

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MOORFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Moorfield Road, Widnes

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111188

Headteacher: Mrs J Caunce

Lead inspector: Miss F Robinson

Dates of inspection: 15 - 18 March 2004

Inspection number: 260774

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	288
School address:	School Way Moorfield Road Widnes Cheshire
Postcode:	WA8 3HJ
Telephone number:	0151 424 3108
Fax number:	0151 495 3379
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Curzon
Date of previous inspection:	19 October 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Moorfield Primary School is a big community primary school located in Widnes. It has 288 pupils on roll (147 boys and 141 girls) aged from four to 11. There are 37 children in the reception classes. Pupils come from a wide range of social, economic and academic backgrounds; most are White British and few are at an early stage of English acquisition. A small number of traveller children have attended the school. The level of knowledge and understanding of children when they join the school are about average. The proportion of pupils with identified special educational needs is broadly average. Most of these pupils have mild learning difficulties. One has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The school won the Schools Achievement Award in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22182	Fiona Robinson	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Music Special educational needs English as an additional language
15522	Bernard Morgan	Lay inspector	
22846	Stephen Nyakatawa	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education Religious education
33088	Kate Russell	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school with excellent features that provides a very good standard of education. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by 11. The headteacher provides excellent supportive leadership that motivates everyone to give of their best and this has enabled the school to make improvements at a good pace and helps pupils to achieve at least good standards. The commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to provide for the very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a key to its success. A shared vision and high expectations are providing a firm steer to the school's work and very good teaching ensures that all pupils succeed. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by the age of 11.
- Standards are well above average in art and design and physical education by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher is providing excellent educational direction to the work of the school.
- The children get a very good start to their education.
- The school provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- The school has an excellent, very welcoming and caring ethos.
- There is very good enrichment of the curriculum through sporting, musical and creative experiences.
- There are very good links with parents and very good involvement of them in their children's education.
- Behaviour and attitudes are very good and relationships are excellent.
- There is a shortage of space for small group work and for information and communication technology (ICT).

The school has made very good improvements since the previous inspection. Key issues have been tackled very well. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved significantly due to the school's effective strategies and some very good teaching. The school development plan is a very effective tool for guiding advancement. The strategies to raise standards in all areas have resulted from rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and key staff. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has also resulted in a rich, stimulating learning environment. The school is very well placed to improve still further.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A\* - top five per cent; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

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

Pupils' achievement is good. They enter school with broadly average standards and make good progress in the reception classes. There are variations in attainment on entry which were below average for Years 2, 3 and 4. By the end of the Reception year, standards are good with most

children meeting, and a significant number exceeding, the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup>. They make good progress over time in both the infant and junior phases. They demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. At the time of the inspection, standards are average in Year 2 in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics, science, art and design and physical education. They are satisfactory in all other subjects. By Year 6, they are well above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design and physical education. They are good in all other areas. Pupils are well placed to meet their current targets in English, mathematics and science. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, Year 6 pupils achieved well above average in comparison to all schools in English, mathematics and science. They were well above average in English and mathematics compared to similar schools and very high (in the top five per cent) in science. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language and traveller children are achieving well in relation to their prior targets and they achieve well over time.

The development of pupils' personal qualities is very good. This leads to the very good attitudes and increasing sense of responsibility they display. Their behaviour, attitudes and relationships are very good and pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is good and punctuality is good. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good overall. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> and Years 5 and 6. It was good throughout the infant phase and very good overall in the junior phase. Learning is effective because of good or better teaching. Pupils respect their teachers and are very keen to do their best. Excellent teaching was seen in science and art and design. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The use of assessment is very good, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is very good and is broad, balanced, relevant and rich. It is greatly enriched by sporting, music experiences and a wide variety of trips and visits. All statutory requirements are met. The school makes effective use of the accommodation available but there are no separate areas for teaching ICT, small groups or library work. Partnerships with parents are very good and this greatly enhances pupils' education. Links with the community are very good and valuable opportunities occur to celebrate pupils' achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are very good. The headteacher provides excellent, sensitive leadership and a very clear vision and focus to the school's work. Teamwork is very effective and support staff are used very well to support the curriculum. The management is very good and governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are very supportive of the school's work and have a very strategic overview. They conscientiously fulfil all of their statutory duties. There is a very good awareness of the impact of teaching and learning on standards. The school provides good value for money.

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

Parents have very good views of the school. They are very happy with the quality of teaching, the expectations of staff and the way in which the school is led. Most of their views were positive. Pupils like their school, respect their teachers and enjoy the experiences they are provided with.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Explore ways in which the accommodation can be extended and enhanced.

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<sup>1</sup> The goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils achieve well in relation to prior attainment throughout the school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are currently well above average by 11. They are average in Year 2 in English and above average in mathematics and science.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children receive a very good start to their education due to very good teaching.
- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. They are well above average in art and design and physical education.
- Pupils achieve well because of very good teaching.
- Standards are above average in mathematics and science by Year 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve well.

#### Commentary

1. Children enter school with broadly average standards and make good progress in the reception classes. There are variations on entry which were below average for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4. By the end of the reception year, standards are good with most children meeting, and a significant number exceeding, the Early Learning Goals. This year, the group are broadly average and are responding well to very good teaching.
2. Overall, standards have risen throughout the school, especially in the upper junior phase. There are a number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group who make good progress in relation to prior achievement due to good or better teaching. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and traveller children is very good. Staff are very sensitive to the needs of these pupils and work is matched very well to their ability.
3. The table below shows standards in Year 2 in 2003. A significant number (17.6 per cent) had special educational needs and standards were below average in reading and mathematics compared to all schools and similar schools. They were well above average in writing. Boys' results over a three year period have been in line with the national average in reading and above average in mathematics and writing. Writing has been a focus for improvement and results have been good. The current focus is on raising standards in reading and this is proving successful with good results, especially in Year 1. Current standards are above average in mathematics, science, art and design and physical education. They are average in English and most other subjects. Pupils record their work well in Years 1 and 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.2 (15.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.0 (15.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.8 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well because of the good provision made for their development. All pupils, including the higher achieving pupils and those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and traveller children, achieve well due to good teaching. Work is matched well to their ability and all pupils are supported well in their



learning. They are making good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science through well-planned lessons and higher expectations from the teachers and learning support assistants.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (28.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.8 (29.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.1 (31.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- The table above shows that in 2003 standards in Year 6 tests were all well above average in English, mathematics and science compared to all schools and similar schools. In science they were very high compared to similar schools (in the top five per cent). Pupils of all capabilities achieved very well. There has been consistently high achievement for the last five years and the tracking of pupils' work indicates significant improvement over time. Information and communication technology assessments show that pupils have been achieving levels appropriate to their age and ability.
- Current standards are well above average in Year 6 in English, mathematics, science, art and design and physical education. They are good in all other areas, including ICT and religious education. Progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 due to very good teaching or better. A significant number of pupils have special educational needs and are achieving well in relation to prior attainment.
- Pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills very well in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' skills in ICT are being used well across the curriculum. All pupils, including the higher achieving and those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, or traveller children, are making at least good progress due to the high standard of teaching and very good curriculum.

