

INSPECTION REPORT

BELGRAVE INFANT SCHOOL

Chester

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 110984

Headteacher: Mrs D Garratt

Lead inspector: Mr J Plumb

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th July 2005

Inspection number: 266402

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	153
School address:	Five Ashes Road Westminster Park Chester Cheshire
Postcode:	CH4 7QS
Telephone number:	01244 680464
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Welch
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are 153 pupils on roll, including 58 reception children. The school is about to face a drop in roll because of a fall in the birth rate in the local area. Over 50 per cent of the pupils come from outside the catchment area. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is not high. Although the number with English as an additional language is a bit higher than in most schools, very few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at six and a half per cent, is below the national average. There are 6.7 per cent of pupils with special educational needs, a figure well below the national average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The school has successfully achieved a number of national awards and leads on a number of local and national initiatives, which benefit pupils and their parents.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16930	Mr J Plumb	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education English as an additional language
9039	Mr B Eyre	Lay inspector	
30205	Ms T Kenna	Team inspector	Science Art and design Geography History Music Foundation Stage
14991	Mr A Hardwicke	Team inspector	English Design and technology Citizenship Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school with a significant number of outstanding features. Achievement is very good throughout the school. The very good, and high proportion of excellent teaching, motivates pupils in their learning. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and her vision that all pupils will develop enquiring minds, become independent learners, and show respect to all around them, is shared by all staff. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is very good throughout the school. Standards are well above the national average in reading and writing, mathematics, science, information and communication and technology (ICT), art and design, design and technology and personal, social and health education and citizenship. Standards in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In all other subjects where sufficient evidence was gathered standards are above average.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership as evidenced in the development of an excellent curriculum.
- Analysis of how well the school performs is excellent and the findings from this analysis are used very effectively to inform planning to raise standards.
- Excellent provision is made for pupils' personal development.
- Teaching and learning are exciting, challenging and based on excellent subject knowledge and as a consequence learning is very good. There is a significant amount of outstanding teaching.
- Links with parents are excellent.

Improvement since the last inspection is very good. All of the issues identified then have been addressed fully. These were all minor issues. Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are better than at the time of the last inspection. Teaching and learning styles have improved significantly: teachers are very confident to use role-play and so make learning interesting and fun for pupils whilst never losing sight of the importance of challenge. The school, according to parents, is more open and accessible to them.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	A*	A	A	A
writing	A*	A	A	A
mathematics	A	B	A	B

*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*

Achievement is **very good** both in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve very well as do those with English as an additional language. Those pupils who are gifted and talented are stretched and achieve very well. There are no significant gender differences.

Results in tests for Year 2 pupils in 2004, show attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was well above the national average. Compared with similar schools standards were equally as high in reading and writing. Standards were only slightly lower in mathematics but still ahead of expectations. Since 2003 standards have been rising.

Inspection findings show that children in the Foundation Stage reach and a significant number exceed the early learning goals. In reading, writing, mathematics and science standards are well above average in Year 2. In ICT, art and design, design and technology and personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) standards are well above average. Standards in religious education exceed those expected in the local agreed syllabus. In all other subjects standards are above average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is **very good**. Attendance is **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **very good** quality of education. Teaching is **very good** and a significant proportion is **excellent**. Lessons are interesting, and exciting and so pupils learn very well. Excellent subject knowledge, interesting activities and very skilful behaviour management are significant strengths in the teaching. Assessment is very good. The curriculum is excellent, including the provision for pupils with SEN. The enrichment of the curriculum is very good. The accommodation is very good and the learning resources are excellent. Support and guidance for pupils and the systems to listen to the voice of pupils and action taken on their views are excellent. Pupils' care and welfare are very good. Partnership with parents is excellent. Links with the community and other schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership as evidenced in the development of an innovative and creative curriculum. The school's vision, shared by all staff is excellent. Governance is very good. Statutory responsibilities are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents and carers who attended the parents meeting and who returned the parents' questionnaire are absolutely delighted with the school. They could not speak more favourably of what the school is doing for their children. Pupils enjoy school and find their teachers to be most helpful. They value having many opportunities to develop responsibility and talk about their work with interest and excitement.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no issues for improvement. The few areas where further work is required have been identified by the school's self-evaluation and there are already robust action plans to address them.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **very good** in the Foundation Stage. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve **very well**. By Year 2, standards attained are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. In religious education standards exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is above average or well above average in all subjects by Year 2 and achievement is very good in both Year 1 and Year 2.
- Achievement in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Excellent self-evaluation results in targeted support for all pupils and raised achievement.
- Pupils with SEN achieve very well.

Commentary

1. The well above average standards found at the time of the last inspection in reading, writing and mathematics have been maintained. In mathematics all pupils in Year 2 in the 2005 national test reached at least a level 2C because of the successful strategy of targeting lower attaining pupils. Standards in science are better than at the time of the last inspection because of focus made by the school in improving the quality of teaching in this subject. Information and communication technology (ICT) standards have improved due to better equipment and increased teacher confidence in the use of the interactive whiteboard to support teaching and learning. Test results have been consistently well above the national average over the past five years. The trend in the school's average national curriculum points for all core subjects is described as below the national trend in the PANDA. This must be treated with caution: *'it follows that as an increasing proportion of pupils in lower attaining schools achieve Level 2A and Level 3, and given that the highest score permitted is a Level 3, that this gap will fall. A school consistently achieving 'straight A's' for all subjects inevitably will fall below the national trend in improving its standards until such time that additional points can be allocated to those who exceed Level 3.* Inspectors found that a significant number of Year 2 pupils are capable of doing work usually done in Year 4 quite comfortably in both mathematics and ICT. In addition there are variations in the cohort for different years. Results in 2002 reflected a very strong group of pupils. In 2003 results fell rapidly but since that time results have been steadily rising.

Foundation Stage

2. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is broadly average. Throughout their time in reception, the children make very good progress as learners and achieve very well in all areas of learning. The vast majority are on target to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning at the start of Year 1, and many are likely to exceed them. The few children with English as an additional language are exceptionally well supported and make very good progress in speaking and listening and are able to access the curriculum fully. Those with SEN are well assessed and planning ensures that they make very good progress in managing their behaviour, taking turns in activities, and in their language development.

