

INSPECTION REPORT

LEIGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Crewe, Cheshire

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111065

Headteacher: Mr G Turner

Lead inspector: Mrs L Read

Dates of inspection: 29 November – 02 Dec 2004

Inspection number: 267204

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 421

School address: Minshull New Road
Crewe
Cheshire
Postcode: CW1 3PP

Telephone number: 01270 214402
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mr J Baldwin
governors:

Date of previous inspection: 07/06/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Leighton Primary is larger than most primary schools, with 392 pupils on roll. It is situated in an area of regeneration close to Crewe and serves a wide and diverse area. Taking into account the full range of housing and employment, social and economic circumstances are average overall. Pupils entering the school in the nursery have a range of learning experiences and attainments that are below average for the age group. The school has two units to cater for pupils with statements of special educational needs; one for infants and one for juniors. The total percentage of pupils in school who have special educational needs (10.5 per cent) is below average; however, 5 per cent of the school population has a statement of special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Most of the special needs come under the learning, speech or autistic categories. Around 22 per cent of pupils claim their entitlement to free school meals, which is average. Most pupils are of a white, British background and a few have Asian heritage. There is one pupil who is in the early stages of learning English as a second language. Over the last few years, a significant number of pupils have entered the school part way through their education. In recognition of the work done, Leighton Primary holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and the Schools Achievement, Healthy Schools, and Activemark awards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21199	Ms L Read	Lead inspector	English Religious education English as an additional language
19343	Mrs Mr Howel	Lay inspector	
21910	Mr G Longton	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Geography History
29263	Mrs F Clarke	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
32620	Mr O Davis	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education
21596	Mr J A Clark	Team inspector	Music Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Leighton Primary is a very good school with many excellent features. Leadership and management are excellent and firmly focused on high standards. Teaching is very good and there are some excellent, innovative approaches to overcoming difficulties in learning. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Attainment in lessons is well above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. It is above expectations in many other subjects. Achievement is very good.
- Excellent leadership and management drive the school forward very successfully.
- Very good teaching is responsible for the very good learning. There is an extremely high level of expertise in teaching pupils who have special educational needs.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is excellent and the information is used extremely effectively to plan extra support or added challenges.
- The curriculum is very broad with an excellent range of activities out of school time.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal development, resulting in very good attitudes to learning, very good behaviour and very profitable relationships.
- The standard of care and guidance for pupils is excellent.
- There are very good links with parents who hold the school in very high regard.

Improvements

There have been very good improvements since the time of the previous inspection, especially in leadership and management, teaching, the provision for English and standards for the higher attaining pupils. Issues relating to attendance, staff appraisal and the work of the governing body have been fully addressed. Attainment levels overall have risen substantially.

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	A
mathematics	D	A	A*	A*
science	D	C	B	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is very good and standards seen during the inspection are well above average. Children enter the nursery with below-average levels of prior learning and receive a very good start to their education. By the end of the reception year, they have attained the expected learning outcomes and some language and personal skills are above average. Attainment at Year 2 for pupils in the main classes is judged as well above the national average for reading and writing and above average for mathematics. Attainment levels have not traditionally been as good as at present so the Year 6 pupils in 2004 made very good progress to achieve the above-average results seen in the table and to be in the top five per cent in the country for mathematics. The very good grades in comparison to similar

schools confirm this fact. The upward trend in attainment is better than that seen nationally and inspection judgements are that standards are well above average in all three subjects. In 2004, the results in English missed the A grade by a tiny margin but pupils are likely to re-gain the top grade in 2005. The very good achievement is due to thorough tracking of pupil progress, very good challenges in lessons and the excellent intervention strategies that boost learning. By Year 6, attainment is well above expectations in art and design, design and technology and physical education and above in religious education, information and communication technology (ICT) and history. Throughout the school, boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic groups progress at an equally very good rate. The pupils who have special educational needs and those who are taught in the two special classes achieve very well along their individual education plans. Gifted and talented pupils achieve very high standards.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good. As a result, pupils have very high standards of behaviour, very positive attitudes and there are very profitable relationships. These factors underpin the very good learning seen. Attendance is much improved and is satisfactory; punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and has a direct impact on the high standards achieved. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is well planned to meet the specific learning needs of the age group, including a very strong emphasis on language work and personal development. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled at teaching pupils with special educational needs. The subject-specialist teaching in Years 3 to 6 provides pupils with exciting tasks and promotes very good progress across the curriculum. A comprehensive amount of assessment information is analysed and used exceptionally well to set work at different levels of difficulty so that all pupils have the challenge or support that they need to progress rapidly. Homework is used very well to extend learning.

There is a very good, broad curriculum that captures pupils' interests and meets their needs very effectively. There are some innovative approaches to learning, such as the many intervention programmes to develop literacy skills and the teaching of a modern foreign language. An excellent range of out-of-school activities, together with visits and visiting specialists, further enhances learning. Accommodation and resources are good and used to best effect.

Care and guidance are excellent. Pupils form trusting relationships with adults and say that they feel safe. Guidance for personal development is very well supported by the learning mentor and through aspects of social and health education that are included across the curriculum. Pupils receive very good feedback and constructive advice in lessons and through marking. Teachers set challenging targets for learning that promote accelerated progress. Staff and governors take exacting care to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils. Links with parents, the community and other schools promote learning very well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are excellent and sharply focused on high attainment. Governance is very good and all statutory requirements are met. The headteacher, senior and subject managers monitor school performance rigorously and take appropriate action

where needed. Governors have a very good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and play a pivotal role in shaping the school's direction and development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The results of the parents' questionnaires and the meeting show that parents have very good levels of confidence in the school. Pupils are proud of their school and they play a very active role in school development through their elected council. The training and the support offered through the Community Project are successful in raising the aspirations of both parents and pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

No significant areas for development were identified through the inspection process.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. Standards seen in Year 6 are well above average for English, mathematics and science. Achievement is very good in these subjects throughout school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in most areas of learning in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes).
- For pupils in Year 2, attainment is well above average level in reading and writing and above average in mathematics and science.
- In addition to the core subjects, attainment in Year 6 is higher than nationally expected in religious education, information and communication technology (ICT) and history and much higher in art and design, design and technology and physical education.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their starting points.
- Boys and girls, pupils from different ethnic groups and those capable of higher attainment, achieve equally well.