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

This is a strength of the school. Pupil's attitudes to the school and to their work are very good. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. The excellent relationships seen are a feature of the school. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent relationships throughout the school.
- Good attendance and associated procedures.
- Very good attitudes to learning.
- Very good behaviour.
- Very good provision for pupil's personal development.

**Commentary**

- Parents overwhelmingly say that pupils enjoy school, and that the school works very hard on their behalf. These very positive views are supported by inspection evidence. Pupils of all abilities are keen to come to school, they enjoy learning and behave very well both in lessons and in and around the school. There have been no exclusions during the last year. Pupils and parents say that bullying is rare and should it occur prompt and effective action is taken. The school is a very sociable community.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

9. Attendance levels overall are good. The schools overall attendance levels are broadly in line with those seen in similar schools, however levels of unauthorised absence are lower than those typically seen. The school works very hard to improve these and is having success in this with parents responding well to their approaches. Very good procedures have been established for recording and monitoring attendance. When coupled to the staff's very good knowledge of pupils and very good relationships with parents this makes for a very effective system.
10. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Teachers, led by the headteacher's example, receive and value pupils' ideas and encourage their feelings of self worth. As a result they show positive attitudes to their work. Teachers take opportunities to enhance this aspect of pupils' development within the curriculum; a typical example was seen in a Year 6 science lesson where pupils were examining the parts of a flower. The outstanding teaching seen not only allowed all pupils to develop secure knowledge but also to appreciate and reflect on the beauty, complexity and delicacy of the flower. In assemblies pupils are provided with opportunities for reflection. Collective worship meets requirements.
11. The provision for pupils' moral education is very good. All children are taught the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are very aware that their behaviour affects others and they show developing self discipline. Warm friendly staff provide strong role models for pupils which help promote honesty, fairness and respect for others. The school's very good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education has a positive impact on this aspect of pupils' development. The very good behaviour and the absence of exclusions is a clear reflection of the school's success in this area.
12. Provision for the social development is very good. Relationships between all members of the school community are excellent. Boys and girls of all ages co-operate well in lessons. At lunchtimes and on the playground older pupils were observed helping to take care of younger pupils. Opportunities for social development and team identity are enhanced by residential visits. Discussions with pupils who recently attended such experiences confirm how much they appreciate, value and feel they gained from these. The very youngest pupils were observed working very well with one another in a lesson where they were making sweets. The school operates as a very purposeful community where it is the norm to care for one another. This is also reflected in the way in which newcomers to the school are enabled to settle quickly to school life. The pupils are very active in raising money in support of various charities and campaigns. The school council is developing a forum for pupils to contribute their ideas and views; its further development is to be encouraged. Aspects of the school's accommodation for example, the size and location of the library facilities, constrain the school's ability to develop pupils' independent learning skills.
13. The cultural development of pupils is very good. Pupils are enabled to learn about and appreciate both their own and other cultures as for example, in work seen in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were comparing schools in Widnes and Kenya. The strength of the school's work in art also lends much to this aspect. Pupils in Year 5 were observed carefully producing some very interesting paintings having studied the style and techniques of the painter Gustav Klimt. They were very clear about their understanding of the style and had clearly used the knowledge gained in other lessons, for example, history and geography, to enhance their work. Visits, as for example, to a synagogue and a mosque also contribute much to their

understanding of modern society. This understanding is further developed and reinforced by the school's very good programme of assemblies.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching is very good overall and pupils learn well as a result. This includes pupils of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, traveller children, and those with special gifts or talents. The youngest children get a very good start to their education.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are planned very well and pupils are well motivated to succeed.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of behaviour and pupils are involved well in their learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and they are very good role models.
- The quality of teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage.
- Excellent teaching was seen in science and art and design.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well.
- The quality of assessment is very good.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	18 (39%)	21 (47%)	5 (10%)	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.*

14. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the junior phase and good in the infant phase. The headteacher and subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching, planning and learning on a regular basis. They have worked hard to raise the overall quality of teaching throughout the school to at least good or better. This is a considerable improvement on the last inspection, when four per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory in the junior phase.
15. Teaching in the two reception classes is very good. The teachers have a confident understanding of the needs of young children and staff generate very good relationships and a stimulating quality of learning. As a result children make good progress. Work is planned very carefully to meet the needs of the children. Effective challenge is provided and they learn quickly. There is very good support for slower learners, traveller children, and those with English as an additional language. The expectations of teachers and support staff are high. The children respond well and learn effectively. Thoughts and ideas are shared in lively discussions in all areas of learning. Very good use is made of assessment to support planning and the children respond very well to the challenges set them.
16. Lessons are planned very well throughout the school and pupils are well motivated to succeed. Care is taken to ensure that curriculum requirements are covered. In a very good Year 6 upper set English lesson, the teacher was rigorous through questioning in her consolidation of their learning. *'What is personification?'* she asked. Pupils replied *'The words create pictures in our mind.'* *'It creates an atmosphere or a mood.'* *'It is why you use figurative language.'* The lesson was very well planned and very effective use was made of resources and time. Every pupil's work was valued and there was appropriate identification of

assessment opportunities. Very good written work resulted. One pupil wrote *'The tree poked at the sky with its gnarled fingers.'*

17. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good overall. Planning is consistent and staff are confident in teaching the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Speaking and listening skills are developed well across the curriculum through the use of skilful questioning and reading is well taught throughout the school. Standards are well above average in Year 6. Writing skills are taught well and there has been a focused effort to raise pupils' achievement. Sufficient challenge is provided for higher achieving pupils throughout the school. Work is matched well to pupils' ability and those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, and traveller children are supported very well in their learning. Good use is made of homework and there is very good development of target setting in literacy and numeracy. Information and communication technology skills are used well in most areas of the curriculum and there was clear evidence of ICT being planned into lessons. For example, it is used well in science to record results of experiments in investigative work or in art and design to learn about famous artists. Skills are taught well throughout the school.
18. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and involve pupils well in their learning. Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils' learning and work hard to help pupils to achieve well. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and questions are used well to check out progress and extend learning. For example, in a Year 6 music lesson the teacher asked the pupils *'What is the mood of this piece of music?'* as he played the *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* by Handel. A pupil replied *'It makes me feel wonderful, majestic and powerful just like a leader of the world.'*
19. Where teaching was very good the teachers were very good role models. For example, in a reception dance lesson the children were really excited as they twirled and swirled like stars moving across the sky. They said that their star dances were *'twinkling, swirling and twirling.'* There was very good encouragement of descriptive language by the teacher and very effective opportunities to admire the achievements of others.
20. During the inspection two outstanding lessons were seen, both in Year 6 in science and art and design.

#### **Examples of outstanding practices**

##### **An excellent art and design lesson for a Year 6 class on creating the Widnes skyline.**

The pupils' attention was captured by the teacher from the outset. Excellent use was made of a picture of the *Sydney Harbour Bridge* by Ken Done to stimulate their curiosity and interest. The lesson had been excellently planned. The teacher inspired the pupils to do well. She expertly demonstrated the necessary skills and encouraged and guided the pupils as they endeavoured to create a skyline picture of Widnes. There was excellent use of questioning to take pupils' learning forward. Pupils excitedly built up their own individual designs. They had a very clear understanding of perspective and there was a great sense of satisfaction as they commented on each other's designs. The lesson was inspiring because of the excellent role model set and the high quality skyline landscapes which resulted.