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.9 (17.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.6 (16.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.8 (17.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 66 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Based on the 2004 national tests for Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics was well above the national average. Compared with similar schools (based on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals) reading and writing was well above the national average and mathematics was above the national average. In 2004 the number of pupils eligible for free school meals was right at the top of the band used to make this judgement: if the next band up is used then mathematics would also be well above average and evidence reveals that a few pupils made the grade difference in any case. Teacher assessments in science in 2004 indicate that standards were above the national average at Level 2+ and well above at Level 3+.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that standards for the current Year 2 pupils are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Because of the successful strategy to raise standards for lower attaining pupils in mathematics every Year 2 pupil reached at least Level 2C in the national test in 2005, an improvement on the situation in 2004. In science standards are well above average, better than in 2004 and also better than at the time of the previous inspection.
5. In ICT standards by Year 2 are well above average and even better than those found at the time of the previous inspection because of better resources and improved teacher confidence enabling pupils to develop a wider range of ICT skills. Standards in religious education exceed those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Because of the excellent curriculum focusing on '*Excellence and Enjoyment*' pupils attain standards well above national expectation in art and design, design and technology and PSHCE. In geography, history and physical education attainment is above the national average. Insufficient evidence was gathered to reach an attainment judgement in music, but in the lesson seen pupils achievement was very good.
6. Achievement for lower attaining pupils and those with SEN is very good because of the strategies in place to support them. Those with EAL are well assessed and provided with targeted support and so achieve very well. Extension activities and tailored enrichment activities, which provide challenge, ensure that gifted and talented pupils achieve very well. The school is particularly adept in analysing any gender issues that impact on standards and as a consequence is currently challenging girls to have a go at mathematical problems that involve taking a risk; consequently girls' achievement in mathematics is rising. The challenging targets set for 2005 have been met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. The promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils clearly enjoy coming to school; they thrive because of the trusting relationships they have with adults.
- Informal and formal discussions with the pupils confirm that they ‘own’ the school’s routines; consequently there is a calm and positive learning environment.
- Pupils play together exceptionally well in the playgrounds. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions with an emphasis on healthy eating.
- The promotion of awe and wonder, respect for others and the promotion of high moral standards are embedded in all the school does.

Commentary

7. There is a calm and relaxed atmosphere in the school in which the pupils move around in a confident manner. Their relationships with each other and adults are excellent. Their confidence, self-reliance and freedom from oppressive behaviour are promoted in an exemplary manner. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. There are no exclusions and pupils with challenging behaviour are skilfully managed. Enjoyment and fun in learning are evident in lessons because the pupils are caught up in the excitement of inspirational teaching. Pupils who find their learning hard are supported very well; consequently they are fully involved in classroom activities. Parents commend the school for the level of individual support provided.
8. The pupils’ attitudes are strengthened by the many opportunities they have to influence the school’s routines or to be involved in the development of policies, for example ecological awareness is heightened by their involvement in a well developed recycling scheme. The pupils are able to explain how a balanced diet is better for them. Indeed the school is miles ahead in this regard to recently publicised national initiatives about promoting the development of the healthy and safe child. The personal, social and emotional development of children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
9. Class discussions and assembly themes are used effectively to aid moral and social understanding. Pupils can explain why thoughtlessness and dishonesty are unacceptable. They are excited when new information is provided; for example how Ghanaian children are embraced into an extended family in a ‘naming ceremony’. This strengthens their awareness that they will meet a wide range of cultures and traditions as they progress along life’s journey. Kindness and consideration for others is evident in everything the school does. When the youngest children enter the school they quickly assimilate and adjust to the high standards of tolerance and understanding the school promotes; this becomes even more firmly embedded as they progress towards more formally structured lessons.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

10. Attendance for the latest year to May 05 is 95.4%. The good rate of attendance has been sustained and occasional incidents of lateness are addressed quickly and effectively. Records are processed electronically and this ensures efficient day-to-day management.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **very good** quality of education. The curriculum is **excellent** and the school provides **very good** enrichment activities. The school **very effectively** ensures pupils' welfare, health and safety and provides **excellent** support and guidance for pupils. The school has **excellent** systems for seeking and acting on the views of pupils. Partnership with parents is **outstanding**. Links with the community and other schools are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good** and a significant proportion of teaching is **excellent** because it excites the pupils and motivates them to become enthusiastic and independent learners. Assessment is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching based on excellent subject knowledge makes use of role-play in relevant contexts. Because it is exciting and interesting it makes learning fun and enjoyable for the pupils. Consequently they have a thirst for learning.
- Very effective use of a range of artefacts and other visual cues and the hands-on experiences given to pupils in their learning are features of the best teaching.
- Pupils with SEN are very well taught and the teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to their learning. They are particularly adept and skilful at managing pupils with challenging behaviour related to their special educational needs.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and so pupils are not afraid to explore in a safe environment and this enables them to discover that they are capable of the highest achievement: well above that expected of pupils of their age.
- Assessment is very good and is used very effectively to raise achievement.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	15	2	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

11. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. A considerable proportion of teaching is excellent. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection and reflects the school's commitment to improving teaching and learning styles. There is a greater emphasis on role play in relevant life situations and also an improvement in teachers' confidence in the use of ICT to support their teaching and bring it alive. The teaching of pupils with SEN is very good. In the Foundation Stage teaching is lively and learning is fun. External expertise is used very effectively to develop the speaking and listening skills of the few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Extension activities are planned for in all lessons and so higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented in a particular area of the curriculum are given the opportunity to achieve well above that expected by pupils of their age. In Year 2 some pupils constructed prisms using NETS whilst others in an ICT lesson created their own 'binary trees' to arrange and manage data about fruits.
12. Role play, powerful visual cues, and a hands-on approach to teaching makes pupils learning relevant, as seen in an excellent Year 1 mathematics lesson when pupils learnt about the management of money in the context of a 'magic shop'. Skilful behaviour management,

particularly by very effective teaching assistants, ensures that pupils with challenging behaviour related to their special educational needs are kept on task and so learn very well. In addition this successful strategy also means that they do not interfere with the learning of other pupils in the class.