Commentary

1. Over the last four years there has been a continuous rise in attainment levels producing an overall trend that is above the national pattern. This is due to focused development planning, the systematic action taken to overcome barriers to learning and to meet the challenging targets set. There have been commendable improvements in attainment and achievement since the previous inspection.

2. When children enter school, their prior learning is below that expected for the age group, especially in terms of language skills. They achieve very well in most areas of learning and attain the expected level by the time they move into Year 1. There are particular strengths in personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy where some children will exceed the expected learning outcomes. This means that pupils are able to move into the National Curriculum programmes of study with relative ease. The 'Talking Partners' programme that runs throughout both the nursery and reception classes supports speaking and listening development very well. It also promotes good confidence as children learn to listen attentively, ask questions when they do not understand fully and to express themselves clearly. The benefits are seen in the junior years through expressive drama work and interesting debates. There is good provision for one child who is in the early stages of learning English as an additional language, both through specialist help and very good support in lessons.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.1 (15.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.6 (13.9)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.1 (15.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The figures above include the test results of the pupils who are in the special educational needs unit and are not expected to achieve average levels. When the results of the mainstream pupils only are taken into account, results are well above average for reading and writing and above average for mathematics. A very good percentage of pupils attained the higher level 3 in reading and writing, illustrating the success of the school's interventions in learning. When compared with schools in similar circumstances, the results were well above average for all three subjects. Achievement is very good, especially for speaking and listening. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that, in the current Year 2, the high standards are maintained. Attainment in science was above the national average for the Year 2 mainstream pupils in the 2004 teacher assessments and the work of the present group is of the same, good standard. In the other subjects, attainment is at least in line with expectations and is above expectations in Year 2 for art and design, design and technology, history and physical education. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well towards the targets set in their individual education plans.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.2 (28.3)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	30.3 (28.5)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.7 (28.5)	28.6 (28.6)

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

4. Standards in English have improved very well since the previous inspection and were above the national average in the 2004 tests. The attainment for mathematics was very high and in the top 5 per cent in the country and for science it was above the national average. When compared to schools where results at the end of Year 2 in 2000 were similar, attainment was well above average in English and science and very high for mathematics.
5. Inspection evidence, together with the results above, shows that achievement in Years 3 to 6 is very good. The much-improved attainment levels at Year 2 mean that the pupils now entering Year 3 need little or no extra help to achieve the average level 4 by the end of their primary schooling. Therefore, the focus is now on working towards more pupils attaining the higher level 5. The predictions for this year's tests show good success here, with around 50 per cent of pupils already working at the higher level in English and science and an even higher number doing so in mathematics. The very good checking of progress, very good planning and very good teaching are the major factors behind the success. A rigorously monitored, stepped approach to improvement has ensured that gains made over the years have been sustained. This pays great credit to the leadership and management of the headteacher and the subject managers.
6. Last year's targets for the Year 6 pupils were exceeded in mathematics at level 4 and 5 and in English at level 4. They fell marginally short at level 5 but a thorough analysis of the papers showed no major problems; it was a case of 'success on the day'. The school is well on track to achieve this year's targets, according to the excellent assessments and records kept and to the work seen during inspection.
7. The school's excellent system of setting learning targets year on year ensures that pupils, including the higher attaining groups, those who are gifted or talented, those from different ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language, achieve their potential. The differences between boys' and girls' attainment, especially in writing, have been fully addressed and boys are now progressing equally well. This is because teachers find ways to engage both groups, choose topics and books to interest all and seek to include more practical work into lessons to motivate the boys.
8. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is above average by Year 6, and there have been very good improvements in the breadth of experiences across the programme of study since the inspection of 1998. The improved teaching, subject leadership and resources have all contributed to the better provision and attainment. Pupils' work in religious education is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and they have a very good awareness of world faiths. Attainment in art and design, design and technology and physical education is well above that normally expected, and, for history, it is above expectations. Standards in geography and music match expectations and are improving. Skills in English, mathematics and ICT are used very well to support learning in other subjects. The quality of writing across the curriculum is of an especially high standard.
9. There is an excellent level of expertise in teaching pupils who have special educational needs and, as a result of the specific interventions and support, they

achieve very well. The very broad curriculum and excellent range of out-of-school activities allow pupils to develop their creative, physical, thinking and practical skills, so that all have the opportunity to develop their talents.

10. The pupils in the special educational needs department (SEN department) make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. They make particularly good progress in developing basic skills and learning approaches which prepare them well for their next stage of education. The progress they make is often in small, but steady, steps and this helps to maintain good levels of confidence and a keenness to learn. The pupils in both classrooms in the department achieve well in all subject areas because of careful planning, excellent assessment and very good teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development is very good because there is very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is improved and is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are eager to learn and are attentive.
- There is very good behaviour, both in classes and in the playground.
- Relationships within the school are very good.
- The school enables pupils to develop a wide range of social skills and instils in them a strong moral code.

Commentary

11. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are a considerable strength of the school, and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. They are enthusiastic learners and work hard. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, show a sustained interest in their lessons and are keen to try out new activities. There is very good co-operation when working in groups and pupils readily share ideas and resources. The standard of behaviour both in lessons and in leisure time is very good and this contributes to the pleasant, industrious atmosphere in school. Pupils fully understand school rules and live up to the high expectations that their teachers set. Discussions with staff, pupils and parents show that incidents of bullying or any form of harassment are very rare, but when they do happen they are dealt with very effectively. Pupils are very clear about the fact that no form of oppressive behaviour will be tolerated.
12. The personal development of the pupils is very good. Children in the Foundation Stage are well on track to achieve the expected learning outcomes for personal and social development. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are confident and willing to offer their views and opinions. They are polite and courteous and very ready to help visitors to their school. They listen attentively to their friends and show consideration for others. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. The pupils appreciate the help their teachers provide and know they can turn to them for help. This is especially true of the learning mentor, who they know they can see whenever they have a worry or a problem.

13. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. Through assemblies and religious education lessons, pupils learn to recognise and respect different faiths. They explore feelings and emotions in their discussions and show a good level of empathy and compassion. Pupils understand that there are many people less fortunate than themselves, and they are enthusiastic in their charity work.
14. The ethos of the school very effectively underpins the social and moral development of the pupils. They have a clear understanding of right from wrong and consider how their actions affect their fellow pupils. All members of staff provide very good role models and there is a high degree of mutual respect between adults and pupils. The school council is very effective in promoting citizenship and members take their responsibilities seriously. They have a very mature approach and understand that the well-being of the whole school community has to be balanced with individual desires.
15. The pupils' understanding of national and other cultures is very good. They benefit from a wide range of educational visits and visitors to the school. They experience a good range of art and music styles from around the world, both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoyed a visit from an Asian music group and the English country dancing club is proving to be a very popular choice. There are a number of pupils who have previously lived in other countries and the school values and celebrates their mother tongues and cultural experiences. The manager for equal opportunities has set up a support group for parents whose children speak English as an additional language. One of their first tasks was to supplement the signs in school, covering all the first languages spoken.
16. The pupils in the SEN department have very good attitudes to their work and thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Attendance is very good. A significant number of the pupils have attention and behavioural problems. This is managed very well in the classroom because teachers judge concentration levels very well and provide sensitive but firm support. They choose from a range of carefully planned strategies to keep the pupils busy and happy in their learning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

17. The attendance rate at the school is satisfactory and moving slightly above the national average. It is continuing to improve, term on term. Staff, in particular the learning mentor, have worked hard to improve the attendance rates, and the majority of parents now appreciate how important it is that their children are in school regularly. Punctuality is good, with very few pupils arriving late to school.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	164	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	110	0	0

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

18. There have been no exclusions during the last school year and this is a further indicator of the school's success in promoting personal development. There are very supportive systems to help pupils who are experiencing difficulties and there is a very strong partnership between families and the school. Because the school has a successful programme to promote learning inclusion, teachers are able to spot potential difficulties early and to be pro-active before they turn into problems.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good with many excellent features. Teaching and learning are very good and very well supported by a stimulating range of study. Enrichment for the curriculum is excellent. Parents and links with the community and other schools make a very good contribution to learning.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. There are excellent processes in place for checking pupils' progress and for setting challenging targets for future learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good range of subject knowledge, including a very good understanding of the needs of the children in the Foundation Stage.
- The teachers' planning is very good and uses assessment information extremely well to set targets for pupils' learning.
- Teachers use a very good range of strategies and resources to challenge, motivate and encourage pupils. They have very high expectations of endeavour and behaviour.
- The systems of streaming and of specialist teaching enable teachers' skills to be utilised to the full in order to inspire and motivate learning.

- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are fully involved in all lessons and receive the support that they need.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 79 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (5%)	30 (38%)	41 (52%)	4 (5%)	0	0	0

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

19. The teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes is very good. Consequently, children make very good progress from a below-average starting point. There is a very strong focus on teaching the early skills in communication and language because many pupils have difficulties in this area. At the same time, mathematical understanding and personal development are promoted very well through dedicated sessions and when working on creative or physical activities. This prepares children very effectively for their National Curriculum studies. The very good attitudes that are established at this early stage are built upon and reflected throughout the year groups. Topics are carefully planned to introduce new knowledge and understanding and also to consolidate and enhance previous learning. The teaching assistants and specialist support staff are very well informed and provide very good support in lessons.
20. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 are successful in developing a very solid foundation across all subjects. A series of intervention programmes has been devised by the school. These are integrated into lessons to boost attainment, especially for speaking and listening, reading and writing. There is excellent specialist support in literacy lessons for pupils whose attainment is below average. A variety of techniques and strategies are used to overcome difficulties. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and special support assistant work alongside the classteacher to provide focused tuition for groups of pupils. At the same time, those pupils who are capable of higher attainment are streamed into another group and work at advanced levels for their age and are presented with some exacting challenges that lead to accelerated learning. A very good programme of phonics (hearing and articulating letter sounds) is in place for all pupils. This leads to very good learning in reading and writing, the benefits of which can be seen in the accurate spelling work of the older age groups.
21. There are many strengths in the teaching and learning for Years 3 to 6. Mathematics and science lessons throughout the juniors include a very good emphasis on problem solving, exploration and experimentation. As a result, pupils become confident mathematicians and learn to think as scientists. Higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted or talented have very good challenges and pupils who are experiencing difficulties have additional work that is tailored to their needs. As a result, learning is very good for all ability groups. Many teachers are timetabled to teach their specialist subjects and this promotes very good, and sometimes excellent, learning across the curriculum. During the inspection, some especially high standards were seen as a result of specialist input into art and design and design and technology. Expertise from outside school is also used effectively, for example, dance specialists worked alongside class teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning in physical education.

22. Throughout school, teachers prepare and plan their lessons with great care and with meticulous reference to prior learning. Teachers share the learning goal with the pupils at the beginning of each lesson and then review the success achieved at the end. They provide very good feedback in lessons and through marking to help pupils improve their work. As a result, even younger pupils are learning to evaluate their own progress. Teachers make good use of pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills to enhance and extend learning across other subjects. Information and communication technology is used extensively across the curriculum and this allows pupils to consolidate effectively the skills that they are acquiring. The electronic whiteboards are used particularly well to demonstrate new learning in ICT or to project text, diagrams and pictures for class discussions. Well qualified and experienced teaching assistants play a major part in supporting learning. Interesting homework tasks are used effectively to extend what is learned in class or to prepare pupils for new work. Parents appreciate and commend the regular setting of homework. They say that the classes, provided as part of the Community Project, help them to understand modern classroom methods and consequently, to help their children at home.
23. The checking of pupils' learning is excellent and tracking records show details of each pupil's progress year on year. They are fully analysed to identify where extra support is needed and where pupils have talents that require nurturing. This essential information is used for the setting of future targets and for planning work at different levels of difficulty. The successful outcomes can be seen in the above-average and sometimes well-above average attainment across many subjects.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream classes is excellent because it is very focused and includes a host of specialist techniques and strategies. The special educational needs co-ordinator is highly skilled and experienced. Her work, for example in the reading recovery programmes or focused class sessions, is excellent. Pupils who experience learning difficulties are fully included in all classroom activities by the adaptation of tasks and materials which enable them to succeed. This reflects the strong commitment to inclusion that is shared by governors, managers and all staff. Just one pupil is currently in the early stages of learning English as an additional language and is receiving extra help to access lessons. Several pupils are bi-lingual and teachers take great care to use and value other languages, for example at registration time or when labelling resources.
25. The teaching and learning in the SEN department are very good. Teaching is based upon very good planning, use of independent education plans and thorough assessment procedures. The teachers and teaching assistants are a very effective team who plan work together and are very clear of their roles in the classroom. They know the educational and emotional needs of the pupils very well and deploy a wide range of techniques to meet them. The staff have high expectations for every pupil and establish very good relationships. Pupils are therefore motivated and challenged by their work. They make particularly good progress in learning to concentrate and complete their tasks. The teachers ensure an 'all round' and consistent approach through very profitable links with parents. The quality of assessment is excellent. Detailed and regular observations are supported by a good range of skill assessments which are used very effectively to plan the next steps.