##### **A Year 6 science lesson for a mixed ability group where outstanding teaching resulted in pupils making very good progress and achieving very good standards.**

The teacher inspired pupils from the outset and engaged very good productive learning. At the outset of the lesson she shared the objectives of the lesson very well and made excellent use of questions to test the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the parts of the flower. Pupils listened intently and were very keen to follow her excellent role model as they examined the structure of a flower in their investigative work. There was excellent co-operation between pupils in their small groups. There was also excellent consolidation of the pupils' work at the end of the lesson by the teacher. They demonstrated a very good knowledge of the names of the parts of the flower and its reproductive methods. The lesson was inspiring because of the outstanding challenge, pace and content of the teaching.

21. The quality of assessment is very good in English, science and mathematics and most areas of the curriculum. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and provide pupils with useful evaluative comments to guide them to improve their work.

### **The curriculum**

The quality and range of the curriculum are very good. All statutory requirements are met. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good and is valued by both pupils and parents. The standard of accommodation is satisfactory and the quality of resources is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good curriculum planning and cross-curricular links are strong.
- Breadth and balance of the curriculum are very good.
- The range of extra-curricular activities and take up by pupils are very good.
- The use of visits and visitors to teach about cultural and religious diversity is very good.
- The provision for physical education and sport is very good.
- Provision for pupils with English as an additional language, gifted and talented, and traveller pupils are very good.
- Excellent equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.
- Monitoring and self-evaluation of the curriculum are very good.
- Accommodation - there are no dedicated areas for ICT and special educational needs and little space for older pupils to work independently.

### **Commentary**

22. The quality and range of opportunities provided are very good throughout the infant and junior classes.
23. Schemes of work have been developed to meet the needs of the school using guidance from QCA. The senior leadership team rigorously monitors curriculum planning and outcomes are used to inform the School Development Plan priorities. Provision for sex and education about the misuse of drugs are very good. Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, which includes well-planned residential visits, are very good. The curriculum is fully inclusive and is equally appropriate for girls and boys whatever their home background.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has effective systems in place to ensure all pupils are fully included in lessons. Individual education plans are available for all pupils and the level of detail ensures that targets are understood and that pupils receive the support they require as individuals or groups. The provision for pupils with English as additional language is very good. There are very effective systems for tracking individuals or groups of pupils to ensure an inclusive provision.
25. The school has an extensive range of extra-curricular activities that the pupils enjoy and parents value. There are very good links with the secondary school whose Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) works very effectively with the school to develop the music curriculum. The curriculum provides pupils with a good preparation for transition from the infant to the junior phase and transfer to secondary school.
26. The accommodation at the school is cramped, although satisfactory overall. The school makes effective use of the accommodation available but there are no separate areas for teaching ICT, small groups or to allow older pupils to carry out independent research. The library facilities are limited both in terms of space and storage. In addition, a corridor off two of the classrooms is currently used for teaching small groups of pupils. Resources in the school are good overall.

## **Care, guidance and support**

These are strengths of the school. The provision of support, advice and guidance is excellent. The arrangements for care, welfare, health and safety are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The support, advice and guidance based on monitoring are excellent.
- Induction arrangements are very good.
- Excellent relationships.
- Very good arrangements for the management of health and safety.

### **Commentary**

27. The school works very hard to promote the care of its pupils. It takes effective steps to provide them with a safe, clean, secure and stimulating environment in which they are happy and enjoy learning. The excellent relationships seen mean that they are in a position where they have confidence and trust in adults and readily seek advice and help. All staff are aware of child protection procedures. The headteacher is the designated person and has received training. Links with agencies such as the service supporting travelling children are used very effectively; this enables pupils to settle into school life and establish confidence and begin to make progress. Routines such as first aid, fire drills and health and safety audits are secure. The school takes very good care of pupils who are unwell during the school day, despite a shortage of social areas. The school knows its pupils very well; this is based on its very good assessment procedures and all staff knowledge, interest and commitment to pupils as typified by the headteacher's excellent example. This information is then used very effectively to target the learning and development of all very well.

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

Partnerships are a strength of the school. The partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are very good. The considerable confidence expressed by parents in the school, its leadership and the standards achieved are fully supported by inspection findings.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- Information to parents is good overall.
- The work of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) results in a very good contribution to pupils' learning and development.
- Written reports on progress together with the very good opportunities for pupils to see and discuss pupils' work are very good.

### **Commentary**

28. The induction arrangements for new pupils receive careful attention, this enables them to settle quickly into school life and make good progress. They are appreciated by parents. The school welcomes help from parents in school and many do so, working effectively alongside teachers and helping on trips.

29. The school's written information for parents is good. Its prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents meet requirements. The reporting arrangements for parents about the progress and development of their children are much appreciated by parents. Written reports meet requirements and provide a clear indication of what the pupil has learnt. These are very effectively supported by termly meetings with staff and an excellent open day for parents to go into school to look at pupils' work. This is extremely well supported by many parents. Parents

also appreciate the school's openness and take advantage of the opportunity for more informal discussions with staff as the need may arise.

30. The PTA is active and has raised considerable sums to support both pupils' learning and development. These have been used for example, to support the improvements to play facilities for younger pupils, enhance information and communication technology facilities, as well as to provide gifts at Christmas and Easter.
31. Links with local secondary schools have received attention and mean that pupils and parents are well informed about the options available; subsequent work facilitates pupils' transfer to their new schools well. The school makes very good use of visits locally to support the pupils' learning. The school makes very good use of its links with agencies such as the service supporting traveller children to enable all children to take the fullest advantage of the very good opportunities it offers its pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The quality of the management and governance are very good. The headteacher is ably supported by a highly skilled deputy headteacher and senior management team. Together with the very effective involvement and support of a committed governing body they are instrumental in developing a very good, highly inclusive school, where pupils feel confident and secure and make good progress. There has been significant improvement in all areas of leadership and management since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides excellent, sensitive leadership and a very clear vision and focus to the school's work.
- The co-ordinators are very good role models and the school is highly inclusive.
- The management of the school is very good.
- Teamwork is very good and everyone is doing their best for the pupils' education.
- The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are very good.
- The expertise and contribution of the governors is very good.

### **Commentary**

32. The headteacher provides excellent sensitive and supportive leadership that motivates everyone to give of their best. This enables the school to make improvements at a good pace. Very good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well, while shared vision and high expectations are providing a firm steer to the school's work.
33. The headteacher leads the school with the full support and confidence of the governors. Underpinning the entire work of the school is the headteacher's very clear sense of purpose and the drive given to pupils' higher achievement. The school is highly inclusive and very good policies ensure that the needs of all pupils are being met. The governors, headteacher and staff ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
34. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has led to the successful establishment of a very supportive staff team who are fully committed to making very good provision for the development of pupils. In close partnership with her very able deputy headteacher and staff, she has created a very positive, purposeful ethos. Key staff lead and manage their areas with commitment and enthusiasm. They are very effective in their roles. Monitoring of the core subjects has focused on the quality of teaching and learning. This has been very effectively carried out by key staff. Monitoring is also clearly linked to setting targets for staff that are related to performance management. There are very effective systems to support staff new to the school. Target setting is firmly established in the core subjects and is at least good across most areas of the curriculum.