13. Excellent subject knowledge, the highest imaginable expectations, and a cracking pace are evident in most teaching. Lesson starters grasp pupils' interest and lesson endings are used effectively to check what pupils understand. Often at the end of lessons the interactive whiteboard is used very effectively, to engage all pupils, and to enable them to demonstrate to each other what they have learnt in the lessons. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and so pupils are not afraid to explore new learning in a safe environment and consequently often surprise themselves and their teacher in what they achieve, as seen in a Year 2 ICT lesson. Each lesson develops pupils speaking and listening skills as they are asked to work with their 'talking partner' before starting the task they have been given. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across all subjects.
14. Assessment is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The needs of pupils with SEN and EAL are very well identified and the assessments carried out inform planning to raise their achievement. Robust and detailed analysis of test papers in English and mathematics inform strategies to raise achievement. Targets are set for each pupil in literacy and numeracy and their progress is rigorously monitored over time. Pupils' work is very well marked and pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work. The school has identified the need to refine its assessment procedure for science and is currently exploring how its assessment of religious education could be improved.

The curriculum

The curriculum meets pupils' needs **exceptionally well**. It successfully promotes excellence and enjoyment in learning. It is broad, balanced, relevant and of **excellent** quality. It enables all groups of pupils to achieve **very well**. A **very good** range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors all enrich the curriculum **very effectively**. The **very good** quality and quantity of accommodation and **excellent** resources of the school meet the needs of the curriculum **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An excellent approach to planning, evaluation, and monitoring curriculum innovation, makes links between subjects and effectively supports pupils' learning.
- The equality of access for all pupils is excellent.
- Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next phase of their education.
- The school offers pupils an extremely rich and varied curriculum, which is enhanced through extra-curricular activities and a range of visits and visitors.
- Pupils' personal, social, and health education is very actively promoted.
- Learning resources are excellent and very effective use is made of ICT in delivering the curriculum.

Commentary

15. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has improved and is now very well planned, ensuring that pupils of all abilities are given a curriculum, which is extremely effective. Thorough attention is given to curriculum planning, and this helps to ensure a consistent approach, for instance between the different classes in the same year-group. Because of the school's very careful scrutiny of its work, it is able to adopt an innovative, whole school approach to curriculum planning. It is able for instance, to try different methods for the teaching of subjects. It then monitors the effectiveness of these methods and either adopts them, or

adapts them in the light of their success. In this way the most effective strategies are adopted, so as to help raise standards in the most productive way.

16. The curriculum is fully inclusive. The curriculum for pupils with SEN is very good. Specific literacy support using ICT very effectively enables pupils with spelling difficulties to make rapid gains in confidence with their writing. The curriculum for pupils with English as an additional language is very good and ensures excellent inclusion for these pupils in every aspect of school life. Extension work and specific curriculum packages ensure that gifted and talented pupils are fully stretched and achieve their very best. Careful review of the curriculum results in strategies to raise achievement as evidenced in mathematics. Equal access for all pupils to the curriculum is excellent.
17. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next phase in their education. Links with the nearby primary school are very strong. Staff and pupils work together very closely, visits are regularly made and reciprocated, and many workshops and shared activities are planned and undertaken. Extreme care is taken to ensure that all pupils' transfer to their next school is as smooth as possible.
18. Pupils benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities that are very well organised by the staff. Pupils are enthusiastic about the activities available to them such as Spanish, French, recorders, computer club, football and tennis. Visits to Erddig to study habitats, the Sea Centre at Rhyl, Theatre Clwyd and local churches stimulate pupils' interest and enjoyment in learning. The wide range of visitors stimulates their interest in music, the arts and the wider local community. Links with the wider community are further developed for example, as pupils join with others for the Chester mid-summer watch.
19. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The very positive and valuing ethos of the school and the very good relationships between teachers and pupils provide very well for pupils' personal development. There is a very well-structured programme for PSHCE, taught through designated and other curriculum subjects, particularly religious education and science. Healthy living is a particular focus of the school, encompassing healthy eating, and a very strong emphasis on physical activity, the latter being developed through the strong programme of physical education and playtime organisation. These programmes, combined with high expectations by all adults, enable pupils to develop very well and underpin their very good attitudes and behaviour.
20. Accommodation is very good. Learning resources are excellent. The very good ICT provision has supported the curriculum development very well. The interactive whiteboards are used very effectively as a teaching aid. The school benefits from a computer suite, which is used for the discrete teaching of computer skills, and computers located in the classrooms, have ensured that they are fully integrated as a teaching aid. The school has worked very hard to make the building and its outside areas a very pleasant bright and stimulating environment in which pupils can grow and develop. The quality of display is stimulating and encourages pupils to interact with it and this contributes to their very good learning.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and safety of the pupils are **very good**. The school is fully and effectively aware of both its legal and moral responsibilities to ensure safety, child protection compliance, medication and safety on outings. All adults undertake appropriate training to ensure compliance with current 'best practice' guidelines. The provision for support, advice and guidance is **excellent**. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All care arrangements are fully secure, all staff work together to ensure compliance with regulations and guidelines.
- Pastoral support provided by the school is outstanding.
- Arrangements to ensure pupils and their parents adjust to the school's routines are comprehensive and effective.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress is organised exceptionally well.
- The way in which pupils' views are canvassed, valued and acted upon is excellent.

Commentary

21. Very high standards of care in the school are made possible because of the way staff collaborate with each other and work together to ensure full compliance with regulations and guidelines. This includes very effective and consistent use of assessment data, which is summarised clearly in annual reporting procedures. This enables parents to be fully apprised about the progress their children are making. Child protection procedures are in place as are risk assessments. There are clear protocols for the administration of medicines and qualified first-aiders are kept up to date with their training. There are regular fire drills. The focus on ensuring that children are safe is robust.
22. The care of pupils with SEN is very good and effective use is made of outside agencies as required to support them. There are plans to create changing facilities so that children with more complex medical needs can be included in reception with the utmost dignity. Considerable and reflective thought goes into valuing the cultures of minority ethnic pupils. Those with English as an additional language are carefully monitored and those at an early stage of learning English receive focused and targeted support with their learning. Racist incidents are exceptionally rare but there are robust procedures in place to manage such incidents.
23. All adults are skilled in the support they provide to pupils and families and this enhances the trust parents have that the school will be equally supportive of their children. Families new to the area are supported equally well, consequently their children settle quickly into the school's routines. Pupils' views are canvassed and acted upon regularly, they welcome visitors and they are keen to explain the school's routines for example the importance of hygiene in the dining room and the correct use of knives and forks.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **excellent** links and relationships with parents and **very good** links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school values highly the contribution parents make to the effective running of the school, it provides a wide range of information to ensure their involvement and commitment.
- Parents and carers opinions are canvassed, valued and acted upon. They are enthusiastic fundraisers.
- Links with the community, other schools and pre-school establishments work very well. Parents say that they have improved in recent times.

