

INSPECTION REPORT

THE DISTRICT CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newton-le-Willows

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104792

Headteacher: Mr W I Bowling

Lead inspector: Mr D S Roberts

Dates of inspection: 15 – 17 June 2004

Inspection number: 258116

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: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 332

School address: Patterson Street
Newton-le-Willows
Merseyside
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Baker

Date of previous inspection: 23 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

District CE Primary is a larger than average sized school, which currently provides full-time education for 332 pupils. The number of pupils on roll has fallen significantly since the last inspection, when 399 pupils attended the school. This is due to the falling birth rate in the local area. The school currently makes provision for 11 pupils from Traveller families. There is a significant rate of transiency. During the most recent academic year, for example, 29 pupils joined and 32 pupils left at times other than the normal point of entry or transfer. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is above the national average. Just over one per cent of pupils are currently in public care. Nearly five per cent of pupils are from families belonging to ethnic minority groups, none of whom are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and with statements of specific needs is similar to that found nationally. Although the intake represents a wide range of ability, overall attainment levels on entry to Reception classes are below those found nationally. The school is currently involved in the Children's Fund and Networked Learning Community initiative. It has Beacon status and gained the School Achievement Award in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1743	D S Roberts	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology
19669	F Kennedy	Lay inspector	
14459	G Owen	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education
17767	S Power	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education English as an additional language
29504	S Herring	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **highly effective** school, which provides **very good value for money**. It takes very good care of its pupils and promotes successfully their academic and all-round development. Very effective teaching enables pupils to achieve very well, in relation to their capabilities, in the key areas of learning. The school is highly successful in ensuring that all pupils are included and involved in all aspects of the curriculum. It provides a welcoming and supportive community, where the Christian ethos is strongly emphasised, and is well regarded by its pupils, their parents and the local community.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By the end of Year 6, pupils acquire a very good grasp of key skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), and achieve high standards in science.
- The quality of teaching is usually very good, particularly in the key areas of learning.
- The school provides a very good curriculum within a rich and stimulating learning environment.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and their behaviour is of a high standard.
- The quality of leadership and management is of a high calibre.
- In physical education, some pupils are capable of achieving higher standards during games lessons.

The school has built effectively on the very good picture apparent in the last inspection, and made good progress in addressing the key issues identified for improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Having entered school with below average attainment levels, pupils **achieve very well** in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment. Children at the Foundation Stage, in Reception classes, make generally good progress and achieve appropriate learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical and creative development. Although many achieve the appropriate goals in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development, overall standards are below average when they enter Year 1. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are average for the pupils' age, and standards in mathematics are above average. This is a broadly similar picture to the average National Curriculum test results for the last three years. By Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics and particularly high in science. This is a similar picture to the average national test results for the last three years and better than the 2003 results. Fluctuations in performance are caused by the varying proportions of pupils with special educational needs in particular year groups, which affect the ability levels of different cohorts taking the national tests. In addition, the proportion of pupils joining the school after Year 2, affects the accuracy of the similar schools' grading. Throughout the school, pupils, at all levels of ability achieve very well in ICT, where standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are above the average for age. In other subjects, pupils'

achievement is generally good and often very good, particularly in religious education, art and design and design and technology, where standards for age are above average. Although overall standards in physical education are satisfactory, some pupils underachieve in games lessons. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve highly, and make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans.

Pupils show **very good** attitudes to learning. They are keen to work hard and involve themselves in the rich variety of learning opportunities on offer. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally promoted very successfully, standards of behaviour are high, and the pupils' attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **very good**. The school provides a high quality curriculum, and a very good programme of extra curricular activities. The pupils' personal, social and health education is promoted successfully, and the school is highly effective in ensuring that all pupils have equality of access and opportunity to all aspects of provision. Overall, the teaching is **very effective**. Good quality teaching in Reception Classes helps children to settle quickly and achieve well in most areas of learning. In other year groups, the teaching is highly effective in the key areas of learning, providing pupils with a good grasp of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, and enabling them to achieve high standards in science. Throughout the school, teaching assistants co-operate effectively with class teachers, and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Their work in supporting pupils with special educational needs contributes significantly towards high achievement by the pupils. Very good provision is made for children from Traveller families, which is reflected in their significant progress. The highly effective use of assessment to help pupils to improve is a very strong feature in the teaching, which contributes significantly towards the pupils' very good achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher demonstrates clear educational vision and a strong sense of purpose, and provides leadership of a high calibre. The deputy headteacher and those in key positions also provide very good leadership, and the school benefits greatly from the guidance and support of a highly effective governing body.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are of the opinion that the teaching is good, and that their children are expected to work hard and make good progress. Some report that their children have experienced a degree of bullying at some stage. The great majority feel comfortable in approaching the school, and are happy with the way the school deals with any problems that arise. Pupils find lessons interesting, feel that they are expected to work hard, and appreciate the help which their teachers and other adults give them. Some feel that the behaviour of a minority of children is not always as good as it should be.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Improve further the quality of teaching in physical education games lessons, to ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately and achieve the standards of which they are capable.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

During their time in the school, most pupils achieve **highly** in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment. The attainment levels of pupils on entry to Reception classes is below average. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, standards in the key areas of learning (literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology) are above average, and standards in science are high, in relation to pupils' age. The school's success in promoting high achievement was recognised by the School Achievement Award in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the two Reception classes generally achieve well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment.
- By Year 6, pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards for age are above average in information and communication technology (ICT), and pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities.
- Standards are above average in design and technology, art and design and religious education.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
- The school is working effectively to ensure that boys and girls work to their potential.
- In physical education, some pupils are capable of achieving higher standards in outdoor games lessons.

Commentary

- 1 Teachers and support staff in the two Reception classes co-operate very effectively and help children to achieve generally good standards in relation to their capabilities. Most children achieve the nationally recognised early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. A substantial proportion achieve appropriate standards in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development, although standards are below those found nationally by the time they enter Year 1.
- 2 Throughout the school, pupils achieve very good standards in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2, overall standards in English and mathematics are similar to the national average. This is broadly consistent with National Curriculum test results taken over the last three years.
- 3 By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average for the pupils' age. This is a better overall picture than that indicated by the most recent National Curriculum test results, but consistent with the average national test results for the last three years. The same average national test results showed the pupils' performance to be well above that of pupils in similar schools, in English and mathematics, and very high in science. Fluctuations in the performance of pupils between year groups is due to the varying ability levels of different cohorts. The year group which took the 2003 national tests, for example, included a high proportion of SEN pupils and a significant number who had joined the school after the normal point of entry.
- 4 Throughout the school, very effective teaching, good quality support by teaching assistants and very successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, are important factors in promoting high achievement by pupils in English, mathematics and science. Taken over four years, National Curriculum test results indicate a rate of

improvement which is similar to the national trend at the end of Years 2 and 6. Since the last inspection, the school has made significant progress in improving spelling and handwriting standards, throughout the school, and in raising standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2.

