

INSPECTION REPORT

BEECH HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wigan

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106399

Acting Headteacher: Mrs R. Higginson

Lead inspector: Dr Richard Perkin

Dates of inspection: 19th – 21st January 2004

Inspection number: 263861

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:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	344
School address:	Netherby Road Beech Hill Wigan Lancashire
Postcode:	WN6 7PT
Telephone number:	01942 243582
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	The Reverend Paul Lock
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative. There is out of school care in the form of a breakfast club for 30 pupils and the Primary Child Mental Health team provides drop-in facilities for half a day a month.

Pupils come almost entirely from a nearby council estate and there are high levels of deprivation in the area. Although numbers have been falling steadily over the past few years, the school is still larger than average, with 344 pupils on roll. There are equal numbers of boys and girls. Twenty-two children attend part-time in the nursery. Most pupils are white British and there are small numbers of pupils of Indian, African and mixed heritage. About 1 per cent of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. A small proportion of pupils are from families who are asylum seekers and a very small number are in public care.

Children begin school with generally low levels of language, mathematical and social skills. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, with a higher than normal number having statements of special educational need. Pupils' disabilities range from dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, physical difficulties and developmental delay. A significant number of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A higher than usual number of pupils leave or arrive at the school at other than the usual starting points in nursery, reception or Year 2. Thirty per cent of last year's Year 6, for example, joined or left the school during Years 3 to 6. This rate of mobility has an adverse effect on the school's national test performance.

The school has been working under the leadership of an acting headteacher since June 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
14591	Richard Perkin	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Information and communication technology Religious education Art and design
13723	Jean Overend	Lay inspector	
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17085	George Mitchell	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Design and technology
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	13
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school where pupils of all abilities achieve well and reach broadly average standards. Teaching is good overall, and very good in the Foundation Stage. The school is well thought of by parents and by pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well, as a result of consistently good and sometimes very good teaching; however, assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress are under-developed;
- Children receive a very good start in the nursery and reception classes;
- Standards in English and science are below the national average but they are above average in information and communication technology (ICT);
- Attendance remains below average in spite of the school's energetic efforts to improve it;
- Teachers responsible for some subjects do not bring about enough improvement in them;
- There are good links with parents, the community and other schools, particularly those in the Excellence in Cities cluster.

The school's effectiveness has improved since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained in all subjects apart from English and science, where standards are lower although performance in national tests is better. Pupils with special educational needs now achieve well. Teaching is markedly better. The Foundation Stage is now very effective. Staff responsibilities are clearer and support staff have much more clearly defined roles that make them effective. Assessment has improved in English and mathematics but is still not effective in most other subjects. Parents are more actively involved in the life and work of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' overall achievement is good. Pupils who have special educational needs, those in care, pupils from ethnic minorities or with English as an additional language and those identified as gifted or talented progress well. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. However, because of their low starting point, whilst they are on course to meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in personal, social, creative and physical development, they are not on course to meet them in the other areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics though standards by the end of Year 2 remain below average. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6 in English and mathematics and they achieve very well in ICT. Standards in English by the end of Year 6 are below average, particularly in writing. In mathematics, standards are broadly at expected levels. Pupils' achievement in science is satisfactory though standards are below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance in the national tests for 11-year-olds in English and mathematics is good.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of the effective provision. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and to learning. Their behaviour is satisfactory overall, but is usually good in lessons. Incidents of bullying and racism are firmly dealt with. Levels of attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory although the school is making great efforts to improve them.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall, with about a third being very good. It is consistently very good in the Foundation Stage. Teachers and support staff work well together. Planning takes good account of the needs of the whole class and is effectively based on assessment in English and mathematics. Assessment is not well enough developed in other subjects for teachers to use it in their planning.

The satisfactory curriculum is considerably enriched by out of school activities, educational visits and environmental projects. Opportunities for pupils to develop independent research skills are inhibited by the location of the library. The work of the learning mentor supports pupils' care and personal development well and the school listens carefully to the views of the pupils and the parents. There are good links with the local community and with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Leadership overall, is satisfactory. The acting headteacher is providing a good lead in identifying areas for development and in forging an effective team to put the resulting plans into practice. While some subject leaders are effective, most do not sufficiently develop their subjects. The management of the school is satisfactory overall. Analysis of performance data is at an early stage and action to overcome barriers to learning, such as the rate of pupil mobility, is hampered by the lack of detailed information. The quality of governance is satisfactory. The largely new governing body is beginning to have a positive effect on the work of the school and is getting to know its strengths and weaknesses. It has ensured that the school meets all its statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views about the school and appreciate the approachability of the acting headteacher and other staff. There are concerns about standards of behaviour and about bullying, although most agree that the school's approach to bullying is generally effective. Pupils also have positive attitudes and most enjoy school. Some pupils share the parents' concerns about bullying and the behaviour of a minority of pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards of writing;
- Improve standards in science;
- Seek further ways of improving attendance and punctuality;
- Develop consistent assessment procedures and make effective use of the systems for recording and tracking pupils' achievement;
- Enable subject leaders to play a more effective part in improving their subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good throughout the school for pupils of all needs and abilities. Standards in mathematics are broadly average by the end of Year 6. In English and science, standards are below average. Standards in ICT are above the national average by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children receive a very good start in the Foundation Stage and achieve very well;
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school because of the good teaching they receive;
- Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language, higher attaining pupils and those identified as gifted and talented achieve well;
- Pupils achieve well in English although standards are below the national average, particularly in writing;
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in science but is uneven across the classes;
- Pupils achieve very well in ICT and standards are above average.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.9 (14.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.7 (13.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.0 (15.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The school's results in national tests for 7-year-olds were well below the national average in 2003 though they were close to those of similar schools in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. They were below the previous year's results largely because of the larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the group. Trends over time, have been erratic in all three subjects but overall, are broadly in line with the national trend. The performance of boys and girls generally follows the national pattern with girls doing better than boys in English and the reverse being true in mathematics; however, in 2003, girls performed better in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.9 (25.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.9 (24.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.4 (26.1)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Results in the national tests for 11-year-olds were below the national average in English and mathematics but above those of schools with similar proportions of free school meals. In science, they were well below the national average and in line with those in similar schools.