35. The leadership of provision for special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good. Individual needs are clearly identified and resources targeted to maximum effect. Targets are set that are based on very secure evidence. These are shared with pupils and parents and reviewed regularly. This has supported pupils very well and secures good improvements in these pupils' achievements.
36. The management of the school is very good with very effective procedures in place to enable the school to run smoothly on a daily basis. There are very effective strategies in place for evaluating how well the school is doing in order to plan for the future. The secretary provides very effective administrative and financial support. She makes a significant contribution to the life and work of the school.
37. The governance of the school is very good. It has improved since the last inspection and has had a positive impact on the raising of pupils' standards and the effective management of the school. The Chair of Governors provides a very good steer to the work of the governing body. Governors are fully involved in planning and prioritising issues in the School Development Plan. They are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and act as critical friends of the school. They have a very good understanding of the school's work through regular reports by the headteacher and personal visits to sample the life and work of the school. This area of strategic planning has improved since the previous inspection.
38. Teachers are very well supported by the teaching assistants and there is a very good team spirit amongst the staff. They make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning attainment and development. There is a shared commitment to ensure that the pupils succeed. In addition, the professional development of staff is very good.
39. The school has very good procedures and very effective systems for financial planning. Finance has been used very effectively to resource planned major expenditure. Governors have very effective financial oversight of the finances and budget. All decisions about spending are linked very efficiently to the School Development Plan. The current under spend is appropriately accounted for in the School Development Plan and will finance a building improvement project and development of the outdoor area for the junior age pupils. Best values principles are central to the management and use of resources and are managed very well. The school provides good value for money.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	667,690
Total expenditure	629,734
Expenditure per pupil	1,944

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	54,700
Balance carried forward to the next	37,956



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

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

40. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and there has been very good improvement since the last inspection in curriculum planning, teaching and resources. The children enter the two reception classes in the September before they are five. Most children have attended some form of pre-school provision. The curriculum is very good and planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are very well matched to their needs. All children, including those with special educational needs and traveller children, achieve well because the teaching is very good. Staff work very well as a team and children's progress is monitored very well. All adults set very good role models for the children and manage them very well. There is a good ratio of adults to children, ensuring that the needs of all are very well met. The accommodation is good indoors and both classes are making good use of an interesting and purposeful outdoor area.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Children's achievement is good and they develop good levels of personal independence.
- Teaching is very good and the expectations of staff are high.
- Relationships are very good with both adults and peers.
- Behaviour is very good at all times.

#### **Commentary**

41. Teaching is very good and, as a result, all children, including those with special educational needs and traveller children, make very good progress and achieve well in their social development. Most children are on course to achieve their Early Learning Goals, with a significant number achieving more than might be expected. The teachers and support staff provide very good role models for the children and have high expectations of behaviour. The school places a lot of emphasis on developing the whole child. Teachers have established secure routines so that children feel safe and confident. As a result they are friendly, co-operative and confident. The very careful structure of the sessions provides children with many opportunities to make choices, play alone or with others, and to learn to share and co-operate. They are developing good independent skills, such as when they manage their own clothes. The children thoroughly enjoy playing games with the parachute and as a result co-operate well, take turns and work effectively as a team. Staff use every opportunity to praise the children's independence and they have a good sense of right and wrong as a result.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

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

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning are focused on developing children's skills through an interesting curriculum.
- The teachers and learning support assistants take every opportunity to develop children's language skills.
- Children enjoy handling books and make good progress starting to read.

## Commentary

42. The majority of children are on course to meet, and a significant number to exceed, the goals in this area of learning. All children, including those with special educational needs and traveller children, are making good progress as a result of the many opportunities they are given to talk and listen. The quality of teaching is very good and staff are very good role models. They take every opportunity during all activities to develop the children's vocabulary through probing questioning. For example, when asked '*What do you do in Church?*' children replied, '*It is a special place*' and '*You get married there.*' Children enjoy books and listen attentively when a story is read to them. For example, when the teacher read the story of '*Where's Our Car?*' The children were hanging on to her every word and looked very carefully for the words beginning with 's'. The majority of children are on the early stages of the reading scheme. All can write their first name and are making good progress with their writing. They can recite the letters of the alphabet in order and are making good progress with linking sounds to letters, naming and sounding. Most are able to match upper and lower case letters. Due to very good teaching one child commented about a non-fiction book. '*It wasn't like a story – it had labels and gave information.*'

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to promote children's mathematical development.
- Achievement is good because teaching and learning are focused on developing children's skills through a practical curriculum.

## Commentary

43. Most children enter reception with below the levels expected for their age. All children, including those with special educational needs and traveller children, are making good progress in relation to ability. This area is very well taught, with a focus on first-hand practical activities. Children will achieve their learning goals by the end of the year, with a few exceeding their targets. Children are able to count to ten. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce and extend children's mathematical skills and language. For example, children take an active role in counting the number of pupils in the class. They can also work out how much five currant buns costs, while singing the song '*Five Currant Buns.*' They readily recognise the coins 1p, 2p, 5p and 10p and use these coins well in their class shop to buy sweets. Children have had good opportunities to use a programmable toy and readily identify everyday shapes. Practical activities prepare the way well for future learning and sustain children's interest well.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of very good teaching which is focused on developing children's skills through a practical, imaginative curriculum.
- Very good use is made of visits in the local area and visitors.

## Commentary

44. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve well. Most are working at levels expected for their age and a significant number exceed these. A very good range of appropriate interesting activities is planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their

understanding. For example, during a very good lesson on making and tasting Indian sweets very good use was made of questions to take the children's learning forward. For example, as the sugar and water were heated by the learning assistant to make syrup she asked "*What is going to happen to the sugar?*" "*It is going to melt*", replied the child. Later, in answer to the question, "*Why shouldn't we have a lot of sugar?*" a child replied "*It will rot your teeth away.*" Another commented '*It's red like blood*' as food colouring was added to the sweets. Children also enjoyed planning their walk to the church. They make good progress in observing features and building in their local environment and are beginning to know about their own culture and beliefs and those of other people. They display a good knowledge of the Green Cross Code, '*Stop. Look. Listen.*' In addition, computer skills are well taught on a daily basis and staff work hard to build up children's confidence in using the computer. As a result, they have very positive attitudes and display equally good skills.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are well co-ordinated and dance confidently.
- They move confidently on outdoor play equipment.
- Children use small tools and equipment well.

### Commentary

45. Most children will have exceeded the learning goals by the end of the year. Teaching and learning are very good and the children show a good awareness of space, of themselves and of others. They experiment with different ways of moving like star shapes. They are aware of their bodies and enjoy watching, copying and describing what others have done well in their star dance. They make very good progress at creating star shapes at high and low levels. They especially enjoy stretching slowly into a star shape. The children enjoy their indoor dance and physical education lessons. These are very well planned and the teacher and support staff are very good role models. Children use small tools and equipment well and have very good opportunities for outdoor play.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy music and singing.
- The imaginative play area is used well to encourage children's creative response.