- 5 In ICT, pupils at all levels of attainment achieve very well in relation to their capabilities, and standards are above average by the time pupils reach the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils benefit greatly from a well-planned programme of work and access to very good resources. However, it is the high quality of the teaching they receive and the expertise of ICT support staff which are the most important factors in their high achievement.
- 6 In most other subjects, pupils generally achieve well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment and standards for age are at least satisfactory. Standards in art and design, design and technology, and religious education are above those expected for the pupils' age and some of the work produced is of a particularly high quality. Although overall standards in physical education are satisfactory, some pupils, particularly higher attainers, are capable of achieving higher standards in games lessons.
- 7 Throughout the school, teachers and support staff work very effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, in terms of gender, race and levels of attainment. This enables most pupils, including those who are particularly gifted, to achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Well planned support by teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils with special educational needs to achieve highly and make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The school is currently placing strong emphasis on improving the achievement of older girls, whose performance in recent national tests has been significantly below that of boys. Inspection evidence indicates that the school works very hard and effectively to promote the progress and achievement of boys and girls.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.3 (15.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.4 (13.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.2 (16.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.2 (28.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.2 (27.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.3 (32.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils demonstrate **very good** attitudes to learning. Behaviour and relationships throughout the school are very good. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour is very good.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Pupils benefit from the very good provision that is made for promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Punctuality is good.
- The school is working effectively to improve further the pupils' rates of attendance.

Commentary

- 8 The school has built successfully on the many positive features identified in the last inspection report. Pupils' attitudes to learning are now very good. They enjoy school and are enthusiastic about all school activities. Behaviour is now very good in lessons, in assembly, in the playground and in the dining room. The pupils' behaviour, when moving around the school between lessons, is exemplary. There have been five fixed period exclusions during the past year, involving three pupils.
- 9 At the Foundation Stage, in the Reception classes, particularly good attention is given to promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development. Teachers and support staff are highly successful in helping children to express their feelings, to share, to take turns and to develop an increasing sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others.
- 10 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral development. Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They appreciate the praise and rewards they are given for good behaviour, hard work and kind, helpful attitudes. Relationships throughout the school are very good. The importance of caring for one another is emphasised, in accordance with the Christian ethos of the school. Respect for others' needs and feelings is also given high priority. An outstanding feature of the school is the way in which the pupils show supportive attitudes to those pupils who have special educational needs. When pupils return to school, for example when re-integrating into their mainstream classes after a period elsewhere, their peers welcome them back in a very warm, friendly way. The very good work on display in one of the Year 4 classrooms exemplifies the way in which the pupils try hard to show pupils who are experiencing difficulties that they care about them and want to help in any way that they can.
- 11 During the inspection, many occasions occurred when the teaching engendered a spiritual response from the pupils. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson the pupils were filled with wonder when they listened to a heart beating and marvelled at how the human body works. In assembly, a sense of spirituality was evoked when one of the Key Stage 1 pupils talked about her new baby sister. The poems about Heaven, written by the Year 6 pupils, indicate that the class made a very spiritual response to their studies in religious education.
- 12 Pupils develop a very good awareness of their own and other cultures. Through religious education the pupils learn about faiths and cultures that are a part of their own multi cultural society. In art and design, the pupils study the work of famous artists. During a recent visit to The Lowry, the Year 2 pupils had the opportunity to work with an artist and to learn about the life and work of Lowry. History lessons provide the pupils with a good insight into ancient civilizations and the impact of these on present day life.
- 13 Provision for the pupils' personal and social development is very good. A good range of extra curricular activities, such as lunchtime and after-school clubs, inter-school sports and a well planned programme of educational visits strongly support the pupils' all-round development. An annual residential visit for pupils in Year 6 provides valuable opportunities for developing independence, self-confidence, good teamwork and a sense of adventure. The pupils are keen to take responsibility inside school. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, in particular, help to create

a strong sense of community by the way in which they carry out monitorial duties such as operating the overhead projector in assembly, helping to make toast for the pupils at break time, assisting with the supervision of younger pupils in the playground and helping in the dining room.

- 14 Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Attendance is improving steadily and is now satisfactory, although it remains below the national median. Illness, holidays and authorised absence granted to pupils from Traveller families account for almost all absence. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average and punctuality is good. The vast majority of the pupils arrive on time in the mornings and lessons start very promptly. The educational welfare service gives strong support to the school in following up poor attendance and persistent lateness. A specialist educational welfare officer has responsibility for working with Traveller families, if high levels of absence or lateness are giving cause for concern.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
292
1
1
5
2
9
5

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
5	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are generally of **very good quality**, and highly effective arrangements are in place for assessing pupils' progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching at the Foundation Stage helps children to settle quickly and develop confidence in expressing themselves.
- Throughout the school, teaching is very effective in promoting pupils' literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills.
- Science teaching is very successful in promoting high standards.
- Very good teaching results in above average standards in art and design and design and technology.
- Support staff work effectively with teachers to meet the particular needs of pupils.
- Very good assessment arrangements are in place.
- Good use is made of homework.
- Arrangement to set pupils according to ability for English and mathematics lessons are proving successful.
- Some aspects of physical education teaching are not fully effective.

Commentary

- 15 Good teaching at the Foundation Stage (Reception classes) helps children to settle quickly and make a very good start to their formal education. It promotes considerable progress in their personal, social and emotional development, helping them to develop confidence in working with other children and in expressing themselves.
- 16 At Key Stages 1 and 2 (Years 1 to 6), teaching is generally very effective in developing pupils' key skills of learning in English, mathematics and ICT. In all three subjects, teachers show very good levels of knowledge and understanding. They draw very effectively on the national strategies in English and mathematics and work hard to achieve a very good level of personal competence in ICT. This contributes significantly towards pupils' very good progress in acquiring the key skills of learning.
- 17 In science, teaching is very effective in promoting high standards, which are reflected in pupils' exceptionally good performance in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests. Teaching is consistently of high quality in design and technology, promoting high achievement and standards which are above average for the pupils' age. Generally good and sometimes very good teaching in art and design contributes towards good achievement by pupils and results in work which is often of high quality.
- 18 In most other subjects, the teaching is generally good and sometimes very good. Although the overall quality of teaching in physical education is satisfactory, there are some weaknesses that need attention. Some teachers are not entirely confident in organising outdoor physical education lessons, where some of the activities are not sufficiently challenging, particularly for higher attaining pupils. However, the commitment of teachers and support staff to providing a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities contributes significantly towards pupils' physical development.
- 19 In English and mathematics, and science in Year 6, the arrangement for setting pupils according to ability enables teachers and support staff to focus more precisely on the needs of particular groups of pupils. The arrangements help teachers to meet the needs of pupils in terms of gender as well as ability. The lessons observed indicated that teachers are working successfully to improve the standards achieved by older girls, who have performed significantly less well than the boys in recent national tests for English and mathematics.
- 20 In the key areas of learning, the very effective use of assessment information is a strong feature in the teaching. This information is used very effectively to set individual targets for improvements for pupils throughout the school. These targets, which are shared with pupils and their parents, give pupils a better understanding of their own learning and enable

teachers to measure the pupils' progress with greater accuracy. The effective use of homework contributes significantly to pupils' progress. Parents are informed of areas to be covered in various subjects during the term ahead, enabling them to play a part in their children's learning.

