

INSPECTION REPORT

CINNAMON BROW
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111381

Headteacher: Mrs Lesley Sweeney

Lead inspector: Dr Alan Jarvis

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th December 2004

Inspection number: 266626

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4 –11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 343

School address: Perth Close
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Warrington
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Rev. S Elstob
governors:

Date of previous 5th – 9th July 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is bigger than most primary schools. It has a nursery on site and educates boys and girls up to the age of eleven. Most pupils live nearby and are from a white British background but there are a small number from Caribbean or Asian backgrounds. Currently, there are 2 pupils whose parents are seeking asylum. Four pupils speak English as an additional language. Two pupils are in public care. Overall, the pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are well below average, although there is quite a wide spread of advantage. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is broadly average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. An above average proportion of pupils enter or leave the school in any one year. An average proportion of pupils have a special educational need but a below average proportion are supported via a statement of special educational needs. Pupils' special needs include specific needs such as dyslexia or moderate learning, emotional or behavioural, visual or autistic difficulties. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils are combined together and 3 classes are made which contain some pupils from Year 3 and some from Year 4. A similar arrangement operates in Years 5 and 6. These "mixed aged" classes are also setted in English, mathematics and science. This means that pupils are taught in sets with other pupils of similar ability. There are three sets: one for higher attaining, one for middle attaining and one for lower attaining pupils. The school

has close links with the main local secondary school, Padgate High School. The school was awarded the DfES "*Achievement Award*" in 2002 because it was one of the top one hundred most improved schools in the country. The headteacher has been in post for just under a term.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector	
31838	Martyn Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics; art and design; music; physical education.
18027	Shelia Mawer	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; English; geography; history.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Cinnamon Brow is a **very effective** school that provides excellent value for money. All pupils matter. Achievement is very good overall, particularly in English, mathematics and science. This is because the governors and staff have worked very closely together to focus on those areas that will make a difference, improve the quality of education and drive up standards. Consequently, teaching, learning, the curriculum and leadership and management are all now very effective.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils start with low standards but very good teaching in English, mathematics and science ensures they achieve very well by reaching average standards by Year 6.
- A very good nursery boosts children's learning and helps them settle in extremely well.
- Pupils with special or other educational needs flourish because their needs are identified at an early stage and timely and very effective support is consequently given.
- Excellent financial management meshes in with the very influential work of the governors.
- A very good Christian ethos permeates all years and pupils are expected to work very hard.
- Attendance is well below average and too many parents do not help the school rectify this.
- Pupils' cultural understanding is the weakest area of their personal development.

The school's effectiveness has improved very well since the last inspection. Achievement is now very good rather than satisfactory. Several things have made this big difference. Leadership and management, the curriculum and teaching were all satisfactory but are now very good. Pupils now behave better and have improved attitudes to learning. Improved setting arrangements and much better resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have also helped raise achievement. All previous key issues have been effectively resolved, but attendance has declined.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	A*	B	B
Mathematics	C	B	C	C
Science	A	A	C	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.*

The table shows that the broad picture in recent years is one of pupils reaching average standards, although they were much higher for a more able group in 2003. However, it does not adequately show that standards have been rising faster than the national trend. In 2004, pupils did a little better than their peers in similar schools but in Year 2 the same pupils did poorly on this measure, indicating very good achievement in their last four years in school.

Achievement is very good overall. Achievement is mostly good in the Foundation Stage and stronger in the nursery than in the reception class. Children are likely to reach standards which approach below average levels in all areas of learning by the end of reception. This is a good improvement on their lower levels on entry in most areas of learning. However, they achieve satisfactorily in their physical development because of a lack of outdoor climbing or balancing equipment. Standards in the current Year 2 are average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Achievement is stronger in Year 2 than in Year 1 but good overall. Pupils in the current Year 6 entered with low standards. They did not have the benefit of the nursery. Although they achieved satisfactorily up to Year 2 they have achieved very well through Years 3 to 6. Their standards in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils underachieved in ICT and music at the last inspection. In Year 6 standards are now average in ICT and below average in music but pupils are achieving well because of the better teaching and improved resources.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their attitudes, behaviour and spiritual, moral social and cultural development, are very good overall. However, whilst they have a good understanding of their own culture they understand comparatively little about other cultures in Britain. Attendance is unsatisfactory overall and too many pupils turn up late for school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching is very good. Children learn very well in the nursery, Year 2 and in many classes in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is strongest and very good overall in English, mathematics and science. A team of very well trained and talented teaching assistants provide very effective support to pupils both in lessons and when they intervene and withdraw pupils for more specialised support. Assessment provides an effective spur to learning, particularly in English and mathematics.

A very well planned and inclusive curriculum has a good focus on English and mathematics and most other subjects are well represented. This ensures all groups of pupils thrive, flourish and achieve very well. The very well planned and balanced curriculum in the nursery ensures that pupils get off to a flying start. The setting arrangements from Year 2 onwards, and particularly in the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics and science, are working very well. These enable teachers and the teaching assistants to concentrate their efforts on a narrower range of ability with great success. Pupils with special educational or other needs have a curriculum which is very well suited to their needs. The very well designed and flexible accommodation is used to great advantage. The uptake of a very wide range of extra-curricular activities is very high. Pupils are cared for very well and this successfully supports the school's very strong family ethos. There are very good links with the community and other schools, particularly Padgate High School.

Whilst there is a satisfactory partnership with parents, greater numbers could be more actively involved in supporting their children at home or in school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Although the headteacher has only been in post since September 2004, she has already demonstrated wise and very decisive leadership. The governors play a very influential role in the school and have provided important stability and guidance during a period in which there have been many staff changes. Very good systems for focusing the work of staff, tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics and rigorous monitoring of teaching contribute to the very good achievement. The leadership of other key staff is good rather than very good because some staff are new to their post and have not yet had time to fully develop their effectiveness, and only the headteacher has a very clear whole-school overview of provision.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Both parents and pupils are very satisfied with the school. Parents particularly like the family assemblies and the approachability of staff. Pupils would change very little but would like more equipment outside at playtimes. The inspectors judge that the school is better than they both think.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- to work with parents to improve pupils' attendance, punctuality and learning, and
- further strengthen pupils' understanding of the views and beliefs of other cultures.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The standards judgment compares the school to standards nationally. Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking into account their progress and capability. Achievement is very good overall, particularly in the nursery, Year 2 and Years 3 to 6 combined. All groups of pupils achieve equally very well. Standards are below average in reception, and average by Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen rapidly in the last four years by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, and the very good nursery has contributed to much improved standards by Year 2.
- Pupils with a special educational or other need achieve very well.
- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage overall and stronger in the nursery.
- Pupils achieve well in ICT and music and no longer underachieve.