### Commentary

46. There are very good daily opportunities for children to develop creativity. They have access to a good range of materials with many opportunities to paint, draw and make models. Teaching is very good and most children will achieve or exceed their learning goals by the end of the year. They enjoy their music lessons and enjoy singing songs in other areas of the curriculum. For example, they eagerly sang '*Twinkle, twinkle, Little Star,*' in a dance lesson before making up their own dance. In music, they are able to use their voices to make long and short sounds and are able to clap out a steady pulse on percussion instruments. They enjoy dressing up and acting as shop assistants in their sweet shop.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is well above average by Year 6.
- Teaching is generally good and often very good.
- The shared subject leadership is very good.
- Pupils attain well compared to pupils in similar schools.
- Presentation and handwriting, particularly that of older pupils, are very good.
- Writing in a wide range of ways and genres is a real strength across the school.
- Cross-curricular opportunities for developing literacy skills are very good.
- There are plentiful, well used resources.
- The library would benefit from development, in order to support pupil's individual research skills.

#### Commentary

47. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, Year 6 pupils achieved well above average standards in English in comparison with all schools and similar schools. Standards in English are rising because of the school's focus on improvement in this subject in writing and currently in reading. Pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and traveller children have made significant progress in relation to prior achievement. Standards in Year 2 were well above average in writing and below average in reading compared to all schools and similar schools in last year's tests. There were a significant number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group which had an impact on standards in reading.
48. At the time of the inspection, standards were well above average in English by Year 6. Pupils are well placed to meet or exceed the targets set for them in the 2004 national tests. The very positive standards reached are due to very good planning, very good teaching in the junior phase and very effective use of assessment. The analysis of pupils' work, together with lesson observations confirms this picture. These are very good improvements since the previous inspection. Currently, standards in reading and writing are in line with expectations in Year 2. Attainment for these pupils was below average on entry. In addition, there are a significant number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group which impacts on standards.
49. From a broadly average starting point pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language, higher attaining pupils and traveller children make at least good progress throughout the school because they are well supported by teachers and support staff. Appropriate setting takes place in Years 4, 5 and 6, which enables differentiated teaching to take place and work is matched very well to pupils' ability.
50. In speaking and listening, standards are average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Pupils are generally confident speakers and listen to each others' opinions with respect; drama and role play is used effectively and linked with history and geography as pupils explore the impact of industrialisation in Widnes on different groups of people.
51. The current whole school focus on reading is beginning to make an impact on standards across the school. Reading recovery provides individual support for some readers. Pupils enjoy reading; reading at home is actively encouraged. Home reading records and diaries are very helpful and well used throughout the school. Standards vary in each class, but are usually above expectations. Currently, they are in line with expectations by Year 2 and well above expectations by Year 6. The school is well aware of the need to develop guided

reading further, especially for the younger pupils. Appropriate strategies are in place and standards are good in Year 1.

52. Standards in writing are in line with expectations in Year 2 and well above expectations in Year 6. Recent focus on writing throughout the school has been very successful. Teachers are more confident with teaching English and have worked hard to explore the purpose and audience of writing, and helping pupils talk about written genres and books. A 'buddy system' was observed in Year 4, when pupils swapped their books to comment on each other's work. Writing in a wide range of genres and for different purposes is a real strength across the school. The biographies written by Year 6 pupils of their parents or famous people were most interesting. A Year 6 class had produced a big book of particularly moving war poems. Many opportunities for formal letter writing were observed during the inspection. Good book reviews and character studies link reading and writing. Older pupils are producing complex sentences, using connectives with confidence. Pupils are given many opportunities for drafting and editing their work which has a real impact on the standard of finished work. Marking is generally thorough and teacher's supportive and informative comments help pupils to make further improvements.
53. Pupils good and very good work is celebrated through displays around school, which provide good models for pupils to aspire to. A very good feature is that so many different types of work is displayed, including books of all kinds, poems, news reports, biographies and accounts of events. Handwriting and presentation is very good, particularly by Year 6 when a significant number of pupils have developed an italic style of writing. Lower attaining pupils in each class have less developed and irregular writing. Pupils enjoy making their own books and take real pride in their work.
54. Teaching is good overall in the infant phase and very good in the junior phase. The school successfully uses the National Literacy Strategy, which it has adapted to suit its own situation. Good lessons are very well planned and delivered with brisk pace and enthusiasm, the teacher using skilful questioning and setting and expecting high standards. Good teaching is differentiated, with well prepared materials and teachers and other adults providing good support and challenge. Other aspects of good teaching include when the teacher models what the children are to do using an overhead projector and when a plenary at the end of the lesson provides pupils with the opportunity to reflect on their work. Pupils enjoy their work and have very good attitudes, which is a testament to teachers' enthusiasm and good planning.
55. The subject is very well led and managed by two experienced and knowledgeable subject leaders; it is a very good idea to share responsibility in this way. They are very well informed about the subject in school through very thorough monitoring of planning, teaching and pupils' work. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and enables teachers to identify pupils who would benefit from intervention strategies which are used very well to provide additional support. Targets are set for individual pupils and for pupils at the age of seven and 11. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
56. Resources for the subject are plentiful and used well to support children's learning. All classes have a class library and featured books are prominently on display. The library, in the foyer of the school, is bright, welcoming and adequately stocked. It is not ideally situated for individual research by pupils. The school has identified that it would benefit from purpose built library accommodation.

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

57. This is now a strength of the school. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop and apply their literacy skills in other subjects, especially history and geography, and ICT is well used to help pupils make a final presentation of their work, such as news reports in history and brochures about Widnes in geography.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are very good by the end of Year 6 and pupils make very good progress.
- Teaching is very good in the junior phase.
- The use of support staff is very effective.
- Information and communication technology is used very effectively to promote learning.
- The subject leader provides very good leadership.
- Procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of provision in the subject are very good.

### Commentary

58. By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics are well above average and pupils achieve very well in relation to ability. In the 2003 national tests pupils attained well above average standards compared to all schools and similar schools. Standards against prior attainment were also very good. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly in line with expectations for children of this age, except in 2003 when standards fell below average compared to all schools and similar schools. These pupils achieved well in relation to prior attainment. On entry to the school their attainment was below average. In addition, there were a significant number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Generally, pupils achieve well and their rate of progress from the infant to the end of the junior phase is at least good. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in mathematics and most succeed in achieving good standards in relation to prior attainment.
59. Teaching in mathematics is very good in the junior phase, which is a considerable improvement on the last inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Several lessons were seen across the age range of the school and the majority were never less than good or better. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Planning was very good and was based on a thorough knowledge of pupils' learning needs. For example, in one Year 6 lesson the teacher used pupils' data on their favourite drinks to explain how this could be presented in a pie chart and how information in a pie chart can be disaggregated in order to solve problems. The use of an interactive white board to demonstrate visually how pie charts are put together was extremely effective. The teacher was enthusiastic about the topic and used questions and prompts to constantly challenge pupils and check their understanding. As a result, pupils knew when to use a pie chart, bar and line graphs appropriately. Teachers' questioning techniques ensure that all pupils are fully involved in the lesson and the level of challenge is carefully matched to individual pupils and groups. Lessons are well structured so that all available time is spent on teaching. In a Year 1 lesson, liquorice allsorts sweets were used very effectively to teach pupils the concepts of sorting, classifying and organisation of information using more than one reference point. Pupils clearly understood that the sweets could be sorted by colour and shape and that this information could be represented by a bar graph.
60. Pupils' learning in mathematics is very good. This is evident in pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 where results are well above average. The organisation of pupils into sets in the junior phase has been very effective in maintaining standards at high levels. The very good support given to individual pupils by staff enables them to make at least good progress in relation to ability. For example, pupils in the upper ability set in the juniors used a variety of methods and tools to calculate percentages, fractions and angles to solve pie chart problems. Pupils know that in a total sample of 80 people, ten people are represented on a pie chart as an eighth and that the slice is an angle of  $45^\circ$ . Pupils' attitudes to learning in mathematics are very good and they are very focused when completing their tasks.