Commentary

24. Parents like this school very much. They value the qualities it so effectively promotes and the standards of education provided. Written and verbal comments confirm that children thrive

because parents have confidence in the teachers. Regular newsletters, information about topics and reports from the governors provide an excellent flow of information.

25. Parents are fully involved in a range of support initiatives and their views are taken into account very well in the development plans currently being evaluated. Parents say that the working relationship with pre-school establishments and other schools in the area have improved in recent times. They value this enhanced level of collaboration because it promotes continuity. Excellent workshops are run for parents to help them support their children's learning, as evidenced in the recent very successful workshops on mathematics. The school makes provision for parents and carers who have to go out to work early in the morning to '*drop their children off early*'. The governors are exploring the development of an extended day: to make provision for children before and after school. Parents and carers of pupils with SEN are supported very well and are effectively involved in their children's targets on their individual education plans.
26. The school is involved in a wide number of exciting and innovative community initiatives and these enrich and broaden the experiences of the children. Their recent involvement in the summer watch activities in Chester is one excellent example because the work in school of designing and making masks was then used into the public parades that followed. The school provides facilities to enable local Brownie and Rainbow packs to meet. Grandparents and other family members come into school to talk to the children and to dine with them. The school is also astute in recruiting people with business or promotional skills to develop the school. Funds raised by parent supporters have enabled the school to purchase 'state of the art' outside play equipment for the youngest children. Parents and other helpers are always willing to provide support to ensure adequate levels of supervision for outings. Links with other schools are very good and the transfer procedures for pupils moving to a new school at the end of Year 2 are very good. Effective opportunities are provided for students from the neighbouring secondary school and from colleges to gain valuable work experience.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent**. Other key staff provide **very good leadership**. Management is **very good**. Governance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's excellent leadership makes this a very good school with a number of outstanding features.
- The leadership of the curriculum is innovative and creative and consequently pupils' achievement is very good.
- Self-evaluation is outstanding and is used to inform planning to very successfully raise achievement.
- Governance is very supportive and appropriately challenging. Strategic thinking and planning is forward looking as evidenced by the 'wrap around committee' to explore how the school can better serve working parents/carers and their children.

Commentary

27. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Her leadership of the curriculum and teaching is innovative and creative. Her vision that the pupils should be: '*confident, independent in their learning, develop enquiring minds, know when to move on, and be respectful to all around them*' is shared by all staff and consequently realised in practice. Teachers, the teaching assistants, the school administrator and the caretaker, work as an effective team to create an outstandingly positive learning environment for the pupils. All pupils are fully included in every aspect of school life and achieve their very best because of

the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. She is ably supported by a very effective deputy headteacher: in partnership they provide very effective leadership at a time when the school is experiencing a falling roll due to a significant drop in the birth rate in Chester. Together they empower staff and morale is high as a consequence. Because of the focus in the school development plan to improve subject leadership the co-ordination of subjects is very good and plays a crucial part in raising achievement in all subjects. There is a commitment to making the government's strategy '*Excellence and Enjoyment*' a reality in this very good school. Leadership of the provision for pupils with SEN, for those with EAL and the gifted and talented is very good.

28. Management is very good. The school's self-evaluation and its use is excellent. This is exemplified in mathematics where a robust self-evaluation identified deficiencies and a robust action plan has resulted in raised achievement. The monitoring of teaching and learning is excellent, and the model of feedback to teachers following observations results in teachers having increased confidence to teach even better. Because of the excellent monitoring systems the senior management and governors know where the strengths and weaknesses are in the school and so are able to take robust action to deal with the deficiencies. All other aspects of management are very good. The school development plan is a very effective tool to support the management of change and bring about improvement. The *change team* has adopted a sensible and realistic approach to '*workforce reform*' and all teachers will have the legally required amount of non- contact time from September 2005.
29. Financial planning is very good. There is a clear rationale for the carry forward. Funds have been targeted to improving ICT resources, which in turn have had a very positive impact on raising standards. In addition prudent financial planning has been necessary to maintain the high quality of teaching and very good achievement in the context of a falling roll because of a decline in the birth rate in Chester. Financial control is excellent. Best value principles are very good: this is evidenced in the provision of school meals, which led the way on healthy eating before the emergence of a recent national impetus.
30. Governance is very good. The governing body supports the headteacher very well and acts as a true critical friend. They are fully involved in decision making. Because they are kept well informed about the school's performance, they ask as required challenging questions. Recently a '*wrap round committee*' has been formed to explore the possibility of the school providing an extended day to support families where both parents and carers are at work. They take their roles and responsibilities very seriously and are keen to be even better. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities and justifiably are proud of their very good school with outstanding features.
31. Performance management is very good and teaching assistants are part of the process. Continuing professional development is linked to the school development plan and is very good. It makes a very valuable contribution to improved teaching and learning styles, which in turn has a positive effect on raising achievement. The induction procedures for teachers new to the school are very good.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	374,568
Total expenditure	366,535
Expenditure per pupil	2395.06

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	26,050
Balance carried forward to the next	34,083

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32. Provision in all areas of learning is **very good** except for the development of children's **physical development which is excellent**. It provides children with a very stimulating and effective start to school life.
33. Children enter one of two reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they become five; they are placed in discrete classes approximately two weeks after starting school, thus ensuring a similar range of ability in each class. They enter the school from a very wide range of different pre-school settings and with a wide range of attainment. The overall attainment of the children is what is usually expected for children of this age. This is similar to the last inspection. With very good achievement, the vast majority will reach and many exceed the early learning goals in most areas of learning by the end of the reception year. There is good improvement since the last inspection.
34. Both classes provide a very stable and caring environment. In all areas of learning teaching is very good. As a result children learn very successfully and achieve very well. This is because staff:
- are a very strong team who have a consistent approach when supporting children;
 - plan interesting and stimulating activities to engage children's interest; and
 - make very good links between areas of learning so children learn in a joined up way.
35. As soon as children begin their schooling they are assessed against the nationally recommended targets. Further daily assessment ensures that planning is constantly adapted to meet the changing needs of all the children in all the areas of their development. Teachers have very good links with parents. There are good procedures to help the parents, carers and children to settle into school and so they become involved in their work. Both classes have their own teaching areas that are very well equipped and established. They have immediate access to outside and indoor activity areas, both of which are also very well equipped. All areas are very well used to develop children's skills in all areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Regular routines are quickly established.
- Good classroom organisation develops social interaction.
- All staff show a consistent approach when supporting children.

