not always specifically planned for higher attaining pupils, teachers add challenge to the pupils' work as they circulate, asking further questions that encourage pupils to think more deeply.

66. History is well led and managed. Teaching and learning are effectively monitored and evaluated, assessment procedures are good and the information is used effectively in planning. A recent, thorough audit clearly identifies areas for further development and makes very good links between history and geography topics. A good range of visits and visitors enhance the curriculum including, for example, the very successful 'Grandparents Day' during which grandparents share their experiences with the pupils. History makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good and standards are above the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. .
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils enjoy the subject.
- Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Commentary**

67. There is a good balance between the study of Christianity and other world religions and between learning about and learning from religions. Displays throughout the school show that the subject has an important place in the curriculum. There has been good improvement in this subject since the previous inspection and religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Through it, pupils' appreciation of belief systems in the world around them and their understanding of the life styles of followers of different faiths, are considerably extended in a sensitive and reflective manner. This starts in Years 1 and 2 with the study of festivals from different religions and continues through to Year 6 where pupils consider how following a particular religion affects peoples' ways of life. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
68. The good teaching makes the subject interesting and enjoyable for the pupils. Where it is very good, the planned activities provide very good levels of challenge for all pupils. In learning about and acting out a Shabbat meal, for example, higher attainers in Year 2 were successfully encouraged to think for themselves, and pupils with special educational needs were very well supported, ensuring their full inclusion throughout. In most lessons, effective questioning enhances pupils' learning considerably by helping them to recall and review previous learning and use it to support new learning. Pupils in Year 6 did this very well as they explored the life of Martin Luther King alongside the issues of the time. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' greater understanding and to challenge higher attainers to interpret or search for meaning behind a story, as happened in a Year 4 lesson on John the Baptist.
69. Leadership and management are good. Teaching and learning are perceptively monitored through direct lesson observations and through the scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Good assessment systems track pupils' progress effectively and are well supported by teachers' marking and lesson evaluations that pick up on what needs further improvement. Resources are good and support learning effectively.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. Design and technology and music were sampled because only two music lessons were observed and only parts of design and technology lessons were seen. However, further evidence from discussions with pupils and staff, inspection of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and displays throughout the school allow judgements to be made in several aspects of provision in both subjects.

### Art and design

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school and standards are high by the end of Year 6.
  - Good leadership and management spread a clear vision and sense of creative purpose.
  - The very well-managed 'art week' has enriched the learning environment and transformed perceptions of what pupils can achieve through art.
  - Work in art and design contributes strongly to pupils' personal development, particularly their spiritual and cultural awareness.
71. All pupils achieve very well across a range of themes, styles and media. Standards are above those expected in Year 2, and well above them in Year 6. Pupils are excited by the varied challenges offered, and they experience creative success and some self-discovery. Their progress is well recorded in their well-maintained folders and sketchbooks, which teachers annotate well, showing pupils how to improve their skills. What is missing is annotation by the pupils to explain their developing visual ideas. Work on observational drawing is very good and pupils develop strong observational skills through drawing in different media. This can be seen in the very fine pencil studies of plant forms in Year 3, and the very good pencil and chalk studies in Year 6 that capture human actions such as skateboarding. Different media and techniques are often imaginatively combined, as in the large ornamental tree made by pupils in Year 1. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by the well planned, mutually supportive links are made between art and design and subjects such as science, history, design and technology, and ICT, which includes the effective use of digital photography.
72. Leadership, management, teaching and learning are good. Teaching and learning are perceptively monitored. They are considerably enhanced by a very successful art week which takes planned diversity and achievement to higher levels, and sets new standards. In lessons, good planning ensures diversity of challenge and experience across painting, printing, collage, textile work and sculpture. Expectations are clear and demanding, links with previous learning are imaginatively planned and the teachers' good subject knowledge means that new skills are introduced systematically and in interesting, achievable ways. During the art week many visitors, including professional artists, introduce pupils to a wide variety of special techniques such as watercolour. Striking displays around the school celebrate the outstanding achievements of every year group and reflect the awe and wonder gained from a vibrant art and design curriculum. Pupils have learned much by working with practising artists. The influence of the work of famous artists is less evident, although an appropriate range of artists from different times, places and cultures is studied over time. There is scope to develop this work further across the school.
73. Pupils achieve well in **design and technology**, and standards are above the national expectation in Year 2. They are well above expectations in Year 6. Throughout the school, there is an emphasis on how to think as designers, and on how to measure, cut and join different materials accurately. As a result, pupils make products of which they can be justifiably proud. Design work is thorough and very well recorded in drawings and notes. Evaluations make honest use of criteria but fail to say how things could be improved. Similar qualities