- 21 Throughout the school, teachers and support staff work together very effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The increasing emphasis placed on supporting particularly gifted and talented pupils is reflected in their good achievement. Children from Traveller families are supported very effectively and achieve well. Very good classroom management contributes greatly towards high standards of behaviour and the purposeful atmosphere which exists in the school. Teachers are generally very successful in making all pupils feel valued, taking account of their needs in terms of gender, race, prior attainment and background. This approach increases pupils' confidence and helps them to develop positive attitudes to learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	23 (49%)	17 (36%)	6 (13%)	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The school provides a very good curriculum. It provides a broad range of learning opportunities which meet the needs of all pupils. There are very good opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom and enrich pupils' experiences. Resources are generally very good, the accommodation is good, and teachers and support staff are well qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum at the Foundation Stage is very successful in providing for pupils' personal, social and emotional development.
- The curriculum is fully inclusive.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The pupils' personal and social development is promoted very effectively.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next the next stage of their education.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, is provided.
- Information technology is used very well to support learning throughout the curriculum.

Commentary

- 22 Throughout the school, the curriculum is generally planned and structured very effectively. The curriculum for English and mathematics is based securely on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Good use is made of the national guidance, which is often adapted in order to meet the needs of all pupils.
- 23 There are clear policies in place for all subjects, providing teachers with useful guidance, and ensuring that statutory requirements are met. The curriculum for children in Reception meets the requirements for those at the Foundation Stage and makes particularly good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development, helping children to settle quickly and gain confidence in working with others. Throughout the school, each subject is given an appropriate amount of time, and teachers and support staff ensure that pupils are involved and fully included in all aspects of the curriculum. Information technology is used very

effectively to support learning across the curriculum, and contributes significantly to the very good progress made by pupils, particularly in the key areas of learning.

- 24 The highly inclusive nature of curriculum organisation results in very good provision for all pupils, taking care to meet their particular requirements in terms of gender, race and prior attainment. The school is currently giving particularly close attention to provision made for older boys and girls, following analysis of national test results. Inspection evidence indicates that the school works equally successfully to meet the needs of boys and girls across the curriculum.
- 25 High quality provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Very good support by teachers and teaching assistants enables pupils to participate fully in all lessons. Clear and realistic targets in very good quality individual education plans help to guide pupils progress in all aspects of the curriculum.
- 26 Provision for personal, social and health education is good. These aspects are taught, in the main, through other subjects and during circle time. Strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' understanding of the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse, and promoting an understanding of sex education and relationships. The school is currently working towards the Healthy School Award, and pupils are encouraged to take a close interest in their own health.
- 27 Curricular provision is considerably enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which are greatly appreciated by pupils. Pupils are prepared very well for the next stage in their education and teachers work closely with staff in the receiving schools, in order to ensure a smooth transition at age eleven. Participation in inter-school matches and competitions contributes significantly to pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- 28 The accommodation is generally good, and teachers and support staff work hard to create a rich, stimulating learning environment in classrooms and corridors. Outdoor facilities are very good with easy access to the school field. Play areas are well equipped with fixed apparatus and benches and tables for pupils to sit. Resources for learning are generally very good except in physical education where there is scope for improving resourcing for outdoor games lessons.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a very high level of care for its pupils and gives them very good support, advice and guidance. The school is very inclusive. It works hard and successfully, in close co-operation with a very wide range of support agencies, to meet the specific needs of individual pupils and to ensure that all pupils are involved in all aspects of school life.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides its pupils with a safe and healthy working environment.
- The school is very inclusive.
- The school works in close co-operation with a very wide range of support agencies.
- Child protection procedures are very good.
- Pupils are provided with very good support, advice and guidance.
- All staff listen carefully to pupils' views, questions and concerns.

Commentary

- 29 The school provides a very high level of care for its pupils. Risk assessments of the buildings and grounds are carried out by the governors at regular intervals. All areas of the school are fully accessible to parents and pupils with disabilities. Pupils are carefully supervised

throughout the school day. Teaching staff, teaching assistants and mid-day supervisors know the pupils well and have a very consistent approach to behaviour management. All the staff have had training in child protection. The designated teacher and the appointed governor work together closely and ensure that staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the local education authority's guidelines. The school's very good child protection procedures are underpinned by a comprehensive policy statement. Very good support is received from the school nurse and the local education authority's Family Well Being Service and Inclusion Support Service in matters concerning child protection and the pupils' health and general welfare.

- 30 The school is very inclusive and works in close co-operation with a wide range of support agencies to cater for individual pupils' needs and to ensure that all pupils are fully included and involved in all aspects of school life. The Travellers' Support Service gives very good support to the pupils who come from Traveller families. The Family Well Being Service gives very good support to pupils and parents who, for a variety of reasons, are in need of additional advice or pastoral support. The pupils are supported during the school day and also meet after school, once a week, for fun activities, friendship and extra help in developing self-confidence and self-esteem.
- 31 The Behaviour and Inclusion Support Services provide very good support for the minority of pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In some cases this involves specialist help inside school and in others it involves education off site for a period, with eventual re-integration into mainstream classes. The school works very closely with the local education authority and with parents to avoid exclusions except as a last resort. In some cases, to avoid exclusion, pupils are transferred to other local primary schools, to give them a fresh start and a chance to modify their behaviour. In the same way, the school accepts pupils from other local schools where they are at risk of exclusion.
- 32 The great majority of the pupils are very well behaved and relationships throughout the school are very good. Teachers set aside a short period each day for 'pupil support time'. This is a time when class teachers talk to the pupils, answers their questions and listens to their worries or concerns, for example about relationships or bullying. Where necessary, a teacher is designated as a mentor, to try to resolve the problem before it escalates into what could become a more serious issue. This system works very well and incidents of bullying are few in number. The consultation exercise, prior to the inspection, revealed that a minority of parents do have concerns about bullying and other forms of negative behaviour. The inspection finds that the school's procedures for preventing and eliminating bullying and other forms of harassment are good and that the school deals promptly and effectively with concerns raised by the pupils and their parents.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established a very good partnership with parents and works in close co-operation with other local schools. There are strong links with the church and the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school keeps parents very well informed about the life and work of the school and about their children's standards and progress.
- Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning.
- Very good links with other local schools contributes very effectively to the quality of education provided.
- Strong links have been established with the church and the local community.