The performance figures are affected by the high rate of pupil mobility and the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, who do well in school but for the most part do not make up enough ground to attain the national average. The trend over time, is erratic in all three subjects, though the results in 2003 were better than in previous years, and overall, the trend is broadly similar to the national trend. There were no significant differences in the pattern of attainment of boys and girls.

3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in the nursery and reception classes because their needs are quickly identified, and activities and support closely geared to them. In the rest of the school, these pupils achieve well because they are motivated to work hard in lessons. Teachers and support staff take good account of their individual education plans in planning suitable activities for them. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress because teachers and support assistants plan specially adapted work for them and they receive specialist help once a week. Teachers are well aware of the particular needs of children in care and ensure that they receive any help they require; consequently they also achieve well. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are well integrated and achieve as well as the other pupils. Higher attainers and those identified as gifted and talented are well provided for and achieve well. Teachers set extension work in many lessons. In work in the computer suite more confident pupils are expected to work with a good measure of independence, often helping less competent pupils.
4. Children make a very good start to their school life in the Foundation Stage. Most begin in the nursery with low levels of communication, social and mathematical skills, and achieve very well by the time they start Year 1. Teachers and support staff provide a very stimulating learning environment and are very good at catching the children's interest and building their confidence. Because of the very good teaching, children's personal, social and emotional development is at the level expected by the end of reception. They also attain the Early Learning Goals in creative and physical development. They do well in developing their communication, language and literacy skills but have much ground to make up and few are on course to attain the required learning goals by the time they begin Year 1. The same is true in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
5. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well in English and mathematics because of the good teaching and the school's use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. By the end of Year 2, however, standards are still below average in all aspects of English and mathematics. The lack of consistency in the teaching of science means that pupils' achievement in the subject is satisfactory rather than good and the standards they reach are below those expected for their age; higher attainers in particular do not do themselves justice.
6. In Years 3 to 6, bearing in mind, the above average number of pupils who join the school midway through the key stage and the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is good. Their standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 are broadly those expected for their age. Standards in English are still below average overall, but pupils' reading levels are approaching those expected and many are becoming confident and quite articulate speakers. Writing is still clearly below average. This is to some extent because teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to write purposefully in other subjects. Pupils' achieve very well in ICT because of strong leadership that has ensured a well trained workforce and a well resourced computer suite. Because of this, standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their behaviour is satisfactory. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and most behave well in the classroom;
- Children in the Foundation Stage are very well motivated and behave very well; the provision for their personal development is very good;
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is actively promoted and impacts on many areas of school life;
- The attendance rate and punctuality are unsatisfactory but the school is working very hard to improve attendance and reduce lateness.

Commentary

7. Pupils' attendance has been below average but the school is now working with the new Education Welfare Officer to improve this situation. Both pupils and parents are being targeted by using good attendance awards for the children that they choose for themselves and through a first day response system whereby parents or carers are contacted if children have not arrived in school by 9.30 am. Punctuality is also being closely monitored but as yet the new systems have not been in place long enough to have much impact. Some parents have persisted in taking children on holiday in term time, thus affecting the school attendance rates and potentially damaging their children's progress and achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.8
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

8. Pupils of all ages say they like school because of their friends. They also like their teachers. In lessons, they show good attitudes to learning, listening well and showing good levels of concentration. Pupils with special educational needs are mostly well motivated and enjoy good relationships with the adults who work with them.
9. When children enter the nursery, they settle quickly and respond very well to the clear routines, stimulating environment and high levels of care. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children are very keen to learn and make very good progress particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. They behave very well.
10. Parents' and pupils' questionnaires show a significant level of concern over behaviour and bullying. Older children spoken to felt that behaviour was fine and had improved recently. Some younger children were less confident. The school takes all incidents of bad behaviour, bullying and racism very seriously. It monitors and records all incidents and responds appropriately, involving parents where necessary. There are good systems in place to allow pupils to speak out if they have any concerns. During the inspection, classroom behaviour was mostly good, especially where the teaching was lively and interesting. The behaviour in the whole school assemblies observed was exemplary. In the playground the play was 'fast and furious' but not aggressive, which was to the pupils' credit in a week with many wet

playtimes. The level of supervision was high, a recent improvement along with more play equipment for lunchtime. Two pupils have been permanently excluded in the past year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	295	2	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

11. The school works successfully to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies and class worship are planned carefully and used well to provide opportunities for reflection, prayer and worship songs. The Excellence in Cities cluster has provided training for the teaching of thinking skills and lessons in philosophy give children time to reflect on the big issues of life and their own beliefs and values. Other subjects, including literacy, help pupils to explore their feelings and those of others. This was seen in a very good lesson in Year 3 on 'The Happy Prince' where very sensitive delivery of the story evoked an empathetic response to the story and its characters. The introduction of progress books is aimed at helping pupils understand themselves and their own progress better.
12. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Concepts of right and wrong are discussed when the pupils set their own class rules. Good moral debate is planned for and the school has received recognition for the high quality work the pupils have done on sustainable resources and the environment in initiatives, such as 'Earth Keepers' and 'Global Footprints'. The police regularly visit the school and include talks on crime and its consequences. Pupils get good opportunities to work together productively, such as in ICT where help and advice are generously shared within pairs and with others. Many responsible jobs are provided to which the pupils respond very well. Links with the community help the children understand their wider society and clubs provide children with other social settings.
13. Cultural development is satisfactory overall. Clubs, such as drama and ICT, give the children a taste of both modern and traditional culture. The displays around the school include many anti-racist and positive multicultural images. Visits and visitors are used well to add to pupils' experiences of their own cultural heritage and other cultures or faiths. However, opportunities are missed to learn about and celebrate the cultural backgrounds of some pupils in the school. Generally, however, the school promotes racial equality soundly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. There is a broad and balanced curriculum with very good opportunities for enrichment. Pupils are cared for very well in the Foundation Stage and satisfactorily in the rest of the school. Pupils' are very effectively consulted. There are good links with parents, the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. In the nursery and reception classes, teaching and learning are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection, especially for children in the Foundation Stage;
- Support assistants are used very effectively, particularly in helping pupils who have special educational needs;
- Teachers' planning is good and leads to interesting lessons that have a good sequence of activities;
- Pupils are expected to behave well and work hard, so that lessons are usually calm and purposeful;
- In Years 1 to 6, with the exceptions of English and mathematics, teachers do not assess pupils' progress in sufficient detail to ensure that new work consistently builds on what they already know.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	16 (30%)	25 (46%)	12 (22%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