26. There have been very good improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Assessments, tracking and target setting have improved very well and expectations of learning are very high. Very good relationships exist in classes, and pupils rise to the high expectations because they trust their teachers and know that help is readily available, should they need it.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good in terms of its breadth and balance and includes excellent enrichment activities to enhance pupils' learning. The school's accommodation and resources for learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is inclusive, providing equal access and equal opportunities for all groups of pupils, including those capable of high attainment.
- Planning is enriched by an excellent range of additional activities, visits and visitors.
- The curriculum includes some innovative approaches and is constantly monitored and evaluated to ensure its effectiveness.

Commentary

27. The teachers capitalise on very good links with other schools and agencies to produce a lively and stimulating curriculum for the pupils. As a consequence, learning has been enriched by an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and opportunities for pupils to participate in sporting and cultural activities. All statutory requirements are met and the provision is successful in meeting pupils' needs and in fuelling their interests. The spirit of the latest national guidance aimed at introducing excellence and enjoyment has been taken on board fully.
28. The curriculum is rigorously monitored and evaluated and effective measures taken to ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement to all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE). Subjects are often linked, for example skills in English, mathematics and ICT are used extensively in other subject studies to consolidate and extend learning. Teachers have worked very hard to develop excitement in learning. Their efforts are recognised through national awards such as the Active Mark for physical education, the Healthy Schools award for PHSCE and the Basic Skills Quality Mark for English and mathematics.
29. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum and that they make the most of the opportunities offered. The headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator and the learning mentor each co-ordinate provision designed to help pupils overcome any social, academic, or emotional barriers that could otherwise hinder their learning. The progress of such pupils is meticulously reviewed and evaluated. The school's programme of interventions such as Reading Recovery, Talking Partners, literacy and numeracy booster classes and master classes are very effective in raising standards of

attainment and achievement. Pupils with special abilities and talents are very well catered for through the school's gifted and talented programme that covers academic as well as aesthetic, creative and physical subjects.

30. The provision for pupils in the main classes who have special educational needs is excellent. Extra help is very carefully timetabled to the specific lesson. For example, the literacy support takes place during the independent session of the literacy hour or the extended reading or writing time. Several pupils are fluent in English as an additional language and just one, younger child, is in the early stages of learning and receives extra help to access lessons. Good use of dual language books demonstrates how the school values each and every language spoken.
31. Curriculum enrichment is an excellent feature of the school. In the returned questionnaires, 97 per cent of parents agreed that the school provides a good range of activities. Strengths in provision include:
- the number and interesting range of extra-curricular activities and clubs;
 - study support groups and the homework club;
 - the reading sessions involving local professional footballers, who act as powerful role models;
 - opportunities for pupils to take part in competitions against other schools in a variety of sporting events;
 - a modern foreign language for the older pupils;
 - visits to places of interest;
 - frequent visitors to school to support the curriculum;
 - residential weekends.
- Of particular note are the sessions with the artist in residence which led to pupils producing art work of exceptional quality.
32. The match of teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum is very good. Teachers' qualifications and experiences cover all subjects and there is very good sharing of expertise. Pupils benefit from the talents of people within the community. For example, those in Year 6 have Spanish lessons supported by a volunteer governor. This helps to develop speaking and listening skills and raises awareness of European cultures. In Year 1, pupils look forward to their weekly music lesson, which includes some novel activities and is also supported by a governor.
33. Teaching assistants are very skilled and effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs because of the very good training they receive in school as a result of the Community Project. These courses are offered to parents, and many pupils benefit from their enhanced expertise in supporting reading. The building is used well to provide all the facilities necessary to teach the National Curriculum. A high standard of maintenance and cleanliness is achieved by a conscientious caretaker and his staff. Many eye-catching displays celebrate pupils' achievements and create an attractive learning environment. The level of resources is good. Those for ICT are very much improved and include two computer suites and interactive whiteboards in most classrooms. These are used very effectively to support teaching and learning in ICT and throughout the curriculum.
34. The pupils in the SEN department have access to a broad and exciting curriculum. The teachers match the targets of the individual pupils to the age-related National Curriculum objectives. Consequently, pupils cover the same topics as their friends in the mainstream

classes and have the essential support to complete their tasks. The accommodation is spacious and very good use is made of the shared practical area. Resources are generally good although some, such as the computers, are rather old and worn. There are plans for replacement as, and when, funding allows.

Care, guidance and support

There is excellent provision for the pupils' care, safety and welfare. The school provides excellent guidance and support for learning and personal development. Pupils are actively involved in the running of the school through their class and school councils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ethos of the school and the secure environment ensure that pupils benefit from excellent care and support.
- The school's induction programme ensures that all pupils are helped to settle quickly into their new surroundings.
- The views of pupils are respected and fully considered when planning school development.