Commentary

- 33 The quality of the information provided for parents is very good. Through the prospectus, the governing body's annual report and weekly newsletters, the parents are kept fully informed with regard to the life and work of the school and its policies and procedures. The home-school agreement sets out very clearly the responsibilities of the school, the families and the pupils. Parents are given a copy of the behaviour policy statement and are involved at a very early stage if an individual's behaviour is giving cause for concern.
- 34 Formal parents' meetings are arranged at suitable intervals, giving parents the opportunity to discuss their children's standards and progress with class teachers. Pupils' annual written reports are very helpful and informative, and include details of individuals' personal development as well as their academic progress. They also explain what pupils need to do to improve the quality of their work. The school's 'open door' policy ensures that parents can approach the headteacher, the deputy head or any member of staff should they have any concerns about their children's work or general welfare.
- 35 Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning. A useful information pack is provided for parents before their children start school. This contains lots of helpful advice as to how to prepare their children for starting school. Parents are offered a home visit during the week before their children start in Reception. The parents run a weekly 'Parents and Toddlers' group, which also helps to prepare the children for the Foundation Stage of their education. Throughout the school, regular information is provided about the planned curriculum, which enables parents to support their children's learning. Through 'Share', a national programme designed to inform parents about their children's learning in school, numerous courses are arranged for parents, which encourage and equip them to support their children's education. Parental support for the home-school reading scheme and for homework in general is having a positive effect on standards and progress throughout the school.
- 36 The school has established very good links with other local schools. It is part of a Networked Learning Community initiative, involving seven St. Helen's primary schools, which focuses on achieving success through collaboration. In addition, the school belongs to a cluster of five primary schools that work in close co-operation with the local high school. The six schools work together closely to raise standards and to prepare the Year 5 and Year 6 pupils for the next stage of their education. Joint activities include inter-school competitions, science and humanities projects and coaching in various sports. The school also has links with a special school, within the local education authority, and makes reciprocal arrangements for pupils to attend the two schools on a part time basis, where this meets their specific special educational needs.
- 37 The school has good links with the church and the local community. The church is in a period of interregnum at present, but a lay reader, who is also the headteacher of another local primary school, comes into school regularly to lead assemblies. This contributes towards high quality assemblies which make a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development. Community police and fire officers come into school to talk to the pupils on aspects of personal safety. The school appreciates the good support that local businesses give to its fund raising events.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is **very good**. The school has built effectively on the very good picture apparent at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher provides leadership of a high calibre, and very good leadership is provided by the deputy headteacher and other staff in key positions. The highly effective governing body works very successfully with the headteacher to provide an equitable and inclusive school where every child matters.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has clear educational vision.
- The governing body successfully ensures that statutory requirements are met fully.
- The senior management team and subject co-ordinators contribute significantly towards the high quality of education.
- Highly effective procedures are in place for monitoring school performance.
- School improvement planning procedures are highly effective.
- Strong emphasis is placed on the professional development of staff.

Commentary

- 38 The clear educational vision of the headteacher, and the very purposeful leadership which he provides, are important factors in this school's success in providing high quality education for its pupils. He is supported very effectively by a talented and hard working staff and highly committed governing body. The school's success in gaining the School Achievement Award for the last three years reflects how pupils have benefited from the provision made for them.
- 39 Governors know the school well and show very good awareness of its strengths and priorities for improvement. The governing body is entirely successful in meeting all statutory requirements. It works very effectively with the headteacher to ensure that the school provides equality of opportunities for all pupils and that their needs are met fully, taking particular account of gender, race and ability. Governing body initiatives take full account of the principles of best value. A good illustration of this is provided by the steps taken to improve ICT provision. Governors considered various options before investing in initiatives which have resulted in two well equipped computer suites and highly skilled ICT support staff. This represents very good quality and value for money.
- 40 The headteacher, senior management and co-ordinators for subjects and aspects of learning, co-operate very effectively to ensure that pupils are provided with a rich and appropriately challenging curriculum. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning and achievement are monitored regularly. Criteria for lesson observations are shared with teachers in advance, and feedback is provided. The information from lesson observations contributes towards agreed targets for improvements as part of performance management. Very good procedures are in place for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress, which help to ensure that pupils at different levels of attainment are challenged and extended appropriately as they move through the school.
- 41 Highly effective school improvement planning procedures are in place, which enable the school to work systematically towards identified targets. The headteacher and governing body, together with the highly efficient school administration, provide very effective financial management of all resources. This ensures that money is used very effectively to address educational priorities. Strong emphasis is placed on improving the skills of all staff. They benefit from opportunities to attend training designed to enhance their skills in various areas of the curriculum. Some of them also benefit from opportunities to share their expertise with colleagues in other schools, as part of the Beacon initiative. The Networked Learning Community initiative, involving a group of local schools, is proving particularly valuable in extending leadership and management skills and providing an insight into different learning contexts. This enables staff to share experiences and improve their skills.
- 42 The richness of the learning environment reflects the school's commitment to make high quality provision for its pupils. All areas of the school are well maintained by an efficient caretaker and cleaning staff. The quality of the learning environment is considerably enhanced by displays of pupils' work, which are of a high standard and used effectively to celebrate pupils' achievement, support their learning and encourage further enquiry.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	887,832
Total expenditure	892,974
Expenditure per pupil	2,439

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	72,909
Balance carried forward to the next	65,463

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children at the Foundation Stage is **good**. The school has maintained the good provision found at the time of the last inspection, and been successful in achieving the prestigious Kite Mark Award. On entry to Reception classes, children's attainments levels are below average. Very good induction procedures, including home visits, help children to settle quickly into school and generally achieve well during their time at the Foundation Stage.

The accommodation is sufficiently spacious, and has direct access to an interesting outdoor area. Resources are of very good quality and are used effectively in a varied range of practical activities, which meet the needs of young children. The overall quality of teaching is good, and the arrangements for assessing children's progress are very good. Teachers and teaching assistants co-operate very effectively to support children's learning and achievement. Yearly and termly curricular plans are thorough, well organised and indicate effective links between the different areas of learning. The strong emphasis placed on allowing children to select their own activities, from the wide range of experiences on offer, helps them to develop increasing independence and sense of responsibility. The children's quality of learning during such activities is improved significantly through valuable interaction with teachers, support staff and other adults.

The Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Very good links with parents have been fostered to enrich children's learning. The weekly newsletters are of a high quality and give very good information about ways in which parents can help their children's learning. Children with special educational needs are supported very well. Their needs are clearly identified, and teachers, support staff and parents co-operate effectively to provide a high level of support. All children are included and involved effectively in all aspects of provision. The effective way in which the school co-operates with a local special educational needs school, to provide for some of its children, is a very good feature in the provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good.
- Independence is fostered very well.
- There is a high expectation for children to follow class rules and routines.