61. Leadership and management in mathematics is very good. The subject leader has a very good overview of standards in the subject. An annual evaluation exercise is effectively used to identify training and resource needs for the subject. There are very effective and efficient systems for tracking pupil progress and achievement. In addition, teaching and learning are monitored very effectively by the subject leader and headteacher. The subject leader and staff have a very clear picture of individual pupil performance across the school at any given time. The quality of marking is good overall. Information and communication technology is used very well to support learning. For example, the interactive whiteboard is used very well by the teachers and Year 5 and Year 6 pupils in lessons.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

62. Pupils use mathematical skills well to support their work in other subjects and there is very clear evidence of this in science, ICT, art and design and design and technology. For example, they use graphs and tables very effectively as a means of recording data from their investigative work in science. They practise their skills in measuring very well when they undertake practical tasks in art and design and design and technology.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

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

- Pupils achieve very well by the age of 11 due to very good teaching.
- The quality of the curriculum is very good.
- There is very good emphasis on the use of scientific language throughout the school.
- The investigation skills of pupils are very good and the subject is very well led and managed.

#### **Commentary**

63. The majority of pupils are working at levels well above expectations for their age as a result of very good teaching by 11. Standards were good at the time of the inspection for Year 2 pupils and very good for Year 6 pupils. By the age of 11 in the 2003 National Curriculum tests pupils achieved well above average standards in comparison to all schools and very high (in the top five per cent) in comparison to similar schools. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. There is also appropriate challenge through questioning and tasks for the higher achieving pupils.
64. The quality of the curriculum is very good and work is matched very well to pupils' ability in the junior phase. Examination of pupils' work and discussion with them shows that investigative skills are well above average by Year 6. Pupils are very skilled at designing a fair test, formulating a hypothesis, conducting the test and analysing their data. For example, they produced a graph to show how long it would take for three different sized parachutes to fall to the ground. A fine display was produced of their findings and very good links were made to their study of parachutes in World War II. Very good use is also made of ICT to support their learning as they record their investigative work.
65. The quality of teaching is very good overall in the junior phase and, as a result, pupils make very good progress. In an excellently taught Year 6 lesson, pupils were fascinated by the structure of a flower. They worked very well in pairs and there was very good development of their scientific knowledge and vocabulary of the parts of a flower. Teaching is also good in Years 1 and 2 and effective use is made of fruits and vegetables to support pupils' learning. Teachers in the infant and junior stages have a very good knowledge about the subject and use this very effectively to explain the scientific principles in a way that pupils understand.

The quality of planning is very good and there is very good expectation and challenge for the junior phase pupils. There is also a very high insistence on high standards of behaviour throughout the school. There is also a very good use of assessment to inform planning and, as a result, pupils have a very good understanding of how they can improve.

66. The management of the subject is very good. The school has a very good capacity to improve further with very good systems in place to monitor and improve the provision. The subject makes a very good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils use their ICT skills to support learning in other subjects.
- There is a good range of software available for teachers and pupils to use.
- Pupil attitudes, enthusiasm and ability to co-operate with each other.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The available resources are well used to support learning.
- The nature and organisation of the resources hinder and limit further progress.
- Control and using e-mail for real purpose need developing further.

### **Commentary**

67. Standards are at least in line with those expected by the end of Year 2. They are above expectations in Year 6. Evidence indicates that younger pupils are able to use drawing software, word processing and simple graphing software to organise, present pictures, writing and graphs. Very high standards were seen in a Year 4 lesson when pupils were creating a branching database to sort and classify information. Pupils use word processing, desk top publishing and presentation software with increasing confidence and by the time they are in Year 5 are using PowerPoint to present information. Pupils in Year 6 have identified the problem of inaccurate data input and are confident with formulas in spreadsheets. Pupils in all classes present their work in computer journals and there is evidence of other ICT work in exercise books from other subjects.
68. Teaching is generally good and lessons are well planned. Good teaching occurs when teachers have high expectations, challenge pupils, review previous learning at the start of a lesson and can model the activity to the whole class. When teaching is not as good, the tasks set are not appropriate to pupils' ability, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and teachers' expectations are not shared with the class. Pupils achieve well when tasks and software are appropriate and when they work co-operatively on a task with others. Pupils work sensibly and are confident and enthusiastic users of a range of ICT applications. Teachers and support assistants use a range of software to support pupils with special educational needs and this enhances the progress they make. Control and monitoring have been identified for further development.
69. The school has invested extensively in hardware and a wide variety of software and training for the staff. There are an appropriate number of computers available to pupils mostly by way of wireless laptop computers, which are timetabled for ICT lessons and can be booked for other lessons. The school has recently purchased an interactive white board linked to a laptop computer and projector, this is very well used by the teacher in this classroom. There is an Internet linked computer and colour printer in each classroom and a scanner between two classes. However, in some classes the positioning of computers on trolleys makes it difficult for younger children to work effectively.



70. During the inspection there were technical problems with some of the laptops, especially with their Internet connections and with a projector. The laptop computers take a long time to set up prior to a lesson; trailing leads are an inevitable problem and in order to get print outs, pupils' work on the laptops has to be saved to disk and printed on the classroom computers. Teachers cope well with the current resources but these are not conducive to further learning developments in the subject. With a dedicated computer suite and fully networked computers providing shared access to software, file sharing and printing the school would be well placed to provide very good ICT provision.
71. The subject is well led and managed by the experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator and the new shadow co-ordinator; it is a good idea to share the responsibility in this way. As well as managing the development of resources, they have reviewed the scheme of work, have introduced realistic achievement targets for pupils, which are informed by end-of-unit teacher assessments. A CD-ROM server and Broadband link are to be installed soon and additional interactive white boards are planned as funding allows to support teachers' whole-class teaching.
72. Improvement since the previous inspection with regard to ICT as a subject has been good and good progress has been made in the use of ICT to support the curriculum, especially in literacy, history and science.