Commentary

35. Staff give the highest regard to the well-being of each and every one of the pupils. They provide an exceptionally caring and supportive environment. As a result, pupils are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle, to be safe, to enjoy their schooling and to make a positive contribution to school life. Staff guidance is very clear and managers ensure that it is rigorously followed by visiting teachers as well as permanent personnel. The child protection procedures are extremely thorough, and great care is taken to ensure the particular needs of the individual pupil are known and understood.
36. The induction arrangements are very good in helping children to settle quickly into school life. Children from the nursery regularly visit the main building and this helps them to become familiar with the 'big' school by the time they transfer. Parents are especially happy with the arrangements for pupils who join the school mid-year. They say the staff work hard to help their children adjust to the change and to find new friends.
37. Guidance for pupils' academic progress is excellent and goes far beyond that normally seen in primary school practice. The headteacher, classteachers, SENCO and learning mentor work as a team to collect relevant information about each pupil's social, emotional and academic progress. Where potential problems are identified, action is taken swiftly. As a result, there is a very strong safety net aimed at overcoming disadvantage and preventing failure. At the same time, pupils' special talents are recognised and extended. The success of the school's approach can be seen in the very good achievement of all groups of pupils.
38. There is excellent support and guidance for the personal development of pupils. Through the PHSCE curriculum, pupils are encouraged to be good members of the school and the local community. They learn to respect the views of others and to argue their point with civility. The learning mentor has proved to be a valuable addition to the staff. She has excellent relationships with the pupils and her door is

always open. She helps to build up confidence in pupils, and provides them with the opportunity to talk openly about their feelings or to make sense of situations.

39. The pupils are enthusiastic about the work of the class and school councils and are confident that their ideas and suggestions are taken seriously. Time is allocated for class representatives to seek the views of their fellow classmates, and these are then reported to the main council. Pupils are responsible for running the meetings and for speaking to the headteacher about any decisions made. Councillors are elected democratically by their fellow pupils and this makes a good contribution to the understanding of citizenship.
40. Pupils in the SEN department receive the same exceptional standard of care as those in the main classes. They are appropriately involved in their own learning. Pupils review their own progress alongside the classteachers and help to develop new targets. Record keeping is of a very high standard for pupils' academic and personal development. Very good use of the information ensures that pupils receive the best support available.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and parents is very good. There are very good links with other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents have a very high level of confidence in the headteacher and his staff.
- There are very useful training opportunities for parents through the Community Project and this helps them to make excellent contributions to their children's learning.
- The school works very closely with other local schools and colleges to bring additional expertise and talent into the classroom.

Commentary

41. The returned questionnaires show that parents are very satisfied with the education and care that their children are receiving. The significant number of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting endorsed this. They have considerable confidence in the leadership and management of the school, and hold the headteacher in exceptionally high regard. They say their children are happy and make good progress because of the good teaching and the friendly and comfortable atmosphere. There is much appreciation for the way teachers make themselves available to parents on a daily basis and for the sensitive way in which problems are dealt with.
42. The school values its links with parents and staff go to great lengths to make sure that they play a significant part in learning. These include:
 - weekly 'drop-in' sessions for the reception classes and Year 1 and 2, when any parent or carer can come in after school to meet the teacher or look at their child's work;
 - a welcome session each morning in every class when parents have 30 minutes before registration to work with their child or talk to the teacher;
 - useful parents' evenings where information is shared;

- in-school training courses in the teaching of reading and writing (this is part of the Community Project and extends to recognised awards for those parents who wish to embark on, or further their career);
 - short evening courses in parenting and to explain modern teaching methods so that parents know how to help at home;
 - bi-lingual books so that parents can share a story in the child's mother tongue as well as in English;
 - the provision of translators, when needed;
 - information about the topics that children will be studying during each term, and newsletters to keep parents up-to-date with events in school;
 - very detailed and informative annual reports for individual pupils.
43. From the home-school journals seen during the inspection, it is very evident that parents are taking a great interest in their children's progress. They understand how their children are being taught, and are confident to be involved in discussions with the teachers. There is very good support for school events and a good number of parents regularly help within the school.
44. The school's facilities are used productively through the Community Project. A growing number of programmes are available, helping adults to acquire skills in computing and first aid as well as those listed above. They are very popular and well attended, with over fifty parents having already received certificates. The courses are also effective in supporting children's learning since, for example, many more parents are well informed about promoting early learning skills in babies and toddlers and in helping with computer work. Many parents are encouraged to continue their learning by enrolling in college courses and subsequently finding new careers. The aim of the Community Project was to raise the aspirations of parents and members of the local community and, through them, to raise the aspirations of pupils. In this latter respect, there is much evidence of success.
45. Staff have developed very effective links with a number of local schools to facilitate the sharing of expertise, for instance in design and technology and physical education. Membership of the Excellence in Cities project has brought many advantages to provision including the appointment of the learning mentor. There are very good systems to help pupils transfer to the next phase of education. Parents say that ex-pupils have settled quickly into their new surroundings at high school because they were well prepared.
46. There are very good links with parents of pupils in the SEN department that contribute well to pupils' progress. The parents are fully involved in regular reviews of their child's learning. They make suggestions for future targets and are well informed of the steps they can take to support their children. This process far exceeds the statutory requirements for reviewing progress of pupils with a statement of special educational need. There are very good links with the education support services, such as speech therapists and educational psychologists who provide expert advice.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both **excellent**. Governors provide very good support and fulfil their statutory duties effectively. Governance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is based firmly on very high aspirations and the removal of barriers to learning.
- There is very good teamwork and sharing of expertise.
- Management and leadership of the subjects are mostly very good and for special educational needs and English they are excellent.
- Day-to-day practice reflects the success of the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils have full and equal access to all parts of school life.
- Governors are very well informed about the quality of provision in school and play a very strong part in school development.
- Information gathered from the school's excellent self-evaluation programme is used very effectively to determine the priorities for future development.