Commentary

1. Parents mostly agree that their children do well but the inspectors judge achievement to be better than this. Children's attainment when they start in nursery is well below average. Their standards of speaking and social skills are particularly low. Although the poor attendance of a small but significant group of pupils adversely affects achievement, by Year 6 standards are average and overall achievement is thus very good. The key reasons for this are that:
 - teaching is considerably improved, particularly in Years 3 to 6 where it is consistently very good in the setted classes in English, mathematics and science;
 - a very good Christian ethos permeates the school and fosters hard work;
 - children in the nursery, established four years ago, receive a "kick start" to school life;
 - the increased support for pupils with special educational needs is very effective;
 - the school's leadership and management have focused on raising achievement.
2. Foundation Stage children achieve well overall in most areas of learning. Children achieve very well overall in the nursery because of very good teaching and a rich curriculum. This ensures they make a very effective start to their learning and rapidly gain confidence. Although provision is not as strong in the reception classes, the children continue to make at least satisfactory gains in their learning. By the end of the reception year they reach standards that are higher, but are still below average. The one area where achievement is satisfactory rather than good is in children's physical development. This is because of a shortage of large climbing and balancing equipment for outdoor play.

The tables shown in this section give average point scores for pupils. Each level in the National Curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point

every term. So, if a school's points are one point above the national, their pupils are, typically, a term ahead.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (15.9)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	16.1 (15.3)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.9 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)

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

- Results in the national tests in Year 2 have risen quickly since the last inspection, when they were well below average. In 2004 they were above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Most improvement has been seen in writing, where the point score has improved from 12.5 to 16.1. This means that pupils in 2004 were about four terms more advanced than their counterparts in 2000. Pupils have been doing much better than they were as result of better teaching and teachers giving a high priority to these areas.
- Pupils are achieving well in Year 2 in terms of the below average standards reached at the end of the reception class and their capabilities. Standards are average in reading, mathematics and ICT and below average in writing. This year group contains more boys than girls; consequently, standards are lower than last year, but both are achieving well. The very good teaching, effective setting arrangements in Year 2 and very effective support for pupils with special educational needs in both Years 1 and 2 are making the difference.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.7 (30.1)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.4 (27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.9 (30.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Achievement by Year 6 is very good whereas it was satisfactory at the last inspection. In the last four years the overall point score has risen from 25.0 to 29.4 and so pupils are now more than a year ahead of the Year 6 pupils four years ago. Pupils who took the tests in 2004 entered the school with well below average standards. They maintained these to Year 2. By Year 6, their test results were above average in English and average in mathematics and science: average overall. This means they achieved very well overall. The very good achievement is also substantiated by data which calculates the relative progress pupils make in the school between Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement seen in the inspection. Pupils did as well as their peers in similar schools but in Year 2 they were performing well below their peers on this measure. Improvement has been most marked in mathematics and science because of the raised profile of the subjects, better training and a very good focus on investigative work in both subjects. Of particular note are the proportions of pupils now reaching

the "higher" level 5: 24% in mathematics and 41% in science last year compared with 11% and 9% in 2000.

6. Pupils in the current Year 6 did not have the benefit of a nursery education and their teaching up to Year 2 was only sufficient to maintain their well below average standards on entry to Year 2. However, they have achieved very well through Years 3 to 6. Standards are average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The unsatisfactory achievement identified in music at the last inspection has been rectified. The average standards in Year 2 and below average standards now reached in Year 6 represent good achievement from previous starting points. It was not possible to judge standards accurately in other subjects, but the indications are that they are broadly average except in geography, where the subject needs a higher profile.
7. Any underachievement is quickly picked up and the extra support provided contributes to the very good achievement. Not all pupils with special educational needs reach the expected level for their age, but most make very good progress from a low starting point. A significant number achieve so well they are deemed to no longer require additional support. The small number of pupils whose home language is not English also do very well overall because of the timely support which is given.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good and their cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance is unsatisfactory and has declined.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attendance of a minority of pupils is poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' multicultural understanding is not as good as other areas of their personal development.
- The school is a very harmonious community in which very good relationships flourish.
- A very good ethos and clear values make a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development and ensure they mature very well.
- Children in the Foundation Stage rapidly gain the confidence to try out new activities.

Commentary

8. Attitudes and behaviour show very good improvement. Pupils show very high levels of interest and enthusiasm in lessons and other activities. For instance, during a mixed Year 3 and 4 literacy lesson, pupils followed the Christmas story very well. They could recall the main events at the end because they had listened so intently. Pupils generally work hard and take pride in their achievements. Attitudes and behaviour in the Foundation Stage are developing well. Behaviour is very good in the classrooms, assembly and around the school grounds. All pupils are aware of the school rules and there are very high expectations regarding conduct at all times. A family assembly is held each week and this promotes achievement and good behaviour very well. Pupils say that bullying is very rare. There were no exclusions last year.
9. Spiritual development is very good. Opportunities in assembly and in subjects such as science and literacy allow pupils to marvel at the world and also to reflect on many important issues. They often consider the impact of their actions on the feelings of others. There are many chances for pupils to consider moral issues through literacy, drama, religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Consequently, they have a very good sense of right and wrong. Pupils consider school and class rules on a regular basis. They hold very positive views about resolving conflict and the need for orderliness in society. Social development is very good. Pupils accept responsibility very well and know that they have an important role to play in the community. Peer mentors (blue/yellow badge holders), tuck shop and monitor duties enable pupils to strongly develop their sense of responsibility towards others. The school promotes good relationships, including racial harmony, very effectively. Pupils play and work together very well. For example, in a mixed Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson they helped each other on tables as they worked through money problems.
10. Pupils' appreciation of their own culture is good. This is because they have many chances to visit historical and other places of interest to complement work in lessons. For example, they regularly visit the church and there are at least three trips each year to art galleries, theatres and museums. In addition, there is a well constructed programme to ensure that teachers provide sufficient experiences for them to

appreciate wider beliefs, traditions and customs in our developing multicultural society. In pupil interviews, most clearly understood other people's values and beliefs and accorded them dignity but not all pupils had developed the understanding they should. Displays around the school do not sufficiently reflect the multicultural dimension of this country. The small number of pupils from a Caribbean or Asian background say they experience no prejudice and are very well integrated.

11. Attendance dipped to well below the national average for a school of this type last school year and unauthorised absence was very high. Although this was due to a small number of parents not supporting the school, it represents a large decline since the last inspection. The school promotes attendance well by rewarding good attendance with attractive certificates. It works very closely with the educational welfare service and an encouraging improvement in the overall attendance rate is evident in the autumn term (2004).

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	1.1
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a much improved and very good quality of education. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are all very good. Additional very good features include very good enrichment of the curriculum, high quality accommodation, very effective care and very strong links with the community and other schools. However, the partnership with parents remains satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn very well in the nursery, Year 2 and many classes in Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching is strongest and very good overall in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils learn particularly well in the mixed aged, setted classes in Years 3 to 6.
- A team of talented teaching assistants provide very effective support to pupils both in lessons and when they intervene and withdraw pupils for more specialised support.
- Assessment provides an effective spur to learning, especially in English and mathematics.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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0	14 (32%)	21 (48%)	9 (20%)	0	0	0
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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.