14. Unlike the previous inspection, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen and a significant proportion was very good; consequently, the quality of learning is good. Teaching and learning are equally good for all groups of pupils, ensuring their good achievement regardless of background or level of attainment.
15. Teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage are now very good. Teachers and support staff work as a very effective team, providing a wide range of activities that helps children to achieve highly in all their areas of learning. They know the children very well and understand their personal and educational needs. This helps to ensure that the work and level of care provide exciting activities for learning in the context of secure and caring relationships.
16. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good. Using the useful systems established by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), pupils' needs are identified early. When appropriate, good quality individual education plans are devised and agreed by the class teacher and the SENCO and shared with parents. Very good use is made of support staff, working alongside the teacher, to provide effective help not only for individuals with special educational needs but also often for other lower attaining pupils who need extra support.
17. Teachers' planning has also improved since the previous inspection and is now consistently good, particularly in English and mathematics where it is based on effective assessment. Resulting lessons have clear and appropriate learning objectives and sequences of activities which help pupils to learn new facts and develop their skills. An English lesson for Year 5 pupils typified this approach: with the aim of improving pupils' understanding of how stories

are constructed, the teacher chose a tape recorded story from India to interest and motivate the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. This was followed by a discussion in which the teacher skilfully used open questions to get the pupils to both express their ideas and develop their appreciation of how language was used to create images in the story. Pupils were then involved in group work, including use of the computer; activities were planned carefully, to help pupils of different abilities to improve their understanding of how stories can be structured. Finally, the teacher gave individuals the opportunity to share what they had been doing with the rest of the class. In such situations, pupils are interested and learn at a good pace because of the variety of the activities and their clear link to the original learning objective.

18. Since the previous inspection, there have been improvements in the assessment of pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Teachers use the information gained to plan future work which builds well on what pupils already know and can do. Consequently, pupils achieve well. In other subjects, however, assessment systems are not well developed and are unsatisfactory. This means that there are times when pupils receive work which is too easy or too difficult and they do not progress as well as they could. There are occasions, in science lessons, for example, when pupils are capable of working at higher levels but are prevented from doing so by teachers' lack of awareness of their capability.
19. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and caring. Pupils behave well and work hard, largely because this is expected of them. Consequently, the majority of lessons are marked by a calm and purposeful atmosphere, within which staff and pupils work together, taking a pride in their levels of success. Pupils' achievement is celebrated in formal ways, through assemblies and reward systems, and also informally through the praise and obvious pleasure of adults who work in their classes. The quality of relationships and the encouragement they receive helps pupils realise that hard work brings success. There are occasional lapses, however, because there has been insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure a totally consistent approach to the management of pupils.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum provides a satisfactory range of worthwhile opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils. There are very good opportunities for curriculum enrichment. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good;
- Curriculum provision and opportunities for pupils in the Foundation Stage are very good and are a strength of the school;
- A varied programme of experiences, through visits, clubs and other activities, helps to enrich the curriculum;
- The environmental projects the school has undertaken make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development;
- The inaccessible and inappropriate location of the school library inhibits opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

Commentary

20. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements and all the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, including provision for religious education and collective worship. It is fully inclusive and ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The very good curriculum in the Foundation Stage ensures that pupils get off to a 'flying start'. A strength is the environment that is created, particularly in the reception class. The whole area is very well presented to allow the children to experience all the areas of learning. Personal, social

and emotional development is particularly strong because of the quality of relationships and level of care that the children experience. Individual support is very good because progress is monitored against all the areas of learning and children are targeted for particular aspects according to their individual needs.

21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans contain targets that effectively address the learning needs of the pupils. This ensures that the pupils are fully included in the lessons and other aspects of the curriculum. Their work with the support assistants helps them to make good progress.
22. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to supplement the work done in the classroom. The annual residential trip to the Lake District, for pupils in Year 6, enhances the physical education and geography curriculum. Pupils enjoy taking part in the many out of school activities organised for them. Particular strengths of the enrichment opportunities offered to the pupils are the environmental projects that pupils have undertaken.

The excellent ways in which the school promotes education for sustainable development (ESD)

The school has undertaken the World Wide Fund Curriculum Management Award Scheme with support from the Global Footprints Project. The teacher responsible for ESD has arranged staff training and is now expanding the work to further involve younger pupils. The school's aim is to raise pupils' awareness and understanding of environmental issues not only locally but at a sustainable global level, through extra-curricular activities and lessons in subjects, such as personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE), geography and science. Older pupils undertake the Earth Keepers' programme during a residential in the Lake District. Pupils who cannot attend follow an alternative programme back at school. Central to the project is the Listening Council which considers not only school issues but also matters from further afield. Critical thinking and speaking and listening skills are developed along with a sense of responsibility and powers of persuasion. English and ICT skills develop through activities, such as the computer-generated illustrated booklets and posters on 'Oil Spill', 'Rainspill' and 'The Crash of The Sea Farer' (an oil tanker). The local community is involved through, for example, pupils' letters to local traders concerning their purchasing policy in respect of Fair Trade bananas. On-line debates on, say, endangered species involve the wider community.