Commentary

47. Staff and governors are totally committed to the ethos of the school; they constantly strive for excellence and provide a caring environment where all pupils, regardless of any special need they may have, are fully integrated into all activities. Leighton Primary has overcome many difficulties to develop a deservedly high reputation in the area. The headteacher is very highly regarded by parents and governors, who value his hard work, approachability and commitment. The teamwork in school facilitates very good sharing of knowledge and experience and ensures that roles and responsibilities are clear and well covered. Across the school, there is a very strong sense of shared purpose and a clear vision for future development. Staff are constantly looking for ways to improve and work very hard to this end. Leadership is highly successful in promoting an all-round education where creative, aesthetic and physical skills, together with the academic, are promoted in a balanced way. Pupils' personal development is promoted and nurtured very effectively and is reflected in their enjoyment of lessons and the very pleasant, welcoming environment.
48. The headteacher and his staff appreciate the main aids to learning in school; these include very supportive parents, advantages sought from local initiatives such as the Excellence in Cities project, and very good support from a forward-looking governing body. When the headteacher arrived at the school some years ago he worked with staff and governors to develop a very ambitious long-term plan to improve attainment and provision. He set about identifying and removing the barriers to learning that existed at that time, often using innovative approaches. A brief outline of this excellent work is given below.

Barrier identified	Action taken	Outcomes
Some pupils entering school with low levels of development in speech and communication.	The introduction of a speaking and listening programme to accelerate learning.	Very good progress in speaking and listening skills. Pupils are now well above average in this area by the end of Years 2 and 6.
The attainment of some groups of pupils was not as high as expected	The development of a 'teachability' profile covering emotional, social and academic factors to identify exactly where support was needed.	The differences in achievement patterns between groups of pupils eliminated.
A disproportionately high percentage	The 'teachability' profile used to	Pupils enabled to make rapid

of pupils from the more socially disadvantaged areas on the register for special educational needs.	develop a support programme from a team of people including the learning mentor, SENCO and headteacher to help overcome problems identified.	progress through school support and contact with home. Many leaving the register and attaining at an average level at least.
Not enough pupils were attaining the average 2B in reading and writing or the higher level 3.	Excellent systems of assessment developed and introduced. Training for staff to further develop their expertise in developing reading and writing skills	The percentages of pupils attaining both grades in reading and writing is now well above the national and similar school average.
Too many pupils staying on the register of special educational needs because of difficulties with literacy.	The streaming of pupils in Years 1 and 2 so that the excellent skills of the SENCO and special needs assistant could be used to provide focused and guided group sessions during the literacy hour. Tailored intervention programmes devised for pupils in Years 3 to 6.	Numbers of pupils on the register halved.
Girls consistently doing better than boys at the average level 4 in reading and writing.	Careful planning to find topics to interest boys, the introduction of more practical learning, for example drama, and the development of the Reading Champion scheme where sporting professionals read with pupils to motivate them.	The gap is virtually closed and attainment levels are much higher. All pupils attained level 4 in reading in the 2004 tests.

49. The highly effective cycle of self-evaluation includes a planned programme of classroom observations by the headteacher and subject managers, together with frequent checks of planning and pupils' books. Data from national, optional and the school's own battery of tests is thoroughly analysed to quickly pinpoint any areas that require further development. Because management is flexible and encourages initiative, staff are enabled to take swift and effective action where problems occur. The detailed tracking and target-setting system allows the headteacher, SENCO, managers and governors to check that individuals, classes and year groups are making the expected progress, and to check that very good challenges are set for the higher attaining pupils.
50. Staff have regular performance reviews, through which a very good programme of training and development needs is established. This represents a very good improvement since the previous report. The high quality of in-house training ensures that all staff, including the teaching assistants, are well informed and very well qualified for their specific roles in school.
51. Leadership and management of the SEN department are very good. The headteacher, SENCO and the department staff work very closely together. The head of the department provides a tight agenda for regular and frequent meetings which cover all aspects of the unit's work. The headteacher's active involvement means that these meetings are valued and productive and guide the work of the unit. There are well-established roles and professional development for all staff. The department operates effectively within the allocated funding and gives very good value for money.
52. Staff deployment very effectively meets the needs of individual pupils and maintains very good provision for the children in the reception and nursery classes. Specialist teaching provides a very good level of expertise across the curriculum and uses teachers' skills to the full. The school bursar provides very good support for the

business side of the school, allowing the headteacher to concentrate on educational matters. The accommodation and resources are used efficiently and the bursar rigorously checks that best value for money is obtained through purchases and contracts. Taking account of the very good quality of education, the very high standards of attainment, the excellent leadership and management and costs that are around average, the school provides very good value for money.

53. Between them, the governors have a very good range of expertise and experience that they use for the ultimate benefit of the pupils. They have a thorough and informed view of the school's strengths and areas for development, representing a very good improvement since the last inspection. Governors use funds very prudently. They evaluate the success of the intervention programmes in the long term and quite rightly claim that it is money well spent. Governors are fully involved in the decision-making processes that lead to school improvement planning, and regularly check on the success of the work covered. They keep a very close eye on attainment patterns and ask searching questions. Budget decisions are largely based around the targets in the improvement plan, and the monitoring of expenditure is thorough and facilitated by the bursar's summary reports. This is another very good improvement since the previous inspection.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	967,703	Balance from previous year	86,563
Total expenditure	1,020,213	Balance carried forward to the next	34,063
Expenditure per pupil	2,458		

Governors aim to keep a minimum of reserves to cover for unforeseen circumstances. The carry-forward for the current year is well within the government's recommended limits.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) is very good. Many children start school with skills which are below the expected level and some with low levels of language development. Most children are on course to reach the expected goals in all the areas of learning and some have progressed to above-average levels in their language work and personal development. This is due to a well-planned curriculum and the very good quality of teaching. Standards and provision are much improved since the previous inspection.

In the nursery the teachers plan a good balance between adult-led activities and those that children can choose for themselves. Resources are arranged to be fully accessible to the children who choose to initiate their own line of enquiry. Provision for children in the reception classes is linked to the guidance for the Foundation Stage and to the early stages of the National Curriculum to extend the higher-attaining pupils. Children engage in a wide variety of well-organised, relevant and interesting activities.