12. Teaching has improved enormously since the last inspection, where eight per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and only eight per cent were very good. The table shows how much more is now good or very good. It also includes two satisfactory lessons taken by supply teachers in Year 1 covering for absent staff. Teaching in English, mathematics and science was satisfactory at the last inspection. It is now very good. This is because of the high profile given, very good implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and very good teamwork. Some teachers lacked confidence in teaching ICT and music. Training has now rectified this. Some lessons lacked interest and occasionally time was wasted. This too has been very successfully addressed and the challenge given to pupils is of a much higher order. Both pupils and parents think that teaching is good. The inspectors disagree and judge this to be a key strength of the school and the main reason why achievement is very good.
13. A very good climate for learning is evident. Pupils make good gains in their learning by Year 2 and very good gains by Year 6. The strongest teaching works very well because:
- the setting arrangements allow teachers to focus on a narrower band of attainment;
 - many lessons proceed at a very brisk pace and hold the attention of all groups of pupils;
 - lessons contain a variety of interesting activities which help hold pupils' interest;
 - if the pace of learning starts to lag teachers use special activities to refocus attention;
 - the purpose of each lesson is made very clear and ideas are explained well; and
 - unacceptable behaviour is rare, but if it occurs, it is dealt with decisively.
14. Since the last inspection a nursery has opened. Good teaching overall in the nursery and reception classes combined ensures that children have a positive and secure start to their education. The teaching in the nursery is stronger than the reception classes. This is because tasks are more stimulating for the children and resources are used more effectively to help the children learn. As a result the children are highly motivated in lessons and make very good gains in their learning. This very good teaching in the nursery has strengthened teaching in the Foundation Stage and enables children to achieve well overall. Joint planning in the nursery and reception classes is thorough and assessment is used well to monitor the children's progress and plan the next stage of their learning. Relationships are very good and help to create a very purposeful learning environment, especially in the nursery. As a result the children's personal, emotional and social skills develop quickly, impacting positively on standards. A good balance is achieved between teacher led tasks and free choice activities.
15. High levels of teamwork were seen between teachers and teaching assistants. They work very effectively together to plan, deliver and evaluate a well thought out programme of support for pupils with a special or other educational need. Many examples were seen of them providing support to individuals or groups of pupils in class or withdrawing them for more focused work. Another key to the success of this

support is the sharing of the targets with the pupils and reminding them of their targets as they tackle their daily work.

16. Some teaching and learning was satisfactory rather than good but there was no common reason for this. In these lessons pupils understood what they had to do and there was sufficient challenge to keep them working independently or co-operatively. However, in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class in science opportunities were missed to let the pupils carry out practical work, and a Year 1 physical education lesson did not have the pace that a good lesson would have. Generally, the newly qualified teachers have settled in well. Their teaching is often good but in a few lessons pupils do not yet consistently work to their limits.
17. Assessment was unsatisfactory. Very good procedures are now in place to assess the progress pupils make in English and mathematics. Because assessment and planning are closely linked, the work set for pupils is matched correctly to their abilities. Information from test results is carefully analysed and used to identify any weaknesses in teaching and provide additional support for pupils who need an extra boost in their learning. It is also used very well to set group and individual targets. The targets set in English and mathematics help pupils to recognise their achievements. Through the very good feedback they receive in lessons and the constructive marking of their work, they also know what they have to do to improve. Good progress has also been made in helping pupils assess their own work. An effective range of methods help assess progress in science, ICT and in the Foundation Stage. The information is use well to guide the teaching and learning. Elsewhere, assessment is satisfactory.

The curriculum

The statutory curriculum and its enrichment are both very good. The accommodation is very good, there are good staffing levels and the quality and quantity of curriculum resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics and science work very well.
- A very good curriculum in the nursery ensures children make a flying start.
- The curriculum for pupils with special educational or other needs is very well developed.

- Flexible and very well designed accommodation is used to great advantage.
- The uptake of a very wide range of extra-curricular activities is very high.

Commentary

18. A very well planned and delivered curriculum has a very good focus on English and mathematics and nearly all other subjects are well represented. This promotes inclusion and ensures all pupils can thrive, flourish and consequently achieve very well. Music and ICT have been considerably strengthened and only geography now needs a little more emphasis.
19. Provision has been strengthened significantly since the last inspection with the introduction of a nursery. The curriculum in the nursery provides an imaginative range of learning experiences that are very well suited to the needs of the children. The curriculum in the reception classes is good. There is no large climbing or balancing equipment outside for the nursery and reception children to use and this restricts their progress. Consequently the curriculum for physical development is satisfactory. The good curriculum overall enables children to achieve well in the Foundation Stage.
20. The school made a conscious curriculum decision to set pupils in English, mathematics and science from Year 2 for efficiency reasons and in order that teachers may focus on a narrower range of ability. Some parents do not like the mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6 but they are working very well. The organisation has proved very beneficial and is an important reason why standards have risen. In subjects where pupils are not setted, the planning is effective in meeting the needs of the mixed aged classes. Staff training is poised to begin through the new national "excellence and enjoyment" strategy to further enliven these subjects. A particularly effective contribution to the curriculum comes from the strong links with the neighbouring secondary school, several of whose teachers bring valuable expertise into areas such as design and technology and music.
21. A wide range of support for pupils with special educational needs has been planned with precision, particularly in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. This includes very effective in-class support. The number of teaching assistants has trebled since the last inspection. They are very well trained and deployed, offering for example handwriting and reading support and helping to deliver the "Springboard" and mathematics recovery programmes. ICT has been particularly helpful in supporting their learning thanks to the use of tablet laptop computers which have handwriting recognition programs.
22. There is plentiful classroom space, rooms for small group activities, and spacious areas to gather pupils together. The main multi-purpose hall is equipped for physical education and there is a smaller hall to be converted into a music room. Corridors behind classrooms in both infant and junior wings are wide and conveniently form both study and storage areas. This means that whilst there is no central library, the wide range of books is easily accessible. There are very good outdoor areas for nursery children which are shared by reception classes. Playing fields and outside hard surfaces support the curriculum very well. There are also tranquil areas where pupils may sit and have quiet time. The sometimes intrusive noise between classrooms owing to limited sound insulation is an area for development which the school already

recognises and plans to address. Accommodation for teaching and administrative staff is very good. Everything is very well maintained by the dedicated site agent and his staff, and this helps to sustain the positive ethos.

23. The range of enrichment experiences is wide and includes several sports activities for Years 1 and 2 as well as for older pupils. Extra-curricular activities are oversubscribed so there is a waiting list to ensure the fair allocation of any places which become available. Where possible, sessions run twice in a year. The craft club, for example, operates at Christmas and at Easter so that more pupils have a chance to participate. Music activities include a choir which performs outside school and an art club which has participated in local exhibitions. Pupils contribute to the publication of the school newspaper by invitation because, like a real newspaper, there are certain conditions that must be fulfilled. Other clubs are open to all, regardless of ability or disability.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Pupils are also provided with very good support and guidance and are involved well in helping the school to develop further.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children new to the school settle in extremely well.
- Very effective steps are in place to ensure child protection, health and safety.
- External agencies support pupils' academic and personal development very effectively.
- Pupils feel very valued because of the very strong family ethos.
- The school actively seeks out and acts on the views of pupils.