Commentary

36. In both classes routines are very well established. Children work in various groups and they take turns and share. As a result children are growing in confidence and developing positive attitudes to their work. They understand classroom rules and routines and their behaviour is very good. For example, lining up for lunch is accomplished in a sensible and careful way.
37. Children enter the school with personal, social and emotional developments that are at the levels expected. The teacher and classroom assistants place great emphasis on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills, and in order to do this they design activities supporting all areas of learning. The classroom has been carefully organised to enable

children to select what they do from a planned range of activities. Children make choices sensibly and most work confidently in the various areas of the classroom. They concentrate for appropriate periods, at times sitting quietly or working as part of a group or the whole class. All children willingly share the resources available and take appropriate responsibility for putting away what they have used.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's communication skills are very well developed.
- Great emphasis is placed on developing children's speaking and listening skills.
- Writing is made relevant and interesting.

Commentary

38. As a result of very good teaching strategies, children answer questions posed by their teacher and are very eager to express their ideas in words. The majority show great confidence in speaking to adults and to other children, and all initiate conversations in their play. Children are aware that books are a source of information and pleasure. They enjoy listening to stories and sharing a book with an adult; many enjoy reading stories for themselves. Most children know nearly all letter sounds and can draw the shapes of letters.
39. Children understand that writing is used to communicate and at times they enjoy working at the writing tables, making books and lists. They have opportunities to write during their imaginative structured play sessions. In one session observed, the children made 'zig-zag' books containing rhyming words some of which they had identified when reading the poem '*There are big waves*'. Staff work with small groups of children giving them very individually focused help. When writing independently at the writing table, many children demonstrated their ability to use their knowledge of sounds to write words that are phonetically recognisable.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's counting skills.
- Mathematical concepts are made relevant to children's experiences.

Commentary

40. Children are making very good progress in developing their awareness and understanding of mathematics. They enjoy counting. Most children count accurately to 20, and many beyond. The teachers make very good use of every opportunity to encourage children to count and use the correct mathematical language such as: *how many children are present? How many more or less?* Number rhymes are also regularly used to reinforce children's counting and children count while they sort objects as they play.
41. The teachers organise the classrooms effectively to enable them to meet the mathematical needs of all children. Planning ensures that children are provided with a balance of teaching and activities. Mathematical learning opportunities are planned into a range of activities that children choose for themselves. Most children recognise simple two-dimensional shapes.

They know circle, square, triangle and rectangle. They relate addition to combining two groups of objects, and can use the appropriate language and symbols. In one very good lesson observed, children used analogue clocks to record the time in hours, of their daily routines. They correctly used the appropriate vocabulary, such as *earlier* and *later*.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan a very good range of interesting activities that lay a strong emphasis on practical investigation. This makes learning interesting and exciting.
- Computer skills are being developed very well

Commentary

42. Children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to learn about their world. Activities are interesting and are well planned with an emphasis on investigation. For example, children as part of their sea topic closely examined a fish and they were encouraged to describe what they saw. All contributed, many knowing that the fish has fins, and it uses gills to breath. As part of the same topic, children made '*Golden Cheese straws*' to use as pirates' treasure. As appropriate they are taught religious education very well.
43. Children use the computers with great confidence, using the mouse to identify and move items on the computer screen and point to illustrations. A variety of programs is used very well to promote the children's understanding in this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Great emphasis is placed on children's physical development.
- Children are taught well to handle resources safely.

Commentary

44. Staff use the outdoor area very well to support children's physical development. Opportunities are planned for children to experiment and experience a range of physical activities. They manoeuvre wheeled vehicles in a controlled way and with an awareness of space. The essence of both the teaching assistants' and teachers' very good planning is the extent to which they allow the children to take initiative and manage the tasks for themselves. In addition to this children have very regular access to the school hall where teachers ensure that children's physical capabilities are developed further. During these times every opportunity is also taken to develop further children's speaking, listening, communication and social skills.
45. The children move around the classroom with growing confidence. They show an increasing awareness of space for themselves and for others. Many use small equipment with increasing control, as they draw or write. Children are taught well to handle equipment with care, and all are aware of the need to do things safely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very wide range of experiences and materials are used to stimulate children's imagination.
- Very good links are made with other areas of learning.

Commentary

46. Children enjoy a very good range of well-planned art and craft and role-play experiences to stimulate their imagination. They concentrate well on these, making pictures and models with a variety of materials and paint. They observe the work of artists and attempt to replicate their ideas. This was seen as children mixed different shades of blue and green acrylic paint. These they used to paint pictures of waves on acetate in the style of David Hockney. They relate well to each other and share imaginative ideas to create stories and events. All the children enjoy singing and making music. Children learn very well from role-play. Their responses indicate that they are observing and remembering situations well. An example of this was seen when they went through the actions of walking the plank, following their construction of a pirate ship.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic literacy skills are very well taught and this means that the pupils learn very well. They achieve standards, which are well above average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEN, are very well catered-for by very careful planning.
- Assessment procedures are very thorough, and the resulting information about what individuals know and can do is very well used to plan what they need to do next.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

47. In reading, writing, and speaking and listening, standards are well above average, and pupils' achievement is very good. In the last inspection standards were also well above average, and so the school has successfully maintained its track record.
48. Speaking and listening have been very well developed. Pupils who initially are reluctant to express their opinions are given good opportunities to listen to others, and to say what they think. The use of 'talk partners' is well developed and teachers often give pupils a quick moment to discuss ideas with their partners before feeding back to the class. This and other approaches improve pupils' confidence and make them increasingly willing to listen to and respect the opinions of others. In speaking to adults and visitors they are courteous and confident, and say what they think clearly and enthusiastically. By the time they are in Year 2 pupils show speaking and listening skills, which are well above those expected.
49. Reading skills are systematically developed through the school. The school has a varied selection of reading books, which appeal to the interests of pupils of all abilities. The basics of phonics, together with a love for reading, are very well taught. Pupils take their reading books home regularly and parents and carers play an important part in establishing regular reading habits. Careful records are kept, with comments on books read from both home and school.
50. Writing figures strongly in many areas of the curriculum. Basic writing skills are very well taught, and a regular cursive handwriting style is developed. By the end of Year 2 pupils' writing is legibly formed and joined. Pupils are given a very wide range of opportunities to write, and teachers are very good at combining the development of basic writing skills with the imaginative aspect. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils learnt about letter sounds and then wrote imaginatively about the contents of a 'magic box'. The work was very well planned, and pupils of different abilities were all fully included. The magic boxes were very exciting and stimulated all pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The very good working relationships seen in many lessons, and the teachers' very good understanding of the subject, ensure that all pupils feel involved and interested, and they develop their writing skills very well.
51. Pupils with SEN are given a very good mix of in-class support and withdrawal for individual or group support. Teachers and support assistants work very well together to provide the right support, and this ensures that these pupils achieve equally well as others. Those for whom English is an additional language, are given the support they need and fully included in all aspects of the work. Consequently their achievement is very good.

52. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers foster very good working relationships with their classes, expect the best from their pupils, and insist on high standards of behaviour. Teachers subject knowledge is very good and they use methods, which encourage pupils to work well together and develop their independence. They plan the work very well, so as to ensure that pupils of all abilities are fully included. They present the work so pupils enjoy what they are doing and want to do their best. Realistic and demanding targets are set for all pupils, and these are settled on through detailed analysis of test results and previous work. Because the teachers know their pupils very well they are able to give them clear guidance on how to improve. Pupils take their reading books home regularly, and parents help with regular work, both with reading and spellings.
53. The subject is very well led and managed by the headteacher. Senior management as a whole has been successful in maintaining the school's record of high standards. Standards found in pupils' work have been carefully and realistically evaluated, and this has led to clear identification of improvement issues. What needs to be done in order to improve further is therefore clearly understood by all concerned. The school's very good resources for English ensure that pupils of all abilities have all that they need for their work. Recent improvements to reading and library books are well judged.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Pupils are given very good opportunities in a wide variety of lessons to develop their language and literacy skills. To help pupils to clarify their ideas, or to explain what they have done, the system of 'talk partners' is very well used in many subjects. A brief time is given to pupils to discuss what they are doing with the person next to them, before reporting back to the class. Pupils are used to working in this way, and build up their thinking and speaking skills very well. Teachers are also very good at using correct language in different subjects and expecting their pupils to do the same. In a Year 1 science lesson, for example, pupils talk about the differences between the forces of pushing and pulling. They consider their ideas with 'talk partners', and use scientific terms such as 'force' appropriately. Such activities develop pupils' language skills effectively, at the same time as they improve their scientific understanding.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained are well above the national average. Achievement is very good because of the very effective strategies used to raise achievement, which focus on exciting and dynamic teaching.
- Problem solving skills using number lines and jottings are strikingly good as are pupils' data handling skills using laptops.
- Learning is fun and interesting and very relevant to the development of mathematical and life skills.
- Analysis of test results to inform planning to raise achievement is outstanding.

Commentary

55. Based on the 2004 national test results, pupils' attainment is well above the national average by Year 2 and above average compared with similar schools. In 2004, a couple of pupils' results made the difference between the school's results being above and well above average compared with similar schools. The results in 2004 are better than in 2003, reflecting the success of the school's strategy to raise standards.

56. Attainment for the current Year 2 pupils is well above average. Because of the success of targeting lower attaining pupils and those with SEN they all achieved very well, which was a marked improvement in standards for lower attaining pupils compared with 2004. Achievement throughout Years 1 and 2 is very good. Pupils are particularly adept and confident at solving number problems. They make accurate paper calculations and explain their methods of working out solutions to the problems they have been set. Analysis of their work shows that they create number lines to solve problems, and confidently use a lot of jottings (including diagrams) to work out the challenging problems they are set. During the inspection higher attaining pupils in Year 2 were seen constructing prisms using NETS, an activity usually seen in Year 4. Access to laptops enables pupils by Year 2 to reach well above national average standards in data handling work, as seen in their 'Venn diagram' work. Year 1 pupils attain standards in working out money problems at a level well above that expected nationally for pupils of their age.
57. Teaching and learning is very good. It ranges from very good to excellent. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and they successfully make learning exciting and fun whilst challenging all pupils to achieve their very best. The objectives of lessons are shared with pupils in a relevant life skills context, as seen in an excellent Year 1 lesson when pupils were given money problem solving activities in the context of shopping in a 'magic shop'. A combination of cracking pace, exciting role play activity, targeted support for pupils with SEN and the very effective use of the interactive whiteboard at the end of the lesson to check what all pupils had learnt made this an outstanding lesson. Throughout all lessons observed pupils were engaged in purposeful activity, enjoyed their tasks, and made very good progress in developing mathematical skills because activities were so incredibly well matched to the needs of the individual. Every pupil has a mathematical target to aspire to and they usually achieve these targets.
58. The leadership and management are very good. Detailed analysis of test results is used very effectively to plan to raise achievement. Recent findings that girls are reluctant to tackle certain questions, which involve taking a risk have been used to build their confidence in tackling such questions and this has resulted in raising girls' achievement. Very good use is made of assessment to set targets for each pupil and their progress against these targets is rigorously monitored. Teaching is carefully monitored and feedback used well to improve the quality of teaching even further. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The opportunities given to pupils to develop their mathematical skills across subjects are very good. Pupils' measuring and data-handling skills are very effectively developed in science. Because pupils have access to excellent laptops they produce some stunningly good data handling work in mathematics at a level well above that expected of pupils of their age. They learn to weigh in food technology lessons and gain a very good grasp of direction in physical education. ICT makes a very valuable contribution to developing pupils' skills in constructing pictograms and graphs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**. This is reflected in the standards attained, which are **well above average**. Achievement is very good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when progress was judged to be good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good standards of teaching.
- Very good opportunities for pupils to carry out scientific enquiry.

- Very good use of the outside environment.