Commentary

43 Children enter Reception classes with social skills that are generally below average, and the skills of a significant number are well below what is usual for their age. Very good teaching helps all children to achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment, and most children achieve the recommended early learning goals in these aspects of the curriculum. The very good relationships between all adults is a strong feature, which sets a good example of co-operation for the children. There is a common approach of high expectations to follow class rules that are clearly displayed, illustrated and regularly referred to. These are framed in language that the children can understand, for example, "Have kind hands, feet and mouths!" Good behaviour is reinforced well with particular comments from the teacher, such as, "I really liked the way you held your pencil sensibly." Children respond very well to the requirement to put their hands up before answering, to say "please" and "thank you", and to tidy up after finishing their tasks. There are good opportunities for children to work together. In one activity, for example, children were asked to talk to a partner in order

to think of words with particular sounds. Co-operation is also fostered well in Circle Time as children "pass a smile" around the circle. Independence is promoted very well, by allowing children to choose their activities, and considerable thought has been given to the organisation of resources in order to encourage children to select the items they require for specific activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is generally **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening skills are developed very well.
- Teachers and support staff provide particularly good support for children experiencing difficulties.
- An interest in books is developed very effectively.
- Arrangements for assessing children's progress are very thorough.
- There is scope for making better use of assessment information to plan writing activities, particularly towards the end of the Reception year.

Commentary

- 44 The teaching, by class teachers and support staff, has many good features and is never less than satisfactory. Speaking and listening skills are promoted very effectively, and children achieve well in developing early reading and writing skills. An increasing proportion achieve appropriately for their age in this area of learning. Many achieve the recommended learning goals by the time they enter Year 1, although overall standards are just below average.
- 45 Speaking and listening skills are developed very well in all areas of learning, through whole class, focused group work, and independent learning activities. A good feature is the way in which teaching assistants provide additional explanations and encouragement to children who are having difficulty in concentrating in a large group, to help them to understand and join in the various activities. This enables children to achieve very well in this aspect of learning. An interest in books is developed very effectively through regular telling and reading of stories by teachers, and through the availability of a good range of high quality books to look at in school and to take home. Good examples were seen of opportunities being taken effectively to teach letter sounds to children. This was apparent in one activity, for example, when children were each given an object and asked to hold them up according to their initial sound.
- 46 Good incidental opportunities are created for children to practise writing in various ways, for example, practising patterns in sand, working at the writing table, and signing in their name at the start of each day. In addition, children copy the titles when designing a cover for their favourite books, such as writing labels for the Hungry Caterpillar display and copying the type of weather for the day, shown on the outdoor chart. The writing of some higher attaining children in making *zig zag* books includes recognisable spelling of words and increasing use of capital letters and full stops. Very good arrangements are in place for assessing children's progress, but better use could be made of assessment information to plan writing activities, particularly as children approach the end of their time in Reception. For example, more opportunities could be created for children, particularly higher attainers, to apply their increasing skills by writing at greater length. The school is at an early stage in implementing the national recommendation for the introduction of regular daily sessions to develop literacy skills, and accelerate learning, as children move towards the end of the Foundation Stage and prepare to enter Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Counting skills are developed effectively.
- There is a good variety of activities to promote children's understanding of shape and measurement.
- Arrangements for assessing children's progress are very effective.
- There is scope for a more systematic approach to developing calculation skills, as children move closer to Year 1.

Commentary

- 47 The teaching has a number of good features and is never less than satisfactory. Many children achieve the recommended early learning goals in this area of learning, although overall standards remain below those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Children achieve well in most aspects, although some are capable of making greater progress in developing calculation skills. Counting skills are promoted well through practical activities such as reciting and acting out number rhymes and counting children in a line. The encouragement given for children to use their fingers to reinforce understanding is a good feature, which helps their learning. The emphasis placed on counting regularly in different activities enables children to achieve well in this aspect of learning.
- 48 There is a wide and varied range of activities to develop children's understanding of shape and measures, such as looking at the shapes of boxes and wheels when designing and making their own vehicles. A good feature is the way the activities of the day are illustrated and discussed, giving children an increasing understanding of sequence as they place the various activities in order. Although most children make satisfactory progress in developing simple calculations skills, this aspect of learning is not promoted as successfully as other aspects of their mathematical development. The school has not yet completed the recommended transition to daily numeracy sessions by the end of the Reception year in preparation for Year 1. Consequently, the approach to developing children's calculation skills is not as systematic as it might be.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for promoting knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a varied range of interesting activities both indoors and outside the classroom.
- Good use is made of educational visits to enhance learning.
- Children benefit from first hand experiences.
- Very good opportunities are provided for children to gain confidence in using ICT.

Commentary

- 49 Teaching is good, and children achieve well in this wide area of learning. Most children attain the recommended early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Activities are imaginative and well planned so children become interested and involved, and learn well. For example, children worked outside the classroom, with an adult, to make and then test the comparative strengths of houses made from different materials including cork and straws. The children learn well from first hand experiences, such as identifying different sounds on their walk around school. Good questioning by teachers and support staff, and well

conducted group and class discussions, help children to build effectively on what they already know. A good example of this was provided when the teacher listed children's ideas to create a "mind map" of their contributions when starting a topic on transport. Good use is made of the immediate area surrounding the school and visits further afield, such as the airport, to enrich learning. Another strong feature is the provision of well selected opportunities for children to develop confidence in using ICT, which helps them to become familiar with modern technology and to develop good skills in using computer facilities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for promoting physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have the opportunity to use a good range of tools to develop manipulative skills.
- Good use is made of the outdoor area and the hall for physical activities.

Commentary

50 Teaching is good in this area of learning, enabling children to achieve well. Most attain the nationally recommended early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children have extensive opportunities to use a wide range of good quality tools and other resources, which help them to become skilled at manipulating quite small objects. This was seen when one boy used split pins in card, independently, to make an attractive belt. There is good access to the outdoor area where children develop good control and co-ordination by using the large climbing frame and a good range of wheeled toys. Children also show a good awareness of space in movement during physical development work in the large hall. During these lessons, teachers demonstrate skills carefully and point out good features of children's movements to help them improve.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

51 There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement in this area of learning, but work on display indicates that most children achieve well and reach the appropriate early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children use a good range of techniques in creative work, for example painting teddies and making collages of their favourite pets. They enjoy singing a good range of rhymes. They listen to music in many activities and become aware of their own and other cultures. An example of this was the enjoyment they derived from taking part in the dragon dance for the Chinese New Year. The rich variety of stimuli and activities in the imaginative play areas contribute significantly to the development of children's language skills and their increasing creativity.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in all aspects of English and, by Year 6, standards are above those found nationally.
- High quality teaching is the most important factor in promoting high standards of achievement.
- Very good planning and highly effective assessment procedures ensure that pupils are challenged appropriately in all aspects of the subject.
- ICT is used very effectively to enhance and extend pupils' learning.
- Very good subject leadership and management contribute significantly towards high quality provision in the subject.
- The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified by the last inspection.