Commentary

24. The governing body has successfully achieved its aim of ensuring that every child matters. For example, the school provides "wrap around care" for the youngest children: parents can leave their children at the 'little browsers' playgroup in the morning and nursery in the afternoon. There are excellent chances to experience the learning routines at pre-school integration sessions. Pre-school toy and book libraries are available. Children new to the school are very sensitively inducted and the "*all about me*" booklet is used very well.
25. Arrangements for child protection and for those in public care are very good and much improved. There are two fully trained designated officers for child protection. General health and safety risk assessments are undertaken diligently. Fire procedures are very effective. High numbers of staff are trained in first aid, reflecting the commitment to safety at all times.
26. Staff know pupils very well. School records are detailed and information is used very well to monitor pupils' academic and personal development. Target setting is a very strong feature of the school. Learning objectives are shared in lessons and individual target cards are used very effectively. Staff work very closely with agencies including the Warrington Education Support Team and Behavioural Support Service. Very positive assistance is also available for pupils with English as an additional language.

These factors illustrate the school's very inclusive approach to education and the rapid improvements made in recent years.

27. The school has a very strong family ethos, underpinned by very good, trusting relationships between pupils and staff. This gives pupils confidence in raising any worries they may have, for instance, if they feel bullied. Nearly all pupils say that there is someone they would go to if they had a concern and that teachers are extremely fair to them. The school council provides additional opportunities for pupils to raise issues. This has led to the school adopting many suggestions made by pupils. For instance, pupils now sit together in the dining halls whether they have sandwiches or school lunch, and older pupils are more involved in supporting younger ones. Pupils would change very little but would like more outside play equipment.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. There are very good links with other schools and the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A minority of parents fail to adequately support the school's efforts to raise attendance and support learning at home.
- Parents are provided with good information about the school.
- Many community links help enrich the curriculum and learning.
- There are very productive links with other schools.

Commentary

28. Parents are very satisfied with the school and particularly like the family assemblies and the approachability of the headteacher and staff. Although some parents are not happy with the information that is provided to them, the inspection team do not agree. The parents' handbook and nursery booklet give good information about the school's provisions and policies. Newsletters are attractive and clearly written. Consultation evenings are well attended and help parents to find out about their children's standards and progress. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory overall. However, "*educational jargon*" sometimes creeps in and this makes it hard for some parents to clearly understand what is being said.
29. Several parent helpers give their time generously to the school. They listen to readers, help in lessons and accompany visits to the church. However, the overall level of support given by parents in helping pupils at home in their learning, whilst satisfactory, could be much stronger. The "*friends of the school*" organise social and fundraising events regularly. A few parents do not adequately support the school's attempts to raise attendance and improve punctuality.
30. The vicar frequently leads assembly and religious services. This supports spiritual and moral development very well. The emergency and welfare agencies make a very strong contribution to personal, social, health and safety education. The curriculum link with a local rugby club is very well developed. Opportunities for sports skills coaching are also provided by "*kids power*". Many school trips to places such as

museums and theatres support learning. The school puts much back into the community and accommodates many local authority and community training courses.

31. Links with other schools have also improved. The local cluster of schools includes Padgate High School and several primary schools. The group works very effectively in addressing common issues and organising excellent joint events such as the forthcoming 'arts and technology week'. Very good steps are taken to aid the transfer of pupils to secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are very good. The new headteacher is already demonstrating very effective leadership. The leadership of other key staff is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors play a very influential role in the school.
- Financial management is excellent.
- Very good management systems are in place to ensure pupils achieve very well.
- Provision for pupils with special or other educational needs is managed very successfully.
- Newly qualified teachers are inducted very well.

Commentary

32. Governors work as a united and very influential team. During a period of staffing changes, including three headteachers in recent years, they have provided a key point of stability. Some governors apply their expertise very well, especially in ensuring the school makes the very best use of its money, in staffing matters and giving a very keen eye to policy development. This has contributed to the drive for improvement in standards. They actively improve their own performance and regularly participate in training courses. They use their very good knowledge of strengths and weaknesses of the school to hold the headteacher fully to account for all decisions which are made. Their very clear steer has helped realise their vision of a highly inclusive school centred on a Christian ethos and one in which pupils can better access secondary education from when they started. They see the current poor attendance level as a barrier to further improvement and are taking very effective action to remedy this.
33. Many key management systems have been improved since the last inspection. They are now working very well. For example:
- the co-ordinators in the key areas of English, mathematics, ICT and special educational needs lead and manage their areas very well and continually strive for improvement;
 - very effective annual reviews of staff performance help staff focus on common targets;
 - the nursery is very well led and provides children with a very good start to school; and
 - rigorous monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and leadership team ensures staff are accountable and are clear about what they do well and where they need to improve.
34. Although the headteacher has only been in post since September 2004, she has already demonstrated wise but very decisive leadership. Her analysis of the current position of the school closely accords with the findings of the inspection. Her very

good vision for the school takes into account the need to consolidate the present position but to continue to drive up standards, improve attendance and work more closely with parents. Currently there is no deputy headteacher. Besides the headteacher the leadership team is made of three "key stage" leaders. These posts were created temporarily pending a decision on what form of management structure would be most efficacious for the future. The leadership team has been productive this term. The strength is that each leader is developing provision within their sphere of influence very well. However the weakness is that, besides the headteacher, no other member of the leadership team has a well developed whole-school overview of provision. Although the nursery is led and managed very well, more work is needed to further improve achievement in the reception class. Most subject co-ordinators, and especially those in English, mathematics and ICT, lead and manage their areas very well. However, some co-ordinators are relatively new to their posts and their role is developing. For these reasons the leadership of other key staff is good rather than very good.

35. The special educational needs co-ordinator oversees provision very well. She is very ably assisted by the pupil support co-ordinator, who manages the day-to-day running of a very effective team of highly trained teaching assistants. Records are meticulously maintained. A register of special needs is updated regularly and pupils are moved up and down the register as appropriate. The costs of providing support and evaluations of the success of intervention are monitored very closely to ensure resources are used to the very best effect.
36. Very good systems are in place to ensure the three newly qualified teachers receive the support and help they need to meet the targets that are set for them as they start their career. For example, they each get half a day per week when they do not teach their normal classes. They use this time productively to observe other staff in the school or best practice in other schools, or to learn about other aspects of school life. Each has taken on the role of shadowing a subject co-ordinator in order to gain insight of work across the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	775,045	Balance from previous year	-46,539
Total expenditure	753,002	Balance carried forward	-24,496
Expenditure per pupil	2,195		

37. An "eagle eye" is kept on the school's finances by the finance officer. She monitors the budget extremely closely and keeps in regular contact with the governors' finance committee. Each item of income and expenditure is scrutinised in minute detail to see if the very best use is being made of money. For example, only cost effective supply staff are employed, staff training is extremely carefully costed and all items of expenditure are examined to ensure the purchase represents the very best value that can be obtained. Invoices are queried if they appear to be flawed. The considerable over-spend from the financial year 2002/2003 preceded these arrangements, and was caused by higher staffing costs than normal during a change of headteacher. There is expected to be a prudent surplus at the end of the current year. Taking into account

the below average expenditure and the very good effectiveness, the school provides excellent value for money. Again, this is a significant improvement on the last inspection, where value for money was satisfactory.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. As a result the children make an effective start to their education and achievement is good in all areas of learning apart from physical development, where it is satisfactory. In the nursery, the quality of provision is high. It is stronger than reception because of very skilled teaching and better use of resources. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average in all areas of learning apart from physical development, which is below average. Their spoken language and social skills are particularly poor. There was no nursery at the last inspection and provision was satisfactory. Good improvements have been made since then through the effective co-ordination, strong teamwork and generous staffing levels. Teaching and learning are good overall.
39. The children quickly settle into the nursery and become engrossed in their learning. This is due to the very good teaching, excellent induction arrangements and a well planned and stimulating learning environment. Teacher led tasks and free choice activities are balanced very well. Assessment is effective and activities take good account of the different ability levels of the children. Although the curriculum is good overall, it is satisfactory in physical development because of a shortage of some equipment. The positive drive for learning continues in reception, where the teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. The indoor accommodation is very spacious and there is a secure outdoor area. Resources are good. During the inspection the children were learning about "Houses and homes".