Leadership is very good and instrumental in promoting very good achievement in most areas of learning. Children with special educational needs progress as well as the majority because of very good support. One pupil who is in the early stages of learning English as an additional language has full access to all aspects of the provision through expert support. Difficulties caused by the reception classes and nursery operating on split sites have been mainly overcome and all staff work well together for the benefit of the children. A current focus for development is the improvement of the outside play area for the reception children to match that seen in the nursery. Assessment procedures are excellent and staff have a very good knowledge of each child's progress. Support for children experiencing any learning difficulties is also excellent.

Children are introduced to the nursery and to the reception classes very sensitively and there are many very good strategies for welcoming parents and including them in their child's' education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and children are very good.
- Skilled and supportive adults help children to develop self-confidence and become independent.

Commentary

54. Children make very good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and are on track to exceed the learning goals at the end of the reception year. Teaching is very good and adults establish warm, friendly and open relationships with the children.

They use praise and encouragement well to reward effort and promote confidence and self-esteem. Children have very positive attitudes towards learning and their behaviour is very good as they eagerly participate in the activities available to them. They play very well together, sharing resources amicably when, for example, playing with construction toys or engaging in role-play in the bakers shop. The nursery is very well organised for independent learning and the children access equipment quickly, handling it with care and returning it to its proper place. Many show the ability to persevere and to concentrate for extended periods. In the reception classes, routines and procedures are well established and children adhere to these. They are well supported to gain independence in taking care of their personal needs, for instance in changing for their physical education lessons. They are confident enough to join in playtimes with older pupils and participate in whole-school assemblies.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening are given priority across the curriculum.
- The school has developed some very good early intervention strategies for children who experience difficulties in this area.
- Children engage in very relevant reading and writing activities.

Commentary

55. Teaching is very effective. Children achieve well from a low starting point. They are likely to achieve the expected learning goals by the end of the reception year and some will exceed them. Many children who enter the nursery lack confidence in talking to adults and to one another. Staff in both nursery and reception classes regularly intervene in role-play and other activities, asking relevant questions and prompting conversation. This strategy successfully develops children's language, thinking and negotiating skills. The school has introduced an initiative to promote speaking and listening skills which is proving to be very successful. Not only does it improve communication skills but also prepares children very well for reading and writing work in Year 1 and afterwards.
56. Children have very good experience of purposeful reading and writing activities. They are encouraged to annotate their drawings and paintings and many confidently 'write' their own sentences and 'read' these to adults. There is a very attractive selection of books, including those made by the staff, to motivate and interest children. In the reception classes, children use their developing skills well as they compose a list of bonfire night rules. In turns, they take the class bear home and, together with parents, help him to write a detailed diary of his experiences. This is a very clever way of introducing homework at an early stage.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are developing a very good grasp of mathematical language.
- They count accurately and recognise numerals.
- Children use their mathematical skills and knowledge in a range of problem-solving situations.

Commentary

57. Achievement is very good and children participate in a wide range of well-planned activities that develop their confidence in mathematics. Teaching is very good overall and most children are on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Throughout the Foundation Stage, regular counting activities are accompanied with rhymes and games that add interest and enjoyment. In the class bakery, children count out the cakes, refer to the list of prices and sort out the money. Their observational drawings of clocks show a variety of developing skills in recording numbers. The concept of sequence is developed as children are introduced to Advent calendars and place objects on the class number line.
58. In the reception classes opportunities for developing mathematical understanding and skills are incorporated into everyday routines, for example, counting out the number of children who are going to have school dinners. Children are developing a good understanding of combining or taking away numbers and use strategies such as partitioning or adding on to solve problems. Higher attaining children are introduced to 'number sentences' using signs such as plus, minus and equal.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is planned to provide first hand experiences which interest the children and accelerate their learning.
- Children are encouraged to use computers to enhance their learning.

Commentary

59. Achievement is very good and children attain the expected learning goals by the end of the reception year. Teaching and learning in this area are very good. Planning includes a variety of interesting experiences to enhance children's knowledge of the world around them.
60. Nursery children, with adult support, had great fun programming the floor robot to draw a pattern. The 'Leighton Bakery' and the 'Leighton Express' activities help to develop vocabulary and give the children practical and relevant play experiences that mimic everyday life. They learn about the passing of time, talking about what they do on different days of the week and recording the changing seasons on a calendar. Aspects of Chinese culture were introduced to the nursery children through

the visit of a parent, who also prepared a delicious meal for them. Children learn about caring for living creatures by holding and feeding the class guinea pigs, who are kept in excellent conditions.

61. Reception children bring in photographs of themselves as babies and discuss the toys that they played with then and now. An exciting project allowed them to explore various light sources, introducing early skills of investigation. The computer and listening centres are popular choices. Children are confident using the mouse and on-screen prompts to support their learning in various areas.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's fine motor skills are developed well.
- There are opportunities for nursery children to develop early water skills through their swimming sessions.
- There is a very well-developed outdoor play area in the nursery but the facilities for the reception classes are not as good at present.

Commentary

62. Teaching is good and children make good progress and are on course to attain the early learning goals. There is a good selection of resources for outdoor play and children engage in exhilarating activities such as walking on bucket stilts and crawling through tunnels. The nursery is also supplied with large wheeled toys, which the children are learning to handle with confidence. The good range of objects and construction materials available prompts the development of the children's manipulative skills and coordination. Through a very good selection of activities, they learn to use a range of tools including scissors, pencils and brushes very accurately. Most children in the reception classes have very good pencil control for their age as they form numbers and letters. Achievement is good.
63. Children enjoy sessions in the school hall. Reception children made good progress in developing sequences of movement as they responded imaginatively to the session. Their outdoor play area is not as well developed as that in the nursery and is too far away to share. This is recognised and is a target for development. A very good feature of the provision is the swimming programme for nursery children. A good number of parents volunteer to help which makes this possible. These young children already show great confidence as they enter the water and enjoy the play session.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children engage in a wide variety of activities and achievement is good.
- Interesting role-play activities provide good opportunities for children to develop their imagination.
- Children produce some very high quality work.
- Opportunities to select different media are good in the reception class but there is less free choice than in the nursery.