Commentary

- 52 Pupils at Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) achieve very well in speaking and listening, reading and writing and, by the end of Year 2, overall standards in English are similar to the national average. This judgement is consistent with average National Curriculum test results for the last three years, which also show the pupils' performance to be well above average compared with those in similar schools. They benefit from a very well planned programme of work and very effective teaching, which enables pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, to achieve highly in relation to their capabilities. The successful manner in which pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed is a strong feature in the provision. Pupils' phonic skills are developed very effectively, enabling them to identify and use, with increasing accuracy, the sounds which make up words. This contributes considerably towards pupils' very good progress in reading and writing.
- 53 Pupils at Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) achieve highly in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment and, by the end of Year 6, standards for age are above those found nationally. This is a much better picture than that indicated by the most recent National Curriculum tests, but similar to the results for 2002. The fluctuation in performance is due to varying ability levels and proportions of pupils with special educational needs in different year groups.
- 54 By the end of Year 6, pupils demonstrate well developed skills in speaking and listening. They show a capacity to vary expression and vocabulary to engage the listener, and to use their skills confidently to express views and ask questions. They are very competent readers. They read accurately and fluently with good expression, and derive great enjoyment from their reading. They talk confidently about their preferences, in terms of authors and types of books, and explain enthusiastically why they like particular characters in the various stories which they have read. Improving pupils' writing skills, particularly spelling and handwriting, is a continuing school improvement priority, and this is clearly having a positive effect on the quality of pupils' work. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to write at length and for different purposes. They demonstrate increasing skills in adapting their writing to suit different requirements and audience. Some of the extended writing and poems produced by pupils in Year 6 are of a very high quality, reflecting the expertise, enthusiasm and inspirational qualities of the teaching.
- 55 Throughout the school, very effective teaching, which makes good use of the guidance provided by the National Literacy Strategy, is the most important factor in the good progress made in the subject since the last inspection. By the age of 11, most pupils have acquired a good handwriting style, their spelling is generally accurate, and punctuation is used

appropriately and effectively. A significant proportion of pupils work at levels which are clearly above those expected for their age. Their writing is particularly lively and imaginative, regularly making use of an adventurous vocabulary.

- 56 The highly effective use of ICT to support learning in English is a very strong feature in the teaching. The availability of two computer suites and very good ICT resourcing, facilitates effective lesson organisation and enables teachers to select relevant programs, which enhance and extend pupils' learning. During the inspection, for example, very good use was made of ICT programs to develop pupils' knowledge of spelling rules and extend their skills in writing complex sentences correctly.
- 57 Throughout the school, class teachers and support staff co-operate successfully to meet the particular needs of individuals and groups of pupils, taking account of race, gender and ability. They are highly successful in ensuring that all pupils are included and involved appropriately in all aspects of the subject. Very good provision is made for those with special educational needs, who make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The success of the emphasis placed on helping gifted or talented pupils to make progress is reflected in their increasingly good achievement. Teachers and support staff give close attention to assessing and monitoring pupils' performance in terms of gender, where recent national test results indicated that older boys out-perform the girls in English. The arrangements to set pupils according to ability for English lessons helps teachers to meet the needs of pupils more effectively in terms of gender and ability. Teachers are also careful to involve boys and girls appropriately during the discussions which form part of the introductory sessions for literacy lessons.
- 58 Very good leadership and management by the subject co-ordinator contributes significantly towards the high quality provision made in English. Very good curricular planning and highly effective assessment procedures ensure that pupils, at all levels of attainment, are challenged appropriately. The setting of individual targets for improvements in various aspects of English, from Year 1 to Year 6, gives pupils a good understanding of their own learning. The targets also help parents to contribute towards their children's learning at home.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 59 Strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy skills during work in other subjects, such as geography, history and religious education. Regular, well planned use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum, which often involves searching for information and producing texts about topics being studied, contributes significantly towards the development of pupils' reading and writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

The school makes **very good** provision for mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well, and standards are above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and Traveller children make very good progress.
- High quality teaching is a major factor in pupils' high achievement.
- The approach to assessment is highly structured.
- The pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning in mathematics.
- The plenary session at the end of lessons is not always used as well as it might be to extend learning.

Commentary

- 60 Pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above those found nationally. This is broadly consistent with National Curriculum test results, and represents significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards at age seven were judged to be below average. Older pupils achieve particularly well in relation to capability. The arrangements for setting pupils according to their prior attainment are having a positive effect on achievement throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, benefiting from the careful support which they receive. Inspection evidence indicates that boys and girls make similar progress. Pupils from minority backgrounds and Traveller children also achieve good standards in relation to their capabilities.
- 61 By the end of Year 2, most pupils have developed a good understanding of place value, and generally recall addition and subtraction facts accurately. They work confidently with numbers to three decimal places and explain clearly the strategies they are using. As pupils progress through the school, they handle more challenging problems and they show competence in all aspects of the curriculum. For example, in one very good Year 5 lesson, the pupils confidently classified shapes according to their properties, and pupils in Year 6 applied their mathematical knowledge to calculate currency exchange rates. Data handling work is regularly included in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, temperatures and rainfall statistics are collected and graphed in geography and the boiling points of various elements are measured and recorded in science.
- 62 The quality of teaching is very good, and lessons are carefully planned and evaluated. Pupils' understanding is monitored carefully and consistently, so that activities build on what pupils already know and can do. Objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons, giving them a good understanding of their own learning, and strong emphasis is placed on using correct mathematical language. A high proportion of lesson time is spent on direct teaching with ample opportunities for pupils to share and explain their strategies. Very good questioning techniques, which challenge pupils' thinking, have a positive impact on learning and achievement. Lessons are generally organised very effectively but, in a minority, the plenary session at the end of the lesson is not always used as effectively as it might be to consolidate and extend learning. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very positive. They listen attentively and engage with the activities quickly and enthusiastically.
- 63 The information generated by highly effective assessment procedures is used very well to track pupils' progress. The marking of pupils' work is consistent and supportive, but advice on what pupils need to do next in order to progress is less consistent. The subject is led and managed very effectively, and resources to support all areas of mathematics are very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 64 Pupils extend their mathematical skills significantly through regular use in other subjects. In science, for example, they use different types of measurements, and in geography they use different scales to calculate distances and locations. Very good use is made of ICT, particularly in handling data and presenting findings from investigations in the most appropriate manner.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A high proportion of pupils achieve standards that are above average in the national tests at the end of Year 6.
- By the age of 11, pupils have achieved very well in extending their scientific enquiry skills.
- Significant improvement has been made in standards and subject quality since the last inspection.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is of particularly high quality.
- Leadership and management are excellent.
- The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils in practical lessons is a significant factor in their very good achievement.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement in the area of physical processes is not as good as in other aspects of the subject.