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This area is well planned and taught, which ensures children achieve well overall.
- Children quickly settle into classroom routines.
- Staff have high expectations of how children should behave and work.
- Confidence and independence are developed well in the free choice areas.

Commentary

40. Because many children have undeveloped social skills when they start in nursery, this area of learning receives a high focus in the teaching and is central to the Foundation Stage curriculum. By the time the children leave the reception classes they have made good gains in their learning and reach standards that are likely to be below average. All teachers and teaching assistants are patient and caring and this helps the children to quickly settle into the nursery. They are keen to learn and soon begin to acquire key skills. For example they already know the routines for deciding when to have their snack, choosing what to eat and drink and organising it themselves.

41. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to reinforce the qualities of caring and sharing and circle time is used well to promote harmony and co-operation. Most children in the nursery have quickly learnt the correct way to behave and by the time they are in the reception classes, they work happily together on tasks. A small number are still finding it hard to conform to the high expectations set by the staff of sharing resources fairly and taking their turn in free choice activities.
42. Nursery and reception children show good levels of confidence and responsibility in choosing what to do and to work independently. When they first start in nursery they tend to move fairly quickly from one activity to another, but are now staying longer on their tasks, although some still prefer to work on their own. Role play areas have been set up which encourage the children to choose activities that interest them. These areas provide exciting activities, especially in the nursery. Here the staff are very skilled at knowing how young children learn and plan challenging activities that lead to sustained interest and good levels of motivation.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well overall with stronger gains being made in the nursery.
- Teaching is very good in the nursery.
- Every opportunity is used to develop early literacy skills in the nursery.
- Insufficient emphasis is given in reception to help children to improve their spoken language and letter formation.

Commentary

43. Although the children make good gains overall in their learning, standards are likely to be below average by the end of reception, with speaking and writing at the lower end of this level. In the nursery, language flourishes across all areas of learning and consequently the children make very good progress. Speaking and listening is given a high priority and the topic on houses and homes is helping the children to improve their poor vocabulary. For example, in the role play 'stable' the children talk about Jesus being born. However few use complete sentences when they speak or start conversations themselves. That is why adults often support the children in these activities and help to initiate conversations. Because they are taught to listen carefully from nursery, the children respond well to questions, most wait for their turn to speak and they remember what they have been taught. Early reading and writing skills are promoted very well in the nursery. They learn that writing carries meaning when signing the register. They are also beginning to trace and read some letter sounds on their name cards and enjoy sharing their favourite books with adults.
44. In the reception classes the teaching is satisfactory. Although the children continue to listen carefully, there is less focus on extending their spoken language across the curriculum. Many missed opportunities were observed during the inspection. Teachers are too willing to accept single words from the children as answers rather than helping them to expand on what they say. Consequently, although the children are confident

learners generally, some are reluctant to ask and answer questions and need more support. Phonic sounds are practised regularly and this is helping the higher attaining children to read simple words and phrases. Writing is not developing as quickly as reading and needs more focus in the teaching. The children's letter formation is poor and because of this they are very reluctant to write freely. There is not enough shared writing to help more children to gain the confidence and skills to write their own names and use recognisable letters in their emergent writing. By the end of reception only a very few children can write a short sentence.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables children to achieve well overall in this area of learning and reach standards that are below average by the end of reception.
- Early numeracy skills are taught well.
- The outdoor area is used effectively to support mathematics in the nursery.

Commentary

45. Children benefit from good direct teaching to accelerate their learning as well as interesting activities and good resources. Nursery rhymes are used regularly to reinforce the correct mathematical language and recognise numbers up to ten. In the nursery a few of the higher attaining children are already sorting numbers to ten in the correct order and using cards with telephone numbers to phone the doctor in their role play activities. In one reception class the teacher planned a good practical session to give the children experience in recognising and using money up to ten pence. One boy knew that he could use either five separate pennies or a five pence piece to buy fruit costing five pence.
46. The outdoor area is used particularly well in the nursery to extend the children's understanding of mathematics. During the inspection a "street" was set up and the children acting as "milkmen" delivered the correct number of bottles of milk to each building. They quickly learnt how to sort the bottles into sets of three and four. Although the reception children do not have continuous use of an outdoor area, they have regular access to sand and water activities and this helps them gain a good understanding of measuring. Displays also show that they have compared 'long' and 'short' objects around the classroom.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and ensures that children achieve well overall, but standards are likely to be below average by the end of the reception year.
- The good curriculum is rich in opportunities.
- Cultural awareness is enhanced through religious education.
- Children make rapid progress in their ICT skills in reception.

Commentary

47. The children are given abundant opportunities to learn about the world through an imaginative curriculum, good resources and frequent visits and visitors. Over the course of the year both nursery and reception children use the garden area outside to observe minibeasts and grow plants and seeds. They are currently planting spring bulbs and watching them grow. As part of the topic on houses and homes they have looked at the homes of different creatures and enjoyed a visit from a barn owl. The reception children made clay hedgehogs and a suitable home for the hedgehogs to live in during the winter.
48. In religious education, nursery children learn about Hindu customs. When they celebrated Divali they invited the reception children to join them. They made Divali sweets and lit candles. The role play areas are changed regularly to keep interest levels high. The current area as a 'stable' is helping the children to learn about the events leading up to the birth of Jesus and the celebration of Christmas.
49. The children's ICT skills in reception are average and achievement is very good. This is because the reception children use the bank of school computers regularly. They confidently use the mouse and choose their own colours to make pictures of different creatures. However many of the pictures show few recognisable features because drawing and observation skills are weak. Most children find the correct program, write their names using the keyboard and print out their work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strength and weaknesses

- A shortage of large outdoor equipment prevents the satisfactory achievement and teaching from being better.
- Children's fine control in holding pencils is weak.