Commentary

60. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers show a very good understanding of the subject, and so are able to explain ideas clearly to their pupils. The work is very well planned, so that all activities build on previous work, and are suitable for the differing levels of understanding within the classes. Teachers have very high expectations. They expect their pupils to work hard, do their best and behave sensibly. Procedures to assess pupils' progress have been developed further recently. They enable teachers to modify the work in response to individual understanding, and are now a more accurate guide to pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 than was the case a year ago.
61. Pupils in Year 2 have very good investigation skills. They are beginning to devise their own criteria for classification. They identify areas for investigation given set topics. They devise experiments and investigations. They understand that their criteria in investigations must be realistic. This was very clearly demonstrated in an observed lesson, where pupils were asked to devise an investigation to classify animals including humans into different groups. Some pupils devised criteria that were unachievable. This resulted in all pupils thoroughly understanding that all criteria used in scientific investigation must be realistic in order for the experiment to be fair. In a lesson seen in Year 1, many practical activities had been devised which enabled pupils to gain a very clear understanding of the different forces applied in pushing and pulling. This led to a realisation of the influence that degrees of force have on movement.
62. The subject is very well managed and the curriculum is very good. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and keen to drive up standards. She is ensuring that the quality of the curriculum is maintained. In planning, great emphasis is placed on the importance of consistent investigative methods across all areas of scientific understanding. Thus pupils are enabled to progressively develop their skills and knowledge very well from year to year. There is a very commendable emphasis on building excitement into the curriculum and in emphasising the importance of pupils learning and using the correct subject specific vocabulary. The school is working hard developing the curriculum to improve the use of ICT in science and a very good start has been made with the introduction of digital cameras. Very good use is made of the well-managed wood within the school grounds, and the areas available for growing plants.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because of very good teaching based on very strong subject knowledge and a high level of teacher confidence pupils achieve very well and attain well above average standards by Year 2.
- Very good resources enable pupils to become confident and independent learners as they use ICT to support their learning across all of their subjects.
- The very good subject leadership empowers teachers to take risks in their use of ICT and this contributes to pupils' enjoyment in learning and the success in teaching across subjects.

Commentary

63. Standards attained by Year 2 are well above national expectations. Pupils' achievement is very good. Teachers are confident in the use of ICT to support their teaching and so pupils develop their computer skills across a wide range of subjects. The work seen on '*Venn diagrams*' in a Year 2 numeracy lesson, where all pupils were able to use laptops to support their learning, was of a very high standard. The very good standards found at the time of the

last inspection have been raised even further because of the investment in high quality resources and improved teacher confidence. Teachers use the interactive whiteboard very effectively to engage all pupils in learning. They effectively check at lesson ends as to whether or not they have a firm grasp of the main concept taught, as seen in a Year 1 mathematics lesson.

64. By Year 2, pupils log on and find the program they want on the computer completely independently. Once they complete their task they save their work, send it to the printer, and log off by themselves. They use computers with confidence, and at times even take their teacher by surprise, as seen in an excellent Year 2 lesson, when pupils used a program to construct their own '*binary tree*' as part of data work on different types of fruit. Their control skills are well above average. They can successfully, and independently, program a '*Roamer*' to move around a pathway on a grid – they skilfully give the '*Roamer*' a series of instructions to achieve what they want to make it do. Year 2 pupils use the Internet independently to research information as part of history and science lessons. The computer skills of pupils in Year 1 are also well above those expected for pupils of their age as evidenced by their modelling work in geography.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It ranges from very good to excellent. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. They are very confident to demonstrate to the pupils what it is that they need to do so that they are clear about what is expected of them in their work. As a result the gains pupils make in ICT skills in lessons are very good. Information and communication technology is now integral to most lessons, as pupils are able to research information as they need it to support their work, or access a computer because that is the way in which they choose to do their written work. Because of the approach to developing ICT skills across subjects pupils are now independent users of computers: the use of computers is a normal part of their daily routine. Pupils with SEN are very well supported in small groups, and computers are used effectively, to support them improve their spelling.
66. Leadership and management are very good. Planning is thorough, assessment procedures are very good, and the monitoring of teaching and learning leads to very positive feedback to teachers which raises their confidence in using ICT in their teaching even further. There has been a very significant improvement in resources since the last inspection and there is a *buzz of excitement* running through the school about the very recent acquisition of eight new laptops and the increase in interactive software. These new resources make a very valuable contribution to the development of pupils ICT skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. The use of the interactive whiteboard and computers across subjects is very good and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teachers use ICT very effectively to support their teaching in science, mathematics, English, art and design, geography, history and design and technology. Specific programs are used very effectively to support pupils with SEN make rapid gains in confidence in their writing. Pupils access CD-ROMS and the Internet to find out information in science and history. They use art packages to produce pictures in the '*Impressionist Style*' in art and design. Much of this work is carried out independently by pupils who make rapid gains in a wide range of ICT skills as the use of computers becomes a normal part of their everyday learning.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in depth. As agreed with the school **geography** and **history** were not foci for the inspection and so no secure overall judgement is made about the provision in these subjects.

68. Insufficient opportunities for lesson observation mean that judgements cannot be made about overall provision in **history** and **geography**. However, analysis of documentation, observation of displays, and the one lesson in **geography** observed show that the school delivers a very good curriculum. Pupils achieve very well to reach standards that are above the expected levels. Achievement is better than what it was at the time of the previous inspection.
69. In **history** pupils study people and events including Guy Fawkes, the Great Fire of London and Remembrance Day. They compare differences between nurses today and those during the time of Florence Nightingale. Much work in history is linked to art and design, resulting in many very good displays of work throughout the school.
70. In one **geography** lesson observed, pupils in Year 2 were studying India. They used information books, pictures and artefacts to develop their own information book about India. Throughout the lesson the teacher concentrated on developing pupils' literacy skills. They planned their work very carefully, each deciding how they would present the information they had discovered. All abilities in this lesson were fully included. Pupils study physical features of the seaside, they discover how Katie Morag's island of Struay differs from their own environment, and they follow Barnaby Bears travels to different countries.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Very good and excellent teaching based on outstandingly good subject knowledge, delivered through exciting role play, leads to very good achievement for all pupils.
- The subject makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development and to raising their awareness of cultural diversity.
- Leadership and management are very good. Particularly monitoring of the subject, which is used to inform planning to raise achievement.
- Assessment procedures could be clearer to show the very good progress pupils make over time.