23. Although the accommodation is satisfactory overall, improvements have taken place since the previous inspection, such as, for example, the new dining hall and the improved facilities for the Foundation Stage. However, the inaccessible and inappropriate location of the school library is a major weakness. No opportunities can be given to pupils for independent research because of its location and the wasted time spent on travelling to it. Therefore, it cannot be used to develop pupils' research skills nor to help them take responsibility for their own learning.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory overall, but very good in the Foundation Stage. The school provides sound support, advice and guidance though monitoring systems are too informal. The school is very good at involving pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The role of the learning mentor is helping to provide support, advice and guidance for pupils and their parents;
- Transition to secondary education and induction into the school are effective;
- Children's care, support and guidance in the Foundation Stage are very good;
- There are strong links with outside agencies and the support for pupils with special educational needs is good;
- The listening council gives pupils a voice in the school and enhances their personal development.

Commentary

24. Parents and pupils feel that this is a strong area of the school. Staff know the pupils and their backgrounds very well. Pupils feel confident that there is a member of staff they could approach if they have a concern. There are clear procedures in place for health and safety so that these areas are secure, although the new child protection co-ordinator has not had the required co-ordinator training. The school has started to produce risk assessments for aspects of school life such as out of school visits. The governors are involved in ensuring the school is a safe environment and local education authority (LEA) expertise is also being made use of. The children are taught about keeping themselves safe at appropriate points in the curriculum. The school policies to promote racial harmony and eliminate bullying are carefully monitored and all incidents recorded. The learning mentor raises the level of care the school can give, especially to those who need extra support. This includes provision of breakfast and lunchtime clubs to enhance children's learning experiences, chasing up regular absentees, working with external support agencies and working directly with children with behavioural and other special needs.
25. The school has very good links to outside agencies to meet the needs of individuals. This advice together with the work of teachers and support assistants ensures that children with special needs are well supported and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs have good access to well informed support, advice and guidance from their teachers and support assistants. The support for pupils with English as an additional language and for those identified as gifted and talented is also good. However, while assessment of English and mathematics has improved to allow the tracking of individual pupils' progress, the progress of different groups is not being separately analysed and the progress being made in other subjects is not being assessed sufficiently. In the Foundation Stage, assessment and its use is very good which, with the very good teamwork of the adults working there, is providing very good care and support for the children in the nursery and reception classes.
26. The school has developed a number of ways for pupils to make their feelings and views known. In personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) lessons and 'Circle Time', pupils have their turn to speak to the whole class and they can also share their concerns and beliefs in many classroom debates. The listening council is a very good vehicle for collecting their views as the whole debate is recorded and shared with the headteacher. A report back to the pupils also informs them about how their views will be acted upon. The council also has a budget with which to effect change.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are good. The links with other schools and colleges are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive good information and show a high level of satisfaction with the school;
- The school seeks the parents' views and acts upon them;
- Community links and strong links with other schools and colleges enhance learning opportunities;
- End of year reports to parents contain insufficient indication of the progress made and the next steps for learning.

Commentary

27. Parents express positive views of the school and particularly appreciate the good teaching their children receive, the arrangements to help their children settle in and the expectation that their children will work hard. The school regularly seeks and acts on their views and has fed back to them the results of questionnaires so that they know their views are valued. Parents are kept well informed about events through newsletters and the school invites parents to class assemblies and other events, which they appreciate. Parents are kept informed about any concerns and about the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Opportunities are given for them to discuss the individual education plans for their children. The school has changed the format of reports to parents and has included several interim reports throughout the year. However, the parents found the interim reports hard to understand and the end of year report did not give a clear indication of progress made in each subject or indicate how the child could improve their work. Although some parents received information about their child's topics, this was not a consistent picture and parents feel they would appreciate more curriculum information. Good use is made of reading and homework diaries to help parents to understand how well their children are doing.
28. Valuable links with the community ensure that pupils experience a far richer curriculum than would otherwise be possible. The link with the local church has provided the artistic stimulus of a flower festival with the chance for pupils to display their work to the public. The visit during inspection week of a historical society enabling the children to dress like the Tudors created a real excitement and interest in the topic. Local sports links enhance the coaching available while also setting good role models for the pupils.
29. The school is outward looking and has developed good relationships with its local cluster of schools and particularly with the local Excellence in Cities cluster. This is providing staff training, sharing of expertise and curriculum development all aimed at raising standards while fully understanding the local situation. There are also good supportive links with the local high schools which Beech Hill feeds into, to help the pupils through their transition process.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership is satisfactory, though the leadership of the acting headteacher is good. Management and the governance of the school are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher, senior management team and governors have raised the involvement of staff in decision making and in planning for improvement;
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very strong;
- Performance data is collected effectively but is not yet sufficiently thoroughly analysed and used by subject leaders to improve standards and promote provision;
- The role of the subject co-ordinator is weak in most subjects.

Commentary

30. The governing body, with many recent appointments and a new committee structure, has a clear vision for the school and works closely with the acting headteacher. Governors are involved in the decision making processes of the school. They are developing positive relationships and acting as a critical friend to the school. They have been instrumental in working with the headteacher and LEA in providing an appropriate school improvement plan. They are aware of the school's performance data and key weaknesses have been identified

and are being addressed. The governing body has a secure knowledge of the school's finances and plans accordingly. All statutory duties are fulfilled.