Commentary

50. Although children start school with below average skills the standards are still likely to be below average by the end of the reception classes. There is no large outdoor climbing or balancing equipment to extend the children's physical skills and this limits their progress at times. However there is a good variety of wheeled toys which the nursery children use frequently to ride and control. Small apparatus such as balls and beanbags is also used to practise important skills such as throwing and catching. There is enough space in the outdoor area for children to move freely and use good levels of energy. The reception children have regular timetabled sessions in the outdoor area and also use the hall for a formal weekly lesson that was not observed.
51. Children are developing their fine motor skills well through the regular use of pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools in the nursery. In the reception classes they need

more practice in using pencils to help them to write more freely and confidently. All children develop a good awareness of a healthy life style by drinking milk, eating healthy snacks and through their topic on food when they taste different foods linked to healthy eating.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well although standards are likely to be below average by the end of the reception year.
- There are good opportunities for imaginative play.
- More choices of materials are needed in art and craft sessions in reception.

Commentary

52. There is a wealth of opportunities for imaginative play in the role play areas. As the children often prepare these areas themselves, their painting, printing and collage skills also improve. Role play is set up regularly outside and whether it is a "café" or "post office" the children happily engage in their activities. Very good links are made with stories and 'teddy bear' or "Grandma's birthday" parties are sometimes arranged. Although there are many occasions for art and craft skills to be developed, the children in the reception classes need more choices in selecting materials themselves, rather than being chosen by adults. The children regularly take part in planned music making sessions and are building up a good repertoire of songs. Reception children have made their own musical instruments and enjoy using them to accompany their singing and learn to keep to the beat. There are fewer occasions for them to have free access to musical instruments to accompany their imaginative play, while this is freely available in the nursery.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 enables pupils to achieve very well.
- The well organised setting arrangements and special educational needs support contribute to the high achievement.
- Very thorough assessment acts as a spur to learning.
- Standards in handwriting are too low.
- Very good leadership and management have significantly improved provision.

Commentary

53. When pupils start in Year 1, their standards in literacy are below average and speaking and writing are at the lower end of this attainment band. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because of good teaching. The effective setting of pupils in Year 2 and a very good special educational needs support programme also help pupils to make good gains in their learning. By Year 2 although standards are below average overall, the pupils' reading and listening skills are at average levels. In Years 3 to 6 the very good teaching, effective setting arrangements and focused special educational needs support help to accelerate progress significantly. Consequently, pupils achieve very well, with a particularly strong gain in Year 6. Standards are broadly average in Year 6. These results are not as high as the above average standards in the national tests in 2004. This can be explained by a much higher number of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6.
54. The teaching and learning are very good overall and lessons observed were never less than good. In the best lessons, basic skills are taught very effectively because teachers set high expectations of what pupils can achieve and deliver lessons in a confident and imaginative way. Planning is thorough and in classes set by ability, teachers plan activities very carefully to match the more even band of attainment. This results in very good learning in lessons. For example the top set in Years 5 and 6 have been looking at the plays of William Shakespeare. Because these higher attaining pupils benefit from more demanding work they were able to discuss the complex relationships and characters in Romeo and Juliet and how they were "brought alive" in the plays. All teachers give careful thought as to how they will explain ideas, and use well prepared resources. This helps pupils to understand quickly and acquire new skills. For example in Year 2, the teacher made a rattle during the lesson to show the pupils in the lower set how to read simple written instructions and follow them in the correct order. Afterwards a group of lower attaining pupils followed the instructions correctly and made their own paper hat. They thoroughly enjoyed the lesson and learnt very well.
55. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very successfully through the setting arrangements and support programmes. In the lower sets there are generous staffing levels and so pupils receive the support they need to achieve as well as their

classmates. The teaching assistants are very well briefed before the lesson begins, so they know exactly what to do. The climate for learning in lessons with high numbers of pupils with special educational needs is often inspiring. Pupils know that their good efforts are always valued and so they are very responsive and well behaved, and self-esteem is high. In a very successful lesson in Year 5 and 6 where nearly all pupils were on the register for special educational needs, the teacher and teaching assistant, through very good support and excellent relationships, helped pupils to distinguish between fact and opinion in a newspaper report and to make rapid progress in their learning.

56. Assessment procedures are very good and have improved significantly from the last inspection. This ensures that work is matched precisely to pupils' abilities and used to set group and individual targets, which are shared with all pupils. Teachers are now beginning to use the concluding part of the literacy lesson to help pupils to evaluate how well they have done and what they have learnt. This is an area identified by the school for further development and it is beginning to be successfully embedded into practice. Marking is very thorough and provides positive feedback to pupils and areas for further improvement.
57. Since the last inspection the continuing efforts to improve handwriting skills have had limited success as standards are lower than other aspects of English. Many pupils in Years 3 to 6 are still printing when they are quite capable of using a cursive script and improving the fluency and legibility of their writing. Not enough time has been given to establishing a whole-school approach to practising handwriting skills and monitoring the progress. Nevertheless there have been very good improvements to teaching, achievement and the curriculum. This owes much to the very effective leadership and management. The astute development plan clearly reflects the results of rigorous monitoring of the teaching and pupils' work and the identification of strengths and areas to develop further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Learning is enriched in many ways in the very imaginative curriculum. Visitors include authors, poets and theatre groups and book week is celebrated. There is a drama club for pupils in Year 2 and good opportunities for all pupils to take place in formal productions. The school gives a good emphasis to promoting literacy across most subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are using their research skills well as more computers are now available. ICT is often used to edit work and produce writing to good presentation standards. Discussions and 'role play' are a prominent feature in most subjects as this has been an area for development. Key vocabulary is regularly displayed and emphasised, particularly for mathematics and science. There are good opportunities to write for various purposes in science and history, although less so in geography. The history topic on the Tudors was used particularly well in Years 3 and 4 to help pupils develop character studies of Henry VIII and his wives.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well by Year 2 and very well by Year 6.
- Teaching, learning and the use of support staff are very good.
- Assessment is used very well to ensure tasks are closely matched to pupils' needs.
- Very good subject leadership has helped drive up standards.
- Numeracy is planned and reinforced well in all subjects.

Commentary

59. Pupils in Year 2 started Year 1 with below average mathematical skills but currently work at broadly average levels. National Curriculum assessments for 2003, the latest year for which comparisons are available, showed that the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who reached levels 2 and above was average compared with all schools but better than schools in similar contexts. In Year 6 the outcomes were similar: the proportion of pupils reaching levels 4 and above was above average and pupils did well. The unvalidated results for 2004 point to rising standards. Pupils in the current Year 6 are reaching broadly average standards but came to the school well below average. They also did not have the benefit of the nursery. This shows that they are doing very well. Although in many years there are more boys than girls, they achieve as well as each other. These findings indicate a very good improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' achievement over their time in school was satisfactory.
60. This is largely because teaching and learning are now much improved. Outcomes show the benefits of setting, introduced in Year 2 and revealing its very positive impact through Years 3 to 6. It allows teachers to plan more effectively, adapting the National Numeracy Strategy to suit the different classes. Tasks are interesting and varied so they enable all groups of pupils to participate fully in lessons and use their time very well. Teaching assistants are very well briefed. They tend to use many of the same techniques as their teacher colleagues and work as partners. This helps lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to achieve as well as everyone else. All adults have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. As a result, pupils work very productively. All pupils receive clear feedback, especially in plenary sessions at the end of lessons. The marking and generally constructive comments made by teachers in their books help them know how well they are doing and what to do next.
61. Systems to track pupils' achievement are very good and help give teachers a very good understanding of how well groups and individuals are doing in order, for example, to implement booster or recovery programmes where needed. The co-ordinator is a leading mathematics teacher whose knowledgeable monitoring of lessons and of pupils' work has promoted a high degree of consistency. The regular review of the curriculum in the light of assessment and monitoring helps bring a sharper focus to planning. This has contributed to the very good overall improvement since the last inspection and the continued rise in standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Numeracy is well developed across the curriculum because the school has systematically identified areas where mathematics contributes to learning. Studies in shape and space, for example, support art work; weighing and measuring reinforce number skills in both design and technology and science. Graphs feature in both