distinguish the Year 6 work on slippers, and projects in earlier years. Strong, well-planned links with other subjects, such as geography, science and music, reinforce pupils' achievement and bring elements of design and technology into other areas of work to enhance learning. Artefacts and models are sturdily and accurately constructed and very well finished, often through the effective use of homework. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' knowledge of themselves and their world. Although only parts of lessons were seen, the quality of teachers' planning, resources, and the ample evidence of consistently high achievement clearly show that teaching and learning are at least good and the curriculum is very well planned within a well-led and well-managed subject.

74. Although no overall judgements are being made about **music**, pupils' attainment in the two lessons observed, and in the lunchtime recorder group, was at least above the national expectation. Their achievement is very good. Teaching and learning were excellent in one of the lessons. Music is very well managed and pupils are successfully encouraged to listen to and perform music from different times, places and cultures. Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A gamelan piece (Indonesian music) was played particularly sensitively by the recorder group. The gentle style of playing, with a taped accompaniment plus Indian bells and gong represented the gamelan style very effectively. In this group and in both lessons observed, the pupils demonstrated very good ability to hold their own parts against others. Pupils sing with good levels of enthusiasm in lessons and in assemblies, maintaining good pitch and articulation.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**

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

- Achievement is good and standards are above the national expectation in Year 6.
- Evaluations of pupils' performances are not used well enough to improve it in some lessons.
- There is a very good range of after school sports clubs and inter school sporting competitions.
- The good use of the excellent accommodation and very good resources has a positive impact on achievement.

### **Commentary**

75. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Standards are at the national expectation in Year 2 and above that in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, enabling them to be fully included in all activities. All aspects of the subject, including swimming, are adequately covered during the year and good links are made to other subjects such as science, numeracy, and personal, social and health education and citizenship.
76. Teaching is good overall, though it varies from satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 to good in Years 3 to 6. In most lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to prepare sequences of progressively demanding activities that engage pupils' interest and promote good levels of concentration and perseverance. Good emphasis is placed on warm up activities and the majority of pupils control their movements well. Clear explanations and demonstrations ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. However, although teachers ask pupils to demonstrate their work, they do not consistently encourage pupils to identify good techniques in those demonstrations and use them to improve their own work. This restricts progress in some lessons as pupils are not always clear about what they need to improve. Good relationships and class management promote good behaviour in most lessons and help maintain a safe environment. Most pupils enjoy their work and older pupils are proud to represent their school in sporting events and competitions.

77. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject through the monitoring of teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are good and the information is used effectively in planning. Specialist coaching and good links with the local high school (a sports college) and other sporting organisations contribute well to the pupils' achievement. Provision is very effectively enriched by a very good range of well-attended after school sports clubs for pupils of all ages and by participation in inter-school sporting competitions. The good provision for outdoor pursuits on residential visits further enhances pupils' physical skills and promotes personal and social development very well. The excellent accommodation and very good resources for indoor and outdoor physical education activities further enhance learning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHEC)**

Provision in this area is **very good** and permeates the work of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good relationships throughout the school give pupils confidence to share their ideas and opinions in a mutually supportive atmosphere.
- Topics covered prepare the pupils very well to take their place within the community.

### **Commentary**

78. The very good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education permeates the entire school. It contributes in very great measure to pupils' overall achievement and personal development, and largely accounts for their excellent spiritual, moral social and cultural development. It reflects the school's determination to strengthen its community by forming very good relationships at all levels. A very well-planned and well-taught programme of work includes sex and drugs education. It links very effectively with assembly themes, and promotes the continuous development of pupils' awareness of citizenship, healthy and safe lifestyles and personal growth and relationships. It is promoted very effectively through many activities such as circle time, the school council and assemblies. It connects with themes that run across subjects and, most particularly, with the 'Golden Rules' that are at the heart of the school. It also informs the planning of educational visits and the very effective arrangements for easing pupils' transition from one stage of their education to the next, including when they leave to move on to high school. Within the school's very caring and exceptionally inclusive culture, all pupils feel personally valued and they gain in confidence and self esteem. As a result, they become caring, mature and responsible young people who are very well prepared for life beyond school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	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	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<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	3
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).*