31. The acting headteacher provides good leadership in a number of ways. She has improved ownership of the school decision making processes through promoting and developing the lines of communication between all members of the school family. For example, regular and purposeful staff meetings and senior management team meetings are taking place and leading to appropriate action.
32. The acting headteacher and her team have recently undertaken an analysis of the school's national performance figures. This has resulted in a clear identification of the school's needs and priorities and led to the production of a well constructed school improvement plan that has been shared by all parties within the school.
33. The acting headteacher has been instrumental in promoting positive relationships between the parent body and the school. In addition, closer links with a cluster of local schools have provided useful support and addressed some identified training needs.
34. The management and monitoring of the curriculum by most of the subject leaders is erratic and lacking in impact on achievement and teaching quality. Recently pupils' performance data has been collected on the core subjects and a tracking system has been created to record the achievements of individual pupils. There is, however, currently a lack of analysis of this data in relation to the progress of individual pupils and groups so that the school cannot make best use of the information in improving achievement.
35. Subject co-ordinators have recently been provided with job descriptions and guidance to identify with greater clarity the work that they need to undertake. Leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The teacher is a skilled and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Staff write the education plans for the pupils but the co-ordinator works with them in reviewing pupils' progress in meeting their individual targets. She liaises with parents and with all external agencies. Subject leaders have produced action plans for their given subjects that they plan to implement in the near future. These include a realistic timescale to the auditing of resources and monitoring systems and the use of external agencies and visitors to support pupils' learning. However, in most subjects, co-ordinators have not yet developed consistent systems for checking on the quality of pupils' work or the quality of provision they receive.
36. Recent management changes have led to some instability that has impeded development. However, the present staff have worked hard to ensure that achievement remains good and, with the effective support of the LEA and colleagues in the Excellence in Cities group, the temporary management team is making good progress in improving the quality of education.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	999,416	Balance from previous year	65964
Total expenditure	1,000,698	Balance carried forward to the next	67246
Expenditure per pupil	2405		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection and the teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is now very good; consequently, they achieve very well. These improvements result from the hard work of the teachers and support staff and the very effective management of the unit. The team's commitment to continued development is demonstrated by their willingness to become involved in the LEA's self-evaluation system. Improvements in teaching and learning have been accompanied by changes to the accommodation; both nursery and reception now have good outside areas where children can use large equipment and improve their physical skills. Methods of monitoring children's progress are good; teachers know exactly what each child is capable of and what skills and knowledge need to be improved. This information is communicated to parents through regular 'homework' books and a message system, helping to build an effective home/school relationship. All children are fully included in the life of the unit, whatever their background or level of development. Children with special educational needs receive superb care, particularly from support staff. Their achievement is very good because all adults are constantly alert to their needs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of the routines and examples provided by staff.

Commentary

37. When children start in the nursery, their skills are well below average. They have great difficulty in interacting with others and tend to work and play in a solitary manner, even when using the same equipment as another child. Their levels of concentration are low. Through the nursery and reception classes, the quality of teaching and learning is very good; the high level of care, the quality of the activities and the style of relationships modelled by staff gradually develop children's interest and social skills. Regular routines become familiar and the consistent, caring manner in which children are treated helps them to achieve very well and become increasingly confident and aware of the pleasure of relationships.
38. Activities, such as role play areas are imaginatively constructed and provide opportunities for children to play different parts and work together. Regular routines operate as children enter the classrooms in the morning and through the day in carpet sessions, story time and snack time. These help children to learn how to take turns, respond politely and help one another. The combination of stimulating activities and the family atmosphere has a significant impact on children's development. Prompted by staff who have a very clear understanding of how young children learn, confidence grows and children gradually begin to select and sustain activities, making decisions about when to change and why. They learn to work effectively by themselves or in groups. In this area of learning, the majority of the children are on course to reach the standard found in most schools by the end of the reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The imaginative organisation of classrooms and activities helps to promote children's language development;
- Close monitoring of children's progress results in targeted teaching.

Commentary

39. Children arrive at nursery with well below average language skills. They achieve well because of the very good teaching and by the end of reception, some are on course to reach the same standards as found in most schools although overall, standards are below average.
40. Teachers are very aware of the importance of language development and both the nursery and reception classes are beautifully organised to encourage children to learn. A range of stimulating displays and activities encourage children to read, write, listen and talk, often around the current topic being studied. For example, the theme of Goldilocks and the three bears was used in the construction of a role play area, a telephone call centre and a garden. Children's language centred round the story and their familiarity with the words and ideas gave them confidence to write and talk.
41. Children's progress in language is carefully monitored and recorded, using national advice and the school's own system. This information is used to make sure that children receive work and support that will move them on to the next stage. Parents are kept in touch through an effective message system so that they also can provide support. The systems help to ensure that children achieve well.
42. A love of books and stories is fostered constantly; story time, using puppets and other devices, is stimulating and fun. Children pay rapt attention, completely absorbed. They clearly enjoy reading as a result, and are keen to demonstrate their skills, with a few beginning to read confidently. Speaking skills develop slowly but well and children's writing improves to the point where a small number of higher attainers are beginning to write in simple sentences.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of teachers' imaginative approaches.

Commentary

43. When they start in the nursery, children's standards are well below average. They learn very well because of the very good quality of teaching they receive and a minority are on course to reach standards similar to those found in most schools. Despite their good achievement, however, overall standards are likely to be below average by the end of the reception year.
44. Children's good achievement is due to teachers' imaginative approach to teaching number skills. Number sessions are fun and mathematical learning is almost incidental. A typical example was seen in reception when the teacher created a pirate crew, who danced and

sang with the rest of the class, while exploring the results of adding on. Learning a key mathematical idea went along with a creative experience that made it a memorable event.

45. Teachers in both classes are also well aware of the need to teach mathematics in real life situations; measuring, weighing, counting, recognising patterns and shapes are all performed in practical contexts. For example, the children ran a café with good food and low prices. Work is matched to children's levels of understanding because of the well organised monitoring of their progress; those who are capable of working at a higher level are able to do so but a significant number will still have a limited knowledge of key ideas by the time they start Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make very effective use of the school environment to raise children's awareness about the world;
- The high quality of teamwork helps children's learning enormously.

Commentary

46. Children's understanding of the wider world is very limited when they start in the nursery. The very good teaching helps them to learn very well but, despite their good rate of achievement, they have too much ground to make up to reach the learning goals by the time they reach the end of reception.
47. The teaching focuses appropriately on encouraging children to learn through their senses. Classrooms and outdoor areas are well designed to provide children with opportunities to explore at first hand. Both nursery and reception classrooms have a very wide range of activities that children can select. As confidence grows, children begin to practise the roles they see around them in their homes. They build with construction toys, make models with different materials, use the listening centre and work on the computer. Progress between the classes is very clear as reception children build upon the confidence and early skills from nursery. Work with computers is particularly good because the reception class is able to use the school's computer suite, where their keyboard and sharing skills develop together. Their awareness of the natural world is enhanced through the use of school's garden areas, for example, a visit from local grey squirrels created an opportunity for study. The growth of their own bodies and skills is also used effectively to increase their awareness of human biology.
48. Support staff play a big part in this area because much of this work is informal, with children's ideas being developed on a one-to-one basis. All adults know what they are trying to achieve and discussions with children are very well managed to develop language skills as well as knowledge. It is clear from listening to these interactions that a majority of the children will still have a limited appreciation of the world around them by the time they start Year 1, largely because of their very low starting point.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons in the school hall are very well taught and provide challenging opportunities for children's physical development.