science and geography; in ICT the use of spreadsheets helps develop both number skills and those of data handling. ICT is used in support programmes for pupils with special needs and also in teachers' planning, which helps to sharpen their own skills which they may then pass on more effectively.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching, very effective support for pupils with special educational needs and very well organised setting arrangements help all groups of pupils to achieve very well overall.
- There is a very good focus on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of science but the good approach taken to develop scientific enquiry could be further strengthened.
- Effective use is made of literacy, numeracy, ICT and visits to enrich the curriculum.
- Management of the subject is better than at the last inspection but not yet fully effective.

Commentary

63. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, where science was a weakness and pupils underachieved. This is because the school's management has given science a much higher priority, training has considerably improved teachers' subject knowledge and all aspects of the subject are now covered considerably better. Consequently, the work pupils do is much more interesting than it was and pupils now achieve very well.
64. Standards in the current Year 2 are average. This represents good achievement from their below average standards at the start of Year 1. Standards are also average in the current Year 6. This represents very good achievement from their well below average standards in Year 2. The number of pupils reaching higher levels is substantially improved. Compared with the last inspection, Year 6 pupils are now around five terms ahead of where they were.
65. The mixed aged classes in Years 3 to 6 are now organised into sets. This is working very well. Teachers plan their activities very carefully to suit the more even band of attainment within each set. For example, the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs in the lower sets get the extra support they need and so are able to cope very well with the work they are given. In the higher sets, the more able pupils are given more demanding work at a higher level which ensures they sustain a high level of interest in their learning.
66. In Years 1 and 2 the combined teaching is good. A very good balance is maintained between the teaching of scientific enquiry and facts and ideas. Learning is brisker in Year 2 than in Year 1 because the questioning is more effective, a much faster pace is sustained and an enquiry approach is more enthusiastically brought alive. For example, in Year 2 pupils used their scientific knowledge to discuss why the plants

they had grown under different conditions turned out differently. One boy said, "The plant in soil with a little bit of water in it grew a little and then stopped growing". The teacher probed by asking *why* it grew in the first place. One boy knew the answer. "Plants need water to grow and there was some at the start". "But *why* did it stop growing", said the teacher. "Because there was no water left to help it grow".

67. In Years 3 to 6 the combined teaching is very good overall. Much teaching proceeds at a very brisk pace, there is a very strong emphasis on discussion and learning is broken up into manageable "bite sized" chunks. Many pupils say they enjoy science and this shows as they waste little time in learning. A key reason why pupils do so well is teachers ensure that each new fact and idea that is introduced is learnt and understood thoroughly. For example, in a very good lesson in the top set in a mixed Year 5 and 6 class nearly all pupils showed they had a very clear understanding of the properties of light. They spotted the mistakes in a diagram on the board which showed light travelling in a wavy rather than a straight line and to a light source rather than from it. Scientific enquiry is also taught systematically well. This is given an extra boost in Year 6 to push the pupils onto a higher level. The overall outcome is that this contributes well to the very good achievement. However, although there is already a good focus on scientific enquiry insufficient focus is given to pupils coming up with their own ideas to test. Many pupils are now ready for some of the more difficult investigational skills to be introduced systematically at an earlier stage.
68. Learning is enriched in a number of ways. As pupils get older they are increasingly encouraged to use a range of writing skills in their scientific writing. Graphs, pictograms and tables of results are also used well to record observations and to help make sense of what they mean. ICT is also used well. The Internet is used for research and spreadsheets are used to present and interpret results. Visitors such as those from the Park Rangers and trips such a those to the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry help to bring the subject to life.
69. The recently appointed joint co-ordinators have not yet had time to fully develop their effectiveness. However, it is already clear they have a clear plan for further development and appreciate the need to monitor teaching much more closely. They are taking good steps to further refine the good system of assessment to track pupils' progress more closely.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well; standards have risen and are now average in Years 2 and 6.
- The curriculum is well planned and there are good quality resources including Internet access.

- The subject is very well led and managed, and this is resulting in rising achievement and standards.
- Effective use is made of ICT across the curriculum.

Commentary

70. Just after the last inspection the school's own review showed that standards and achievement were far lower than they ought to have been and pupils were underachieving. Since then improvement has been very good and weaknesses have been converted into strengths. For example, the subject was poorly resourced with the ratio of computers to pupils being 1:24; now it is 1:7 which makes it a little better than the national average. Computers were rarely used but now each class has weekly ICT lesson in which pupils are taught basic skills as well as ICT being regularly used in other subjects. The computers were old but a substantial investment in up-to-date wireless or "WiFi" portable laptop computers now ensures computers can be used flexibly in classrooms. Teachers lacked confidence in teaching the subject but now high quality training has ensured that they teach the subject well.
71. The curriculum has also been strengthened. The subject has a much higher profile. Over time, all groups of pupils frequently use word-processors, databases and spreadsheets in their learning. Pupils use software to control devices such as floor robots. However, not enough use is made of sensors or data loggers to monitor the physical environment and record data in subjects such as science and geography. Whilst pupils can readily access the Internet insufficient emphasis is given to developing pupils' confidence in using e-mails, even though many pupils have learnt this skill at home. ICT is used well to provide support for pupils with special educational needs. For example, in Years 5 and 6 special "tablet computers" have been provided to help them further develop their writing skills.
72. Teaching and learning are now good across all years. This is because learning is well planned to suit and challenge the age and abilities of the pupils in each class. For example, in Year 2 a very close working partnership between the teacher and the teaching assistant ensured that the activities led to a high level of interest in the pupils. The result was that there is rigour in the way pupils used a painting program to produce artwork in the style of Mondrian or Jason Pollock using "*spray, brush, flood fill and line drawing*" effects. In Years 3 to 6 teachers confidently used an interactive whiteboard to demonstrate key skills. Consequently pupils are able to quickly take these on in their learning. A very good example of this was seen in one of the mixed aged Year 3 and 4 classes, where pupils were engrossed working in pairs using ICT to rapidly produce the design for Christmas wrapping paper.
73. The subject co-ordinator has already brought about many improvements but has a very clear vision for the future, including the use of more interactive whiteboards. He monitors teaching and pupils' work very well in order to focus his support, iron out any weaknesses and give a very clear steer to the subject. In addition, he runs very useful demonstration lessons for other teachers to improve their confidence. An effective assessment system is increasingly being used to track pupils' progress whereas none operated before. However, the full impact of the steps that have been taken have not yet fully fed through. This means that standards are not yet higher in Years 2 and 6

because pupils have not had the access to the good quality resources, improved curriculum and better teaching they now enjoy.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Teachers systematically plan for ICT to be used in other subjects. This has been made possible because software and additional equipment have been cost effectively purchased for each subject. Word-processing is prominent in extended writing, posters and displays, for example, in English and history. Interesting software supports the development of number skills in mathematics. Data is put into spreadsheets in science and then used to produce graphs of the results of investigations. Digital cameras are used in design and technology, art and design and physical education to help pupils record and evaluate their work. Pupils undertake effective research using CD-ROM and the Internet for subjects such as history and geography, for example in finding out information to do with the weather.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was the subject of a section 23 inspection and so is not reported on. Work in history and geography was sampled.