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

73. Learning across the curriculum is enhanced with good use of ICT. In mathematics a teacher used the interactive whiteboard well to support pupils' learning. Information and communication technology supports literacy effectively with the final presentation of written work, such as news reports which pupils have drafted. In history appropriate use is made of word processing and desktop publishing to present their findings and in science an investigation on noise around the school is enhanced with the use of sound sensors.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **HISTORY**

Provision in history is **good** with some **very good** features.

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

- Standards of work in history are high.
- Cross curricular links are well developed, especially with English, ICT and geography.
- Range of opportunities for developing literacy skills.
- Very good teaching and well planned lessons in the junior phase.
- Good use of a range of resources, especially artefacts.

#### **Commentary**

74. There has been good improvement since the last inspection; history is no longer topic based, but is taught as a discrete subject with cross-curricular links, especially with English and drama, geography and ICT. Standards have improved because of good teaching, evaluation of the subject through regular monitoring of planning, teaching and pupils' work.
75. From analysis of the work in pupils' books and on display and from talking to pupils, standards are above the level expected for pupils of similar ages at the end of the infant phase and at the end of the junior phase, with some pupils being well above. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress. Year 2 pupils can sort and classify information and can successfully compare old and new toys; they are able to compare the similarities and differences of London street scenes from 1666

and present day; and they are able to understand what changes occurred in London after the Great Fire in 1666. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are well aware that there were mixed opinions about local industrial development in Victorian times and Year 6 pupils can identify some of the reasons why World War II began. Pupils of all ages are given a range of opportunities for communicating their knowledge and understanding of history through a range of writing, for example news reports, poems, biographies and diaries. Some lower attaining pupils do not finish their work because it has not been set to match their abilities.

76. Standards are high by Year 6 because teaching is very good. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, using well prepared resources. Units of work start with pupils considering what they already know about the topic and what they would like to find out. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and skilful questioning by teachers encourages and challenges pupils to think deeper, explore alternative viewpoints and the causes and consequences of events and people's actions. Drama and role play helps pupils to explore differing views, for example in a Year 5 lesson considering the impact of the development of local industry on the lives of different groups of people.
77. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject because teachers bring history to life with a range of activities and good use of resources; a Victorian Day was held last term giving pupils an opportunity to experience the recreation of a Victorian school, dressed appropriately, sitting in rows and writing on slates. A collection of artefacts from World War II and Britain since 1930 generates interest; displays of a wide range of pupils' work celebrates their achievements. Good links with geography help children to understand how the past influences the present when studying how the local area has changed.
78. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator. The quality of the curriculum is very good. The good range of resources are well organised, kept centrally and are accessible and used well by teachers to support learning. Teachers provide supportive comments to pupils about their work and how they can make it better. Links with ICT have been developed well, especially in Years 5 and 6.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is at least good overall.
- Work is well planned, providing interesting and varied activities.
- Links with other subjects, including history and literacy, are well developed.
- Work about the local area, often linked with history, is good.
- Pupils make good progress in their understanding of how places change and can compare Widnes with other places.
- There is too much time between the subject being taught in some years.

### **Commentary**

79. Two lessons were seen during the inspection, both in the junior phase. There was insufficient evidence available to form a secure judgement on pupils' achievement in the infant phase as history and design and technology have been the focus so far this year. Analysis of the work of older pupils and talking to pupils indicate that by Year 6 standards are good. Year 4 pupils have a sound knowledge of Kenya. They can compare Kenya and the United Kingdom well, including identifying the similarities and differences between the cities of Liverpool and Nairobi, comparing the climate and schools in the two countries. Years 5 and 6 study the local area, and their work in geography is successfully combined with history so pupils are able to identify how Widnes has changed in the past and is still changing. Year 6 pupils are able to use six figure grid references.

80. Features of good teaching were seen when lessons and resources were well planned, with teachers having high expectations of pupils and using well chosen questions to challenge pupils' knowledge and understanding. The pace of lessons was brisk and a plenary session gave pupils an opportunity to reflect on their work and how they could make it better.
81. The long-term curriculum plan indicates adequate opportunity for all pupils to access their subject entitlement. However, there is too long between the subject being taught in some classes, which is recognised by the subject leader. Links with other subjects, particularly history and literacy, appropriately enhance the subject and provide pupils with opportunities to develop and apply their skills. The subject is very well monitored by the subject leader and the headteacher. The subject leader has identified her priorities for the future development of the subject, including further links with ICT and integrating map work further into the scheme of work.
82. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards have improved; teaching is better because teachers have gained confidence after being involved in writing the new scheme of work. More fieldwork opportunities are now provided to extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom. The recent whole school focus on fair trade has made a positive impression on pupils.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

83. It is not possible to make a firm judgement about overall provision in **religious education**. However, the evidence available suggests it is very good. It is evident from viewing planning and discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils that a very good curriculum is taught in accordance with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. There is excellent use of visits and visitors to promote understanding of religious and cultural diversity. Pupils are also given valuable opportunities for reflection and for developing their own views especially through assemblies and cross-curricular work. This is a very good improvement on the last inspection.
84. Standards in religious education at the time of the inspection were above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by Year 6. By Year 2, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' learning in religious education is good and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and traveller children, make good progress in relation to prior achievement. The work seen in pupils' books shows that pupils, especially in the junior phase, have a very good knowledge of other religious festivals and celebrations. The celebration of the Chinese New Year was a major event in the school calendar. Very good links were made to literacy, art and design and dance and drama. The work completed by the pupils as a result was impressive, as supported by written and photographic evidence.
85. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to explore Christianity and compose their own prayers to share with all members of the school community. The theme of faith was explored very effectively indeed by the oldest pupils through music and lyrics from pupils' day-to-day experiences. Very good cross-curricular links are made wherever possible. For example, display work in a Year 6 classroom included impressive stained glass artwork found in Christian places of worship. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning. For example, to research the use of colour in churches.
86. The subject is well led and managed by the acting subject leader. The subject is very well monitored and there is very good use made of assessment to inform planning. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through a wide range of visits to places such as the church, mosque and synagogue the curriculum offers a rich breadth of experiences on religious and cultural diversity.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### ART AND DESIGN

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by Year 6.
- The curriculum is rich and stimulating.
- Pupils enjoy their art and design lessons. They use a wide range of skills and techniques to produce work of a high standard.
- Teaching is very good in the junior phase.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

#### Commentary

87. The curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant and rich. All teachers have a very good subject knowledge and understanding in the junior phase. Pupils benefit from the excellent input from teachers in Years 5 and 6.
88. Standards are good for Year 2 and very good for Year 6 pupils particularly in clay work, observational drawing and paintings in the style of well known artists. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. There is a very good range of excellently planned creative opportunities available to pupils. They are very competent when using different media, and are very confident in evaluating their own work and other pupils' work. This was expertly demonstrated in a very good Year 5 lesson on creating an image of Widnes in the style of Ken Done. The lesson had been very well planned and was very successful because there had been a very good demonstration of all the skills necessary to sketch Halton Stadium, a famous landmark. The pupils co-operated very well in pairs as they evaluated their own and their partner's work. The pupils were encouraged to share the strengths and areas for development in their work with one another at the end of the lesson. They really enjoy their work.
89. The quality of teaching seen is very good overall. The work in Years 1 and 2 is built on very successfully in Years 3 to 6. There is a very good range of work on display throughout the school. The quality of observational drawing is good in the infant phase due to good teaching of the skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have created very good images of the Widnes skyline. Very good wallpaper designs have been created by Year 6 in the style of William Morris. There is also confident and competent use made of ICT to support their learning. Pupils listen to the views of the artist Ken Done as they work in his style. Some excellent teaching was seen in Year 6, which had been expertly introduced, explained and developed by the class teacher.
90. The subject has a very firm place in the curriculum and all pupils mention that art and design is one of their favourite subjects. The co-ordinator provides very good educational direction for the subject. She conscientiously monitor standards, teaching and learning of the subject. The subject makes an excellent contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are very good cross-curricular links. There has been a very good improvement in the curriculum, teaching and resourcing of this subject since the previous inspection.

### DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. No lessons were observed in **design and technology**. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about overall provision. However, the evidence available indicates that it is

good. Inspectors spoke to the subject leader about their work and to pupils about what they had learnt in design and technology. They also looked at pupils' work.

92. It is evident from teachers' planning, the prospectus and discussions with pupils that work planned in design and technology is varied and interesting. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are developing well the expected subject skills through designing and making a wide variety of products. For example, Year 1/2 pupils have designed and made an interesting range of clocks, while junior age pupils have made moving toys and games and shelters. Standards are in line for seven year olds and above expectations for 11 year olds.
93. Analysis of pupils' work indicates good teaching of designing and making skills. Displays in Years 5 and 6 on cogs, gears and wheels are of a good standard. The work is well presented and indicates pupils take pride in their work. Design and technology is used well in other subjects. For example, work in history on the Victorians lead to pupils making some good quality moving toys and shoes. Pupils also use ICT well to support their learning. For example, in Years 5 and 6 they learnt to use computer simulations in their work on cogs and levers.
94. It is clear that pupils are used to evaluating their own work and that of their classmates. The co-ordinator provides very good, clear educational direction for this subject. The support and guidance given to teachers is very effective. There are very good assessment procedures in place, which are used well to inform planning. The co-ordinator also encourages the use of parents with particular skills in the subject to support pupils' learning. For example, in the week of the inspection the local vicar was helping a small group of pupils to finish off design work on a mechanical moving toy.
95. In **music**, pupils were only observed in one very good lesson in Year 6, although the whole school was heard singing tunefully and expressively in assemblies. For example, '*Love is something if you give it away*' was well sung by pupils. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in improving teachers' subject knowledge and understanding, introducing and implementing a new scheme, and improving resources. The co-ordinator is providing good, clear educational direction for the subject.
96. It is apparent that the good subject expertise of teachers is used well to help pupils to progress well. Standards are in line with expectations by seven and above average by the time pupils are 11. The very good teaching in a Year 6 lesson resulted in pupils making very good progress in identifying music with strong syncopation such as '*Portsmouth Point*,' by Walton. The success of the teaching was due to very effective use being made of ICT to support learning. Pupils obviously enjoy singing and making music.
97. The curriculum is very good. It is broad, balanced, relevant and rich and makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Junior age pupils are given valuable opportunities to study the guitar, flute, clarinet and keyboard. Concerts and performance also contribute very well to pupils' overall musical experience. The co-ordinator monitors planning and pupils' learning, but as yet has not monitored teaching.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of attainment are very good at the end of Year 6.
- The range of extra-curricular clubs on offer is very good.
- Teaching and learning in the junior phase is very effective.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.

- Participation in local and national initiatives is high and well considered.
- Achievements and successes are recognised and celebrated.

## Commentary

98. Standards in physical education are now very good particularly in the junior phase. These are above national expectations in the junior phase and above national expectations in the infant phase. The high standards in games, gymnastics and swimming have been maintained since the last inspection. Swimming is a particular strength. All Year 6 pupils can swim 25 metres and the school has won several swimming galas. The school has participated in the Merseyside Youth Games winning a Fair Play Trophy. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress and standards reached are at least good compared to their prior achievement.
99. Teaching in physical education is very good in the junior phase. From the lessons observed, teachers' subject knowledge was very secure. Lessons were well structured to ensure a good balance between vigorous physical activity and learning about the importance of exercise to promote a healthy lifestyle. The teacher challenged pupils to perform to the limits of their physical capability. For example, in a Year 4 gymnastics lesson, pupils were challenged to balance putting the weight on different parts of their bodies while being asked to put together a sequence of more demanding gymnastic moves. The lesson delivery was clear and the organisation of pupils and equipment was very good. In a Year 2 lesson, teaching encouraged pupils to extend basic skills. Modelling and demonstration were used very effectively to meet pupils' learning needs and introduce appropriate levels of challenge. The use of role-play and animal characters from Handa's Surprise made the teaching more interesting for the pupils.
100. Learning in physical education is very good. In both the infant and junior phases pupils rise to new challenges and learn new skills rapidly. They all make very good progress. For example in a Year 6 lesson, pupils learned the skills for effective sprinting in athletics through an investigative approach. Working in pairs, pupils investigated sprinting techniques and skills by using stopwatches and markers. They sprinted over a short distance sprint by initially running dead or light on their feet. Later pupils tried sprinting with their arms behind their backs. Pupils evaluated each others performance and they had clearly understood the skills and techniques for effective sprinting. In this lesson pupils took responsibility for their own learning. Pupils made very good progress in developing their sprinting skills through vigorous activity. The levels of enthusiasm and motivation are very high and pupils' attitudes to learning in physical education are very good.
101. Leadership in physical education is very good. Some aspects are high quality. For example, the range of extra-curricular activities on offer is extensive. The co-ordinator has been in post for three years and much has been achieved in this short time. Under the leadership of the subject leader, the school is also involved in local and national initiatives. There are robust auditing systems in place, which are part of the requirement for the Active Mark and School Sports Co-ordinator Programme in which the school is participating. Management in physical education is also very good. There are clear planning, monitoring and evaluation systems. The Action Plan for the subject is based on a thorough audit developed by the DfES for the School Sports Co-ordinator Programme. The active time spent on physical education is well monitored through planning and lesson observations. Time allocated for the subject during lessons is used very effectively and most of the time is dedicated to activity. In the week of the inspection, a hockey club was started with the support of an England national player coaching interested pupils.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision is planned very well into the curriculum.
- Cross-curricular links are clearly identified.

## **Commentary**

102. The arrangements for PSHCE, including drugs education, are very good. The programme of work is taught through circle time, religious education, music and science. Pupils' citizenship skills are developed very well and this area contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The arrangements for drug and health education are very good. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. Pupils learn about the importance of a healthy diet in science. They also learn about the effect of exercise on their bodies in both physical education and science. The programme helps pupils develop a safe and healthy lifestyle. They gain confidence and interact very well with others. Personal, social and health education also makes valuable links to history in exploring social interests and conditions of former times.
103. The very caring school ethos supports pupils' personal development and the regular use of 'Circle Time' provides good opportunities to share feelings and to discuss different topics. These sessions are effective in building the pupils' confidence and enabling them to share their feelings with others. As pupils get older, they are given increasing responsibilities, preparing them well for the next stage of their education.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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