Commentary

49. When they start nursery, children's physical skills are well below average. They have difficulty controlling large balls and in balancing, so that managing small movements in activities, such as dressing up is also a problem. Nursery and reception teachers provide very well for this area of experience, with the result that children achieve very well and their skills improve to the extent that the majority are on course to reach the standard found in most schools by the time they leave the unit.
50. Classrooms contain a wide range of activities, very well designed to help children develop their fine control skills; construction kits, simple tools, painting and modelling are examples through which their dexterity improves. The outside play areas are also very well equipped to encourage the practice of big movements and the control of small and large balls. The basketball ring is particularly popular in nursery with some higher attainers demonstrating remarkable accuracy and control. Children enjoy dancing, and teachers use this not only to develop rhythmic movement but also to raise awareness about the effects of exercise on their bodies.
51. Sessions in the school hall are very well taught. A lesson for the reception class gave children the opportunity to practise turning, balancing and using gestures to express such emotions as fear and surprise. They found the latter difficult but their overall performance indicated that they were making genuine progress in the lesson and that most are likely to develop a good sense of spatial and body awareness by the end of the reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because creativity is valued and permeates the life of the unit.

Commentary

52. Children achieve very well in their creative development because they receive very good teaching and consequently, learn very well. Many are on course to reach the standards found in most schools by the end of the reception year.
53. Opportunities for the development of creativity are many and varied in both nursery and reception classes. Rooms are full of exciting and imaginative displays and activities. Children can choose to paint, print, model, write, make music and become involved in imaginative play. Class lessons are often presented in dramatic forms, particularly in reception, where playing different roles is part of everyday life. Children clearly enjoy the excitement of the 'play' and willingly respond with their own ideas. Songs, dances and rhymes help them to learn in language and number as well as developing their imagination.

54. Children's work is valued in display and through the praise they receive. Their confidence increases as they progress from nursery to reception. The quality of their paintings and models improves and their singing is tuneful, rhythmic and exuberant. The range and individuality of their work is good and the quality of the finished products, particularly paintings, shows good control of line and colour.
55. The nursery and reception unit is spacious, well organised and attractive, and provides children with an interesting, motivating place within which they can develop across all the areas of experience. Staffing levels are good and the care each child receives is extraordinary; consequently, the children make great strides. Perhaps most significant is the rapid development of children's self-esteem, which helps them to make a very good start to their school careers.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching;
- There is good achievement in literacy in high ability groups throughout the school;
- The development of writing skills is not as good as it should be;
- The location of the library means that there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their research skills or to work independently.

Commentary

56. Compared to national figures, pupils' results in the tests for 7-year-olds in 2003 were well below average in both reading and writing. They were down on the results of the previous year, largely because there were more pupils with special educational needs in 2003. When compared to the results of schools with similar proportions qualifying for free school meals, however, performance in reading was broadly the same. In writing, performance was below the average for similar schools. The trend over time is erratic but follows the national trend overall. The results of national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2003 were affected adversely by the numbers of pupils with special educational needs and by the numbers of pupils joining the school during Years 3 to 6. Standards were below the national average but above the average for schools with similar proportions of pupils qualifying for free school meals. The results were better in 2003 than in the previous year and the trend over time was similar to the national trend.
57. Pupils make good progress in their reading throughout their time in the school because of the opportunities they are given to read a range of styles for a variety of purposes. They develop their reading skills and strategies for recognising unfamiliar words systematically. They borrow books from the classroom and school libraries, and regularly take home their reading books for practice with their parents. This reading is monitored and informs class records of individual pupils' achievements. The most able children read with expression and feeling, recognising characterisation and theme, and reach above average standards. Teachers provide an effective model for pupils to follow. This was seen in a very good lesson where the teacher brought out the feeling in the story through the quality of her performance of the text. Overall, however, standards of reading remain below average.
58. The school library is in an unsuitable location at the end of the school furthest from the older pupils. A visit involves walking the length of the school, going outside and through the Foundation Stage building, a journey that takes up valuable time. Within the library there is no

Internet link and book resources need to be upgraded. Available class time is limited with pupils needing to be timetabled for them to visit. This limited access restricts children in using their research and referencing skills fully and in developing their abilities to learn for themselves.

59. Pupils achieve well in writing during their time in the school. Grammar and punctuation are taught well and systematically on a regular basis during the literacy hour. The most able pupils by the end of Year 6 produce some very good work that is both fluent and imaginative. However, further opportunities to use the skills they have been taught are too infrequent and there are not enough opportunities to use their writing skills in other subjects. Handwriting and presentation is practised throughout the school. Unfortunately, the good quality achieved in practice is rarely transferred from the handwriting lesson to other work. This results in the printed rather than the taught cursive hand being seen in the older pupils' work.
60. Speaking and listening skills are below those expected by the end of Year 6. However, achievement is good during pupils' time within the school. Pupils are provided with many opportunities during lessons to be involved with group and whole-class discussions. Skills are supported by the teachers' good use of open-ended questioning in asking for pupils ideas and opinions. In all classes observed, pupils were enthusiastic and willing to be involved in discussions. Learning support assistants very effectively helped pupils with special educational needs in their understanding and successfully encouraged their involvement. Good opportunities are provided for developing speaking and listening skills in activities, such as the Listening Council and circle discussions in religious education and PSHCE lessons.
61. The quality of the teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is good and sometimes very good, often using the structure of the literacy hour to good effect. However, there are times when teachers choose to develop skills rather than taking the chance to ask pupils to write independently about something that has gripped their interest and pupils' motivation is lessened. Lessons are well planned and meet the needs of the range of pupils within each class. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well because of the work that is adapted for them and because of the support they receive.
62. The subject leader has only recently taken up the position and has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of pupils' work or the quality of teaching in English. There is little evidence that in the past year or two the leadership has brought about significant improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. While opportunities to use language and literacy in other subjects are satisfactory, many opportunities are missed to provide pupils with purposes and audiences for writing in subjects, such as religious education and history. A very good model is provided by the kinds of writing that are produced in the environmental projects undertaken by the older pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, enjoy lessons and have positive attitudes throughout the school because it provides well for the needs of all the pupils;
- Teaching is good and is particularly strong in Year 2 and Years 5 and 6;
- Teachers and support assistants work well together;
- The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well - there is a strong focus on number and pupils' numeracy skills are well developed;
- ICT is not sufficiently used to support the learning in most lessons.