75. The profile of **geography** is lower than it ought to be in Years 3 to 6, as the school has focused its attention on other subjects. Mapping and fieldwork skills are particularly weak because the local area is not used enough to help pupils to widen their knowledge and understanding. The satisfactory lesson seen in a mixed Year 5 and 6 classes on mountain ranges lacked real challenge and as a result the pupils did not work with the enthusiasm they did in other lessons. There has not been enough focus on linking subjects together to make the learning in geography more meaningful. Useful work has been done in Years 1 and 2, using the area around the school to identify different features and let pupils draw their journey from home to school. Good links have also been made in Year 2 with Vision Aid Overseas. This has given pupils a good understanding of the importance of recycling materials and conservation issues.
76. In **history** some good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Planning is more comprehensive and pupils benefit from a good range of visits and visitors that help to bring the subject alive and interest pupils. In Year 2, pupils visit the local cenotaph and extend their writing skills well when they write out the reasons why Remembrance Day is celebrated. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 spoke enthusiastically about their visit to Tatton Hall, where they learnt about the Tudors through role play. There is more challenge in the teaching now because less reliance is placed on worksheets. In the one lesson seen in Years 3 and 4, the pupils were given good opportunities for research into Tudor life by finding out whether Ann Boleyn was a good wife or not. In Years 5 and 6 a shortage of resources is preventing pupils from learning how to interpret history. Although some useful information has been learnt on Ancient Greece the writing lacks depth and understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music is reported on in full. Art and design, design and technology and physical education were sampled.

77. In **art and design** the available evidence indicates that provision has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is now better balanced and teachers have gained confidence. There is a strength in painting in Years 1 and 2, where pupils have a good grasp of the use of colour and the representation of shape and proportion. Standards in the limited sample of work from Years 5 and 6 are broadly average. Some examples of oil and pastel work by Year 4, inspired by Van Gogh's famous painting called "Iris", have very good proportion and are striking in their subtle use of dark colours.
78. In **design and technology** national guidance is now followed more closely and a suitable range of interesting "design and make" activities are provided to suit the needs and interests of the pupils. Standards are broadly average by Years 2 and 6. For example, Year 2 has made puppets with a pushing mechanism and Year 6 showed imagination in the range apparatus they made for their "Hamsters' adventure playground". The pupils enjoyed these practical lessons. The co-ordinator has strengthened the subject and put it on a much more secure footing with assessment being a key focus for further improvement.
79. In lessons seen in **physical education** pupils made good gains in learning in gymnastics and dance thanks to good planning and feedback which helped them see how well they were doing. Pupils' evaluation of their own performance was not so strongly developed. Standards in dance are rising, thanks in part to close links with the neighbouring secondary school where this is an area of particular expertise. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 rehearsed a dance routine for the Christmas performance, some of which they had devised themselves. The very good guidance of their class teacher helped improve their accuracy and consistency.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good curriculum and good leadership support effective teaching and learning.
- Strong links with the partner secondary school contribute to rising standards.
- Pupils enjoy singing and concentrate on improving their performance.

Commentary

80. At the last inspection the achievement of younger pupils was unsatisfactory and that of older pupils was poor. This was because the school gave little time to the subject and teachers did not understand clearly what should be taught. The school still identifies music as a subject which needs to be developed further, but improvement so far has been very good. This is because good subject leadership and management has identified the major areas for development and is steadily taking steps to address them.

81. Since many teachers lacked confidence in teaching the subject, new schemes of work and a wider range of resources have been introduced to provide better support. These improvements mean that pupils follow a balanced curriculum which meets requirements. A good and expanding range of enrichment activities also helps pupils perform and appreciate music better. For example, several professional musicians have visited the school to run workshops for drums, strings, clarinet and saxophone. Pupils have opportunities to learn the guitar and keyboard classes begin shortly. The school regularly contributes to singing festivals where pupils improve their skills of performance before a wider audience and also have opportunities to learn from others. The use of ICT to support music is, however, underdeveloped: subject documents show that CD equipment is used to play music and record performances but there were no indications that ICT is used in composition or to create sounds.
82. Standards are average by Year 2. This means achievement is good because pupils start Year 1 with below average standards. Teaching is now good because lessons are planned well and include a good range of methods which help motivate the pupils. Their attitudes and behaviour in lessons observed were consequently good. The majority of the pupils were quite keen to improve their musical skills and concentrated well on the activities provided for them. Teachers recognised that their subject knowledge was not developed well enough to help pupils refine their breathing techniques and phrasing to reach higher levels, but the school now receives expertise from outside.
83. Close links with the music department of the neighbouring secondary school have brought the very good benefit of regular specialist teaching so that Year 6 pupils have moved on rapidly in recent months. They now appreciate how the elements of timbre, texture, tempo and rhythm combine to create an overall effect, although they lack the skill to improvise themselves. Standards are below average but achievement is still good because this group of pupils entered the school well below average. They are gaining a secure foundation for later work thanks to very well focused teaching and plentiful constructive feedback. They respond very well to high expectations.
84. Year 6 practised for the Christmas performance with much exuberance and a developing control of rhythm, tone, and dynamics. They applied much of what they had learned to demonstrate awareness of their audience and their goal to entertain.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area was sampled.

85. Circle time is the key way in which pupils' personal, social and emotional development is fostered. Good, sensitive teaching was seen in which pupils talked about their reactions to violent behaviour and explored the idea of mediation. In these sessions great care was taken to ensure that pupils listened carefully to others so they could reflect on what they had heard. The technique of passing a soft toy around the group gave the right to speak. The teachers carefully organised the sessions so that all pupils were valued and consequently, the pupils were confident both to express themselves and also to refrain if they felt at any stage they had nothing to contribute.
86. The variety of topics covered is appropriate to the ages of the pupils. For example, younger children learn about keeping safe and how to relate to other people whilst the

older pupils learn about growing up and how their bodies and feelings might change. The dangers of harmful drugs and smoking are clearly identified. Sex education is taught with sensitivity later on in the school in line with the governors' clear policy on this matter.

87. Opportunities are taken to make pupils more aware of their role in the community. Prayers twice a day offer opportunities to consider world, local and personal issues. The school council feeds ideas into the school so pupils know their views are valued. Visitors from local churches help to foster a sense of local identity.
88. Christian values are continually stressed in circle time, lessons and assemblies. They help to underpin the very good relationships between the staff and the pupils and between the pupils themselves. Many examples were seen during the inspection of pupils helping each other and ensuring that everyone was respected and included.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	1
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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