Commentary

64. Teaching is good and children are on course to reach the expected level for their age. A wide range of activities is carefully planned to develop children's skills in this area and plentiful resources give children good opportunities to experiment with different tools and materials. Children regularly sing simple songs and number rhymes and develop a good response to rhythm. They enjoy the imaginative role-play areas, where imagination is actively extended by adult interaction.
65. In the nursery, staff put particular emphasis on this area of the curriculum and children are continuously given opportunities to explore and develop their ideas in art, music and play. Staff encourage children to explore and express their ideas freely through, for example, painting, drawing, constructing and modelling. There is a wide range of materials from which children can choose to create their own designs, patterns, pictures and collages. In the reception classes, basic skills are very well taught. This enables children to produce some very good quality work, particularly in observational drawing. However, children sometimes have a teacher-selected range of media rather than choosing for themselves and, on these occasions, opportunities to explore creative ideas can be missed.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The provision for English is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Standards in Years 2 and 6 are well above the national average.
- The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good.
- The school has developed a series of excellent intervention programmes to support, extend and enhance learning.
- Literacy skills are used to very good effect in other subjects.
- There is excellent leadership and management of the subject, including excellent assessment and target setting systems.

Commentary

66. Attainment levels in Year 2 and Year 6 are well above the national average in reading, writing and speaking and listening. This represents an excellent improvement since the time of the previous inspection. Achievement is very good

because of the many intervention programmes in place to support and boost attainment, the emphasis on learning phonics (hearing and articulating letter sounds), very good teaching and excellent assessment and planning.

67. The quality of teaching across the school is very good and teachers have high levels of expertise in the subject. They use questioning very effectively to constantly challenge pupils and to stimulate interest and increase motivation. Pupils are confident in asking questions and in 'having a go' at answering or trying out new work. This is because there are very good relationships in class and pupils know that their teachers value every effort made. Marking is of high quality and provides very useful guidance. Pupils take careful note of the comments made and act upon them to improve their work.
68. The major factors that underpin the improved standards are the intervention programmes that have been developed to overcome barriers to learning, together with the exacting challenges set for the higher attaining pupils. An excellent programme to teach and extend speaking and listening skills is introduced in the nursery and extends into the reception class. The benefits of the programme are seen not only in the very good oral work of the Year 1 pupils but also in the junior pupils' abilities to discuss, debate and to frame their own, pertinent questions. The work done plays a major part in supporting pupils' National Curriculum studies in reading and writing, especially for the significant percentage who enter school with limited speech and language skills. Drama lessons are of a good standard and are used very well to engage pupils' imagination and as a stimulus for writing. In one lesson, pupils improvised actions and speech as they explored the character of Thor. This type of practical activity is proving to be especially useful for supporting boys' writing which has been a focus of school development over the last year.
69. Reading is expertly promoted and pupils demonstrate a keen interest in books from an early stage. All pupils benefit very well from the exceptionally high level of teacher expertise in this area and from the training that teaching assistants receive and that is also available to parents. Teaching assistants are very well qualified in teaching the full range of reading skills and in assessing pupils' progress. They are carefully deployed to work with those pupils who need extra support. The very detailed records of progress are constantly scrutinised by class teachers and the special educational needs manager to see if additional support is needed. Where appropriate, pupils move onto a reading recovery programme; an intensive course that produces some excellent results. In addition, the school runs early literacy support groups and booster sessions to ensure that pupils achieve their potential. As a result, progress for pupils who have special educational needs, or who experience short periods of difficulty in learning, is very good indeed. There is very good support available for pupils who speak English as an additional language which leads to very good progress. All languages are much in evidence around school, for example, in signs and dual language books.
70. Through the Community Programme, parents are able to access the same training as the teaching assistants to help support their children and there are also shorter sessions arranged in the evenings. The benefits of the training courses can be seen in the informed written dialogue between home and school and the very good, informed support for reading provided by parents.

71. As a result of these measures, pupils' attainment has risen sharply and nearly all the Year 2 mainstream pupils achieved the expected level in the 2004 national tests and almost a half attained the higher level 3. This is well above average when compared to similar schools. In Years 3 to 6, very little further intervention is needed because pupils are confident readers and writers by the time they leave Year 2. Nevertheless, teachers keep a close check on progress and, together with the teaching assistants, provide additional support wherever appropriate. In the 2004 tests, all pupils attained the expected level 4 in reading, illustrating the success of the approach.
72. From the earliest stages, pupils are aware of the structure of books and the roles of an author, illustrator and editor. They persevere very well when, for instance, sounding out unfamiliar words and they make good use of the meaning of the text, picture cues and their knowledge of grammar when they are reading new texts. In Years 3 to 6 the very good progress continues as pupils put their very good research skills to use and enjoy a wide variety of material, including poetry, playscripts and classic works.
73. The high standards seen in writing across all age groups show that the action taken by the teachers to improve this area of literacy has been very successful. It also illustrates the benefits of the intensive work done on reading and speaking and listening in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. This provides pupils with a wealth of ideas and a wide vocabulary to help them express their thoughts. By Year 6, pupils are able to write in both formal and informal styles and for a wide range of purposes. Around 50 per cent of the current Year 6 pupils are well on track to achieve the higher level 5. These results illustrate the success of the school's approach to early and sustained intervention in learning. Of special note in pupils' work are:
- very good planning of writing;
 - accurate spelling and grammar;
 - accurate punctuation and use of paragraphs;
 - imaginative settings and very good characterisation in stories;
 - the use of complex sentences and figurative language;
 - the use of a wide range of non-fiction genres both in English and other subjects to suit purpose and to engage the reader.
- The presentation of work in all classes is very good. By Year 6 pupils write in a neat, fluent, joined style of which they are justly proud.
74. Leadership and management are excellent. Assessment is excellent and results are systematically analysed to set challenging targets for learning and to highlight areas of provision for future improvement. The deployment of teachers and assistants fully exploits their skills for the pupils' benefit. For example, in lessons for the lower-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2, the manager and teaching assistant for special educational needs work alongside the class teacher. As a result, pupils have excellent guided group work sessions that are developing their skills at a rapid pace. The junior classes are streamed according to prior learning and teaching assistants are deployed to provide support generally and to deliver special programmes, for example in spelling. The subject has a very high profile in the curriculum. All staff endeavour to create