Commentary

64. Results in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were well below the national average but broadly similar to those for schools with a similar proportion qualifying for free school meals. Although boys usually perform better than girls in the mathematics tests, in 2003, the reverse was true. The tests for 11-year-olds showed pupils performing below the national average but above the average for similar schools. Results vary from year to year but overall, the trend is similar to that nationally.
65. Since the previous inspection, standards in mathematics have been maintained. This is commendable considering the large number of pupils with special educational needs and the large number of pupils who are leaving or joining the school at various times during the year. The school is now providing better for higher attaining pupils throughout the school through providing more challenge in lessons.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Work and test results are carefully analysed to see where improvements can be made. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject to help build on current practices.
67. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Consequently, the curriculum in mathematics is planned well and reflects the National Numeracy Strategy. This is having a positive impact on the standards. The good focus on number is seen to good effect in the mental arithmetic part of the lesson. All pupils enjoy these sessions which moved at a rapid pace. Everyone is involved when pupils use whiteboards and digit cards to show their answers. Pupils gain great satisfaction explaining how they have calculated their answers. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils were consolidating their long multiplication skills - a higher attaining pupil, when calculating 35×18 , explained that he 'multiplied the 35 by 10 and then doubled it before taking off two lots of 35, giving an answer of 630'. He did this calculation in his head!
68. Teacher and support assistants work well together. Teaching assistants are skilful in supporting individuals and groups in lessons. This results in all pupils being able to take an active part in the lessons. Teachers question the pupils well to probe and consolidate their learning, and opportunities are given for them to use the time at the end of the lesson to reflect on what they have learned.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and some very good teaching was observed in Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6. In a Year 2 lesson on partitioning two digit numbers, for example, each ability group was given a task that challenged and interested them. The lesson moved at a brisk pace throughout and the teacher's explanations and the help given to lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs by support staff ensured high levels of achievement for all. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieved well in the lessons seen. This is because work was planned at

the correct level for them and they received good support from the adults who worked with them.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to use their knowledge and skills in other subjects. In science, the pupils produce graphs and charts and they use their measuring skills in design and technology. Opportunities are missed during many lessons for pupils to use ICT to help them consolidate what is being taught, although good integration of ICT and mathematics was observed in a lesson in the computer suite.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes good use of national advice to ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum;
- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average though there is some good achievement;
- There are wide variations in how effective the teaching is;
- Systems for monitoring pupils' progress do not ensure that work builds on what they already know;
- There has been insufficient monitoring to ensure a consistently good quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

71. Results in the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2003 were well below the national average but broadly in line with those of schools with similar levels of free school meals. The results were adversely affected by the make-up of the Year 6 group, which included an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and a high proportion of pupils who arrived during the junior years.
72. The school provides a broad and balanced science curriculum because it makes thoughtful use of the advice provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The co-ordinator has developed a good curriculum structure, which effectively supports non-specialist teachers, and has recently acquired some much needed learning resources. Pupils consequently receive lessons that effectively cover the National Curriculum, with a good balance of knowledge and skill based activities. Most importantly, they have opportunities to become involved in practical activities; making decisions and solving problems. For example, work in Year 6 on dissolving, evaporating and filtering, and activities in Year 2 on melting and freezing, all involve first-hand work which effectively promotes pupils' understanding of key scientific concepts. The work is also evidence of the way in which pupils' ideas about materials are developed through the school. This structure of lessons helps to ensure that, from a below average starting point, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
73. In some lessons, the quality of teaching and learning is good; consequently, pupils achieve well. A lesson for Year 2 pupils was well planned, with clear objectives and an effective sequence of activities. The teacher's questioning helped to establish what the pupils already knew and made sure that everyone had a sound, basic understanding. The activities were challenging, with pupils having to solve problems in order to make an electric circuit work. Higher attaining pupils had more complex equipment to deal with and, typically, pupils with special educational needs were very well supported to ensure their full involvement. Pupils who made a circuit received a certificate to celebrate their success. The lesson was very

effective because it focused on its objective, recognised that pupils make progress at different rates and celebrated their achievement.

74. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, there are some weaknesses which result in pupils' standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 being below average. This shows deterioration since the previous inspection. In most lessons, pupils are well managed, their behaviour is good and they work hard, clearly interested in science. Weaknesses stem from a lack of focus on key scientific ideas. Lessons about the effect of exercise on the human heart, for example, did not pay sufficient attention to either the muscular nature of the organ or to its key function in pumping oxygenated blood round the body. Similarly, a lesson involving the dissection of flowers paid little attention to the moral and environmental implications of the activity. Most of the weaknesses in lessons occur because there has been insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning; consequently, weaknesses have been allowed to persist and pupils' achievement has been inhibited.
75. Systems for the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are not developed sufficiently to ensure that the work provided builds on what they already know and can do. Higher attainers are not always given work that helps them to progress more quickly to higher levels of understanding because teachers are not aware of their capabilities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, achieve very well and standards by the end of Year 6 are above the national average;
- The subject is well led and the quality of teaching is good;
- The use of the computer suite enhances learning in ICT and other subjects;
- There is not enough consistent use of ICT in other subjects in the classroom.