Commentary

71. By Year 2, pupils' attainment exceeds the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement is very good. Planning and the quality of teaching have improved since the previous inspection. Excellent use is made of role play to bring the subject alive and skilfully planned opportunities given to pupils for reflective writing makes a very valuable contribution to their spiritual development.
72. By Year 2 pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of the tastes and smells associated with important Jewish and Hindu festivals because of the lovely hands-on experience they have of making foods associated with these festivals. They can explain the importance of Diwali and understand the importance of the rich displays of religious artefacts and pictures so beautifully displayed around the school. Their understanding of religious

symbolism is well above average for their age as evidenced when they explained the symbolic significance of the foods on the Seder plate. Their grasp of what it means to be special is particularly good. Their knowledge of Bible stories is very good and they can relate the teaching of Jesus in parables to how they should behave in the playground. Because excellent use is made of planned visits to a local church Year 1 pupils have a knowledge and understanding of the features in a church, which is well above that expected for pupils of their age.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Some teaching is excellent. In an excellent Year 2 lesson, outstanding subject knowledge, stunningly effective use of artefacts and enjoyable role-play totally absorbed the pupils' interest. As a result, they made rapid gains in their understanding of Roshashannah. Pupils' concentration and confidence resulted in them pronouncing some transliterations of important Hebrew sayings at a level well above that expected for pupils of their age. Pupils with SEN make rapid gains in their understanding because of the hands-on approach to teaching using stimulating artefacts to teach about the significance of religious festivals. Very effective use is made of encouraging pupils to talk about their reaction to artefacts in pairs and their ideas are gathered very well by the teacher who models their answers before they are set written tasks. This results in some high quality pieces of writing as seen in the reflective poems about '*Remembrance Day*'. Discussion with a group of Year 2 pupils revealed that they had been very well taught as they enthused about their learning and sense of achievement. Teaching focuses very well on raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity that results in pupils gaining a deeper and better informed respect for people who follow customs different from their own. All of this is achieved in an atmosphere where learning is made to be fun and exciting. Effective use is made of computers to enable the pupils to research information about world faiths.
74. Leadership and management are very good and make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Planning is thorough and the subject is very effectively monitored to inform planning to raise achievement even further. The co-ordinator has a very good knowledge of the locally agreed syllabus, has produced a very good scheme of work, and has built up a bank of quality resources. The quality of display in classrooms and corridors is stunningly good and significantly enhances pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. Provision is better than at the time of the last inspection but there is still room to improve further assessment procedures.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

In **art and design**, **design and technology**, **music** and **physical education** work was sampled and discussions held with staff. However, there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about provision in these subjects.

75. In a very good Year 2 **art and design** lesson based on Indian art, the teacher worked very effectively to develop the pupils' artistic skills and ideas. Designs incorporating observational drawings of natural objects were developing very well, pupils worked individually to produce their designs using a range of materials, including computer generated design. During the lesson the final design was being transferred to material prior to being treated with Batik wax and dye paints. In Year 1 pupils were observed creating designs in the style of Michael Brennand-Wood, using petals and leaves. Later these would be laminated. Many of the designs were of a very high standard. Pupils have worked with visiting artists to produce many displays around the school. They use a wide range of media to produce pictures, designs and collages. Three-dimensional work is being very well developed, and very good examples were seen of clay pots and tiles. Overall the standard of work displayed around the school was very high. The co-ordinator has a very clear overview of the subject, she ensures that all pupils have access to a very wide range of high quality materials, and she is instrumental in ensuring that the cultural impact on the subject is as strong as possible. The school is working very hard to ensure that pupils artistic and design skills develop progressively from one year to the next. This is very evident from the work seen on display, which suggests that attainment is well above average in art and design.

76. In **design and technology** the full range of activities is taught. Pupils' work scrutinised, on walls around the school, in photographs, and in books and folders, indicates that standards are above those expected nationally, and that pupils achieve well. The practical nature of many of the activities appeals to pupils of all abilities, and standards of presentation are high. No lessons were seen during the inspection, but work looked at suggests that there was a very good sense of enthusiasm and enjoyment in participating in the work. The skills taught in design and technology also make a very valuable contributions to other subjects, and much of the work also takes place as part of very well-planned topics, which include work from a variety of subjects
77. In an excellent **music** lesson observed in Year 1 pupils experimented with *pitch, dynamics, and tempo* prior to developing their own compositions depicting the poems they had written describing what they would put in '*The Magic Box*'. Investigating natural sounds they experimented with instruments to illustrate them. During assemblies pupils listen to music, and join in with songs and hymns. The music curriculum is lead by a very talented specialist teacher who visits the school once a week. She inspires the staff to continue her work throughout the week.
78. In **physical education** pupils are taught the full range of activities. Lessons observed indicate that standards are above the national average, and that pupils achieve well. Pupils participate with enthusiasm, and, when taking part in well-organised team games they are taught the principals of team spirit and fair play. There is a good balance in the curriculum between gymnastics, games and dance, and participation in all these activities makes a very good contribution to pupils' self-confidence. In lessons seen during the inspection pupils commented on each other's performance, and on suggested ways to improve. In a folk dancing lesson, Year 2 pupils showed familiarity with a range of dances, and everyone joined in enthusiastically and with a great sense of enjoyment.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The policy and scheme of work are very good. Links with other subjects are well thought through and effective.
- The school council is developing well and giving pupils a very good understanding of democracy and citizenship.
- 'Circle time' is well used to help pupils explore personal feelings and problems.

Commentary

79. Pupils' achievement is very good and standards are well above average by the end of Year 2. The teaching and learning of all aspects of personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good. Pupils' personal wellbeing is enhanced by the very wide range of experiences which they receive. The development of self-confidence and responsibility are encouraged through work covered in school assemblies, religious education lessons, and in a wide variety of other situations. Such approaches fit well with the school's caring ethos.
80. 'Circle time' is used well, and teachers have attended training courses to help with the development of this approach. In weekly sessions pupils share and discuss topics, so that personal concerns can be explored and resolved. Some worthwhile new resources have been purchased to assist in this work, and are now beginning to be well used.
81. Issues dealt with by the school council include the recent development of play facilities in the playground. Pupils made suggestions through their school councillors, and were delighted

when they saw them put into effect. Lunchtime supervisory staff have been given training in playground games, and pupils have responded well to these initiatives.

82. Aspects of health education are well covered, including healthy eating, hygiene and the development of a safe and healthy lifestyle. The school nurse makes a valuable contribution, and parents are also involved in some areas. Personal, social and health education is integrated well with work across the curriculum. In science, for instance, pupils learn about healthy eating, while in physical education they learn about the effects of exercise on the body.
83. Citizenship is very well linked with social development, and the very responsible attitudes, which pupils develop in the school are very well promoted through a wide range of opportunities. Teamwork, sharing and co-operating, the use of 'talk partners' to share and develop ideas, all form important parts of the school's daily work. The skills of gifted and talented pupils are recognised and developed, and their capabilities are developed in subjects such as art and design, the humanities, music and physical education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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