Commentary

- 65 Pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. By the time pupils are seven, standards are above those found nationally and, by 11, pupils' attainment is well above the national average, with a high proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level. This positive picture is consistent with the results of the 2003 test results for pupils in Year 6, which showed performance to be well above that found nationally, with 73 per cent achieving the higher level 5. Throughout the school, pupils achieve good standards in relation to their capabilities and achievement accelerates significantly in Years 5 and 6 due to the very good provision for pupils to develop their scientific skills and understanding.
- 66 Most of the teaching is at least good, and it is often of high quality in Years 5 and 6. The very good teaching is characterised by very high expectations of what pupils can achieve, lively lessons that build carefully on previous learning and teaching styles that are highly successful in motivating pupils. Pupils are kept on their toes by the very good pace of lessons and engagement in active learning tasks. The marking of pupils' work is a particularly strong feature of the very good teaching and gives pupils high quality information about how well they are doing. Throughout the school, the good behaviour and high motivation levels shown by both boys and girls are significant factors in their very good achievement. Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs is a feature of all science lessons. Teachers know their pupils very well and plan carefully to enable them to achieve to their full capabilities in contexts that suit their learning needs.
- 67 Since the last inspection, considerable improvements have been achieved in the standards throughout the school. Expectations are higher and scientific enquiry is an integral part of most lessons. This improvement is due largely to the very high quality leadership and management in the subject. The co-ordinator is constantly looking for ways to improve provision and has been very successful in implementing a strategy for enhancing pupils' performance. Assessment information is used very effectively to identify areas for further improvement. For example, the under achievement of some younger pupils in the area of physical processes has been identified accurately as an area for improvement and action is currently being taken to remedy the situation.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities.
- Pupils benefit from very good teaching and a very well planned programme of work.
- Since the last inspection, the school has made considerable progress in improving resources.
- Provision for pupils is enhanced considerably by the expertise of the support technician.
- The subject is led and managed very effectively.
- The regular and systematic use of ICT to support and enhance learning in other subjects is a strong feature throughout the curriculum.

Commentary

- 68 Throughout the school, pupils achieve highly in relation to their capabilities and prior attainment. By Years 2 and 6, standards are above those expected for the pupils' age. This represents significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were appropriate for the pupils' age. The curriculum for ICT provides pupils with a rich variety of learning opportunities. They benefit from well-planned and appropriately challenging activities in all aspects of the subject.
- 69 High quality teaching promotes very good progress by pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. The expertise and hard work of the support technician is particularly beneficial. In addition to co-operating with class teachers to provide a good level of support for pupils, his ability to address problems quickly means that time is not lost unnecessarily when technical difficulties arise.
- 70 The commitment and dedication of teachers in developing their own expertise contributes to their very good knowledge and understanding of ICT, which is an important factor in the high quality of teaching provided for the pupils. Very well planned and organised lessons challenge and extend pupils, at all levels of attainment, capturing their interest and attention and stimulating a strong desire to learn.
- 71 By Year 6, the pupils' ability to use ICT, to present their work in ways which meets the requirements of particular purposes and audiences, is a strong feature. They adjust the style, shape and colour of text confidently, shift text, using cut and paste techniques, and use illustrations and sound to enhance their presentations. They make good use of spreadsheets as part of their work in mathematics, using formulae appropriately to change variables. Pupils extend their understanding of control technology, entering a set of information accurately to programme a screen image to create some quite complex geometrical shapes. Older pupils build effectively on the same principles to control external devices, such as traffic lights, connected to the computer. The pupils' confidence and competence in using the internet means that information to support learning in various subjects is accessed quickly, so that the pace of lessons is rarely interrupted.
- 72 Teachers and support staff work together very effectively to ensure that all aspects of ICT are accessible to all pupils, and good care is taken to check that boys and girls enjoy the same opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very carefully and make good progress. Opportunities are also created during formal and extra curricular activities to ensure that higher attainers, and those that are particularly gifted, are set tasks which challenge and extend them appropriately.
- 73 The hard work and very effective leadership and management provided by the subject co-ordinator is an important factor in the significant improvement in provision achieved since the last inspection. Teachers are provided with clear guidance, and benefit from regular training

in new skills. The computer suites and very good learning resources, together with access to an increasingly interesting and informative school web-site, all help to capture pupils' interest, challenge their thinking and extend their learning in the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 74 The very effective use of ICT to support pupils' learning in work across the curriculum is a strong feature in the school. Appropriate opportunities for ICT to be used to enhance learning are carefully identified as an integral part of subject planning across the curriculum. The wide range of ICT resources available to teachers enables them to select suitably challenging programs which are appropriately related to the main objectives of lessons in different subjects. Care is taken to ensure that pupils are capable and confident in using new software and ICT equipment. This was evident when pupils in Year 5 practised using and interpreting data, generated by sensors measuring changing temperature, and producing a line graph on screen.

HUMANITIES

Geography

- 75 It was only possible to see one geography lesson and so it is not possible to make a reliable judgement about the overall quality of provision. However, evidence from the lesson seen and sampling of pupils' work indicates that standards in geography are generally in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievement in relation to their capabilities is satisfactory throughout the school, and pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the sensitive support they are given. This is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection. In the only lesson observed, teaching was good and gave suitable emphasis to geographical vocabulary and skills in the context of a river study.
- 76 The work in pupils' books indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory throughout the school. The programme of work generally meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, but there are some shortcomings in the way some of the requirements are interpreted in lesson planning. Geographical themes, such as Rivers and Weather, are taught well and give pupils good opportunities to develop and apply their geographical skills and knowledge. However, the choice of contrasting localities does not give pupils sufficient opportunity to study at the required range of scales or to find answers to key geographical questions, and often becomes too generalised. Leadership and management are generally effective. The coordinator has a good understanding of the development priorities for the subject but has not yet had the opportunity to refine the subject to meet more fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.

History

- 77 Insufficient lessons were observed to make a firm judgement about provision. Evidence from the limited number of lessons observed, samples of pupils' work and lesson planning, indicates that pupils throughout the school achieve well, and that standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are appropriate for the pupils' age. National Curriculum requirements are generally met effectively, and pupils do particularly well in increasing their historical knowledge and understanding. The development of study skills, although sometimes very effective, is not a consistent feature. In a very good lesson observed in Year 1, for example, the focus of the learning was based firmly on the development of skills, and pupils were able to achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. They learned very effectively how to use primary sources of historical evidence by handling and examining artefacts that illustrated what life was like for people one hundred years ago, and were highly motivated to ask questions and make comparisons between past and present. The scrutiny of work produced previously indicates that in other year groups insufficient emphasis is placed on developing the skills necessary to study and interpret events from the recent and more distant past.

- 78 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject and has not yet had the opportunity to make an impact on standards and quality. However, she is well qualified to lead the subject and already has a good overview of the areas in need of development. Work completed in history makes a constructive contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills, and the increasingly thoughtful use of ICT to enhance learning is a strong feature in the provision.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected for age by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- Religious education makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

- 79 Pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities and prior attainment. By the end of Year 2, standards are similar to those expected for pupils' age, and by the age of eleven pupils are achieving standards that are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Throughout the school, pupils make significant progress in learning about the major world faiths as well as growing spiritually and morally through their studies.
- 80 Teaching is good overall. Lessons are carefully planned to stimulate and motivate the pupils and often use imaginative and innovative approaches that are very effective in promoting interest and enthusiasm. For example, pupils in Year 2 made great strides in learning about Judaism through role play in a classroom 'Synagogue'. Information and communication technology is used very well to support learning. In one lesson, for example, pupils re-created places of worship on screen as part of their studies of comparative religions.
- 81 Religious education makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and plays a central role in reinforcing the Christian ethos of the school. Very good links with the church make a significant contribution to learning and give relevance to the study of Christianity. The study of other major world faiths promotes interest, understanding and tolerance. In a lesson observed in Year 6, for example, pupils were able to recognise cultural parallels between Hindu and Christian wedding and naming ceremonies, and during a Year 4 lesson, pupils demonstrated good understanding of Islamic beliefs and practice.
- 82 The subject is very well led and managed. The coordinator has been instrumental in setting up a forum for teachers from other schools to exchange information about good practice in religious education teaching, and the school reaps the benefits in being at the centre of this exchange. The school has been successful in maintaining the good provision found at the time of the last inspection, and meets fully the requirements for religious education and collective worship.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skills are developed systematically and often taught very well.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
- The curriculum is well planned and includes a good range of experiences.

Commentary

- 83 Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This reflects good improvement since the last inspection in the standards achieved by the end of Year 2. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities because good account is taken of their different needs when lessons are planned.
- 84 Teaching is good throughout the school. The systematic teaching of skills is a particularly strong feature. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher demonstrated how to create an impression of movement through rotating figures. This resulted in very good quality work by the pupils. Good reference is made to the work of famous artists to inspire pupils. This was seen in Year 2, for example, when time spent appreciating the work of Monet led to good use of colour in paintings and collages, based on the famous paintings of Monet's garden. Learning is enriched by visits to galleries such as The Lowry Centre. The study of the work of famous artists and also art from other cultures, such as Indian patterns and designs, make a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work at the end of a lesson and this helps to improve the quality of learning.
- 85 The curriculum is carefully planned to include a wide range of learning experiences, and there are good links with other subjects to enhance learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 created very effective weaving, influenced by the study of water in science, and pupils in Year 3 used ICT effectively to produce good pictures in the style of Klint. The subject is successfully led and managed. The co-ordinator uses her specialist knowledge effectively to plan a good range of work and to help and support other colleagues where needed.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good throughout the school.
- Very effective evaluation of their work by the pupils leads to good progress in their learning.
- Resources are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

- 86 Standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6 in all aspects of the subject. Since the last inspection a good improvement has been achieved in the use of ICT to support learning. Very good lesson plans take careful account of the needs of different groups of pupils, enabling all, including those with special educational needs, to achieve very well.

- 87 Teaching is consistently very good, enabling pupils to develop skills quickly and systematically. Resources are used very well in lessons and pupils learn to compare the relative merits and effectiveness of different materials, tools and components. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson, for example, when pupils used a good range of axles and wheels to make their vehicles, and concluded that the wooden wheels were far stronger and more effective than the cardboard ones they had used in a previous lesson. Skills such as stitching are developed systematically, and very good opportunities are created for pupils to evaluate their products, enabling them to learn well from their own experiences. In addition, teachers annotate pupils' designs very well and make useful comments for pupils to consider. Good links are maintained with other subjects. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils used their scientific skills very well when designing an artefact that lit up when the right connections were made. Opportunities are taken very effectively for developing pupils' writing skills, for example when labelling designs and evaluating their work.
- 88 Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The very knowledgeable co-ordinator provides valuable support and advice for all teachers and staff. These are important factors in achieving and maintaining good standards throughout the school.

Music

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject planning is very effective in meeting the needs of different pupils.
- Leadership is good.
- Resources are good.
- Opportunities for pupils to compose music are limited.

Commentary

- 89 Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their capabilities, and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are appropriate for the pupils' ages. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and are now good. This results in more opportunities for pupils to play instruments and to listen to, and appreciate, a good range of music. However, opportunities for pupils to compose music are limited, and is an issue identified by the school as a priority for improvement. Teaching is a least satisfactory and often good. A particularly good feature in the teaching, is the way in which teachers' planning takes account of the needs of different groups, so that all pupils are challenged appropriately.
- 90 Pupils behave responsibly and work well in groups. This was evident, for example, in a good Year 2 lesson, when pupils co-operated successfully to experiment with different instruments to reproduce the sound of rain. Teachers explain and introduce new learning effectively, but at times the introduction to lessons takes too long, so that insufficient time is allowed for pupils to engage in activities. Teaching is enhanced significantly by the expertise of visiting instrumental teachers and by after school activities such as the choir. The subject is led and managed effectively by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. The comparative weakness in opportunities for composing music is being resolved through the scheme of work, with the co-ordinator taking an active part in planning lessons across the school. The issue related to the lack of musical instruments from other cultures, identified in the last inspection, has been fully resolved, and the subject now makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Physical education

Overall provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have access to a wide range of activities.
- The provision made for pupils' to participate in extra-curricular sporting activities is very good.
- In some games lessons, pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.
- Resources for some aspects of games are insufficient.

Commentary

91 Pupils generally achieve well and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are appropriate for the pupils' ages. All pupils are encouraged and supported well, taking note of their particular needs in terms of gender, race and ability. Very good use is made of external expertise, particularly in rugby and swimming. In all lessons observed, pupils wore appropriate kit and were aware of safety requirements. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory and sometimes good or better. The best lesson observed contained vigorous activity, and the teacher provided good demonstrations and coaching. Pupils were encouraged to reflect on their own performance and to discuss how it might be improved. In some lessons, however, some of the pupils, particularly higher attainers, were not always challenged sufficiently by the learning activities and as a result did not achieve the standards of which they were capable. The co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for the subject, but has a clear long term view of what needs to be done in order to improve standards. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is offered, which contributes significantly towards pupils' good overall achievement. Resources for games lessons, are insufficient, and the arrangement to share equipment with other local schools are not entirely effective.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

92 Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe lessons in this area of the school's work and it is, therefore, not possible to make a judgement about overall provision. Careful scrutiny of curricular planning and examination of the pupils' work in books and on display, as well as discussion with pupils and staff, indicate that the school places strong emphasis on these aspects of the curriculum. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught as a discrete subject and is supported through work in other subjects, such as science and humanities. Close attention is given to developing the pupils' understanding of the dangers of drug misuse and providing sex education. Circle time takes place in all classes and is an important part of the programme of study for PSHE. It is planned carefully and provides valuable opportunities for the pupils to talk openly and honestly about their thoughts and feelings on topics such as friendships, racism, resolving conflict and making choices.

93 The pupils' personal and social development is promoted effectively through assemblies, extra curricular activities and competitive sport. Fundraising for numerous charities makes an important contribution towards the pupils' development as world citizens and upholds Christian principles of caring and sharing. Pupils from Year 2 upwards are represented on the School Council, which adds significantly to the pupils' maturity and sense of responsibility. It provides them with a valuable insight into how democracy operates and gives them the opportunity to contribute to school improvement.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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