Commentary

76. Energetic and knowledgeable leadership has helped to develop the spacious and well resourced computer suite, a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has also ensured that teachers are well trained and confident in using the available software and hardware, such as the Smart Board. Consequently, teaching is confident and effective so that pupils achieve very well and reach good standards by the time they leave the school, maintaining the standards seen at the last inspection. For example, pupils in Year 5 are confident to use the computers to design control mechanisms for use in their design and technology project on making fairground rides that work. Pupils of all abilities are able to achieve very well because teachers are good at allowing the higher attainers to work independently and at providing extra attention and support for pupils who are less confident. The computers in the classrooms in Years 1 and 2 are not networked with those in the junior classes or with the computer suite and consequently opportunities are missed for older and younger pupils to work together and to undertake work for each other. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and reach the expected standards by the end of Year 2.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. ICT serves other subjects well in the work done in the computer suite, where pupils' learning in mathematics and science, for example, is enhanced because of the ICT programs used. There is also very good work done using ICT in projects, such as those relating to education for sustainable development; in these, literacy, art and ICT are very well integrated. In classroom lessons, however, there is not enough consistent use of ICT in other subjects and opportunities are missed to promote learning both in ICT and in the other subjects.

HUMANITIES

78. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe a very limited number of lessons in both **geography** and **history** and no judgement can be made on the quality of provision in either subject. Evidence was gathered through discussion with staff and pupils, the scrutiny of pupils' work and examples on display. Although it was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of the teaching and learning, it was clear that standards were at broadly expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in both subjects, thus maintaining the standards seen at the last inspection.
79. The geography curriculum is considerably enhanced by the environmental projects that the older pupils in particular are involved in. This involves extensive use of ICT, as, for example, during an Internet debate on the possible impact of an oil spill near the Galapagos Islands. The residential visit to the Lake District for older pupils extended learning in a variety of aspects of geography.
80. The history curriculum is enriched by the use of visitors to the school. An actor, for example, used costume and drama to explore with older pupils some of the differences between lives today and in Tudor times.
81. Subject leadership in both subjects is unsatisfactory, particularly in sampling pupils' work and monitoring their progress and in monitoring the quality of teaching.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good;
- Pupils show respect for the beliefs and views of other people;
- Leadership of the subject, particularly in monitoring achievement and the quality of teaching and learning, is weak.

Commentary

82. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are at expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, as they were at the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good, with teachers using resources well and encouraging an understanding and respect for the customs and beliefs of other faiths. Learning in religious education is sometimes enhanced by lessons in philosophy and in PSHCE, where pupils are encouraged to discuss religious, moral and philosophical issues.
83. At present, the subject does not have a high profile in school and the co-ordinator does not examine samples of pupils' work to check their progress. While she monitors teachers' planning, she does not yet observe lessons.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. Too little teaching was seen in **design and technology, music** and **physical education** to make an overall judgement about provision in those subjects. A small number of lessons were observed in music and physical education and discussions took place with staff and pupils. Pupils' work was analysed in design and technology. It is clear that the curriculum in all three subjects is satisfactory. Standards in the singing aspect of music are satisfactory, as they were at the time of the last inspection.
85. Work in design and technology, on display, showed that pupils experience a curriculum which provides for the progressive development of skills in designing and making. Projects are often linked productively with other subjects such as science and ICT. A consistent approach to teaching and learning is encouraged by the use of a common design booklet and code of practice.
86. Music is effectively led and staff are now more confident to teach the subject. Pupils' singing skills are developed each week when the music co-ordinator uses her considerable expertise to teach all the pupils in the infant and junior classes. Pupils are given the opportunity to perform in school productions. A few pupils learn to play musical instruments, such as the guitar, flute and saxophone.
87. In physical education, pupils learn to swim when they are in Year 4. By the time they leave the school, the vast majority are confident swimmers. Many opportunities are given for pupils to join in sporting activities with other schools. Recently a Year 6 athletics team were very successful when they took part in the Wigan Schools' Indoor Festival. A good range of after-school clubs, such as netball and football for both boys and girls provide additional opportunities to develop team skills.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well;
- Teaching is good;
- The subject leader does not monitor achievement and teaching sufficiently.

Commentary

88. Pupils of all levels of ability achieve well, with higher attainers and talented pupils in particular being given opportunities to explore techniques that challenge them effectively. Some of their paintings using a stained glass style, for example, show a strong sense of form and colour. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the teachers and support staff so that they produce pleasing work at the level of which they are capable. The teaching is good, particularly by the specialist teacher. Pupils are presented with a stimulating variety of techniques and media, and the knowledgeable teaching ensures that their skills develop systematically, often through practice and first drafts in their sketch books. They encounter a good variety of work by artists both familiar and less well known, though there is not enough art from cultures other than western ones. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable but has not yet set up systems to check and monitor pupils' progress or the quality of teaching.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in PSHCE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and provides opportunities for pupils to share their feelings and ideas, though the approach is not consistent throughout the school;
- Pupils' sense of responsibility is very well promoted by the Listening Council;
- There is good use of visitors and visits to help pupils learn.

Commentary

89. PSHCE lessons observed during the inspection were well taught and good use is being made of 'Circle Time' when the children can discuss issues or voice their concerns. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about keeping healthy and safe, as, for example, by involvement in the Crucial Crew initiative run by the emergency services. Good use is made of external experts to teach health education and drugs awareness in appropriate and interesting ways, such as by involving the community police or school nurse.
90. Older children take pride in helping younger children either in lessons or at playtime. They are given plenty of responsible jobs to encourage their social development. Exciting opportunities have been created for pupils to become responsible citizens through environmental awareness projects. They can express their views and play a part in setting the direction of the school through the Listening Council. However, the school has recognised the need to continue to improve the provision of PSHCE to achieve a consistent approach which allows pupils to build systematically on their existing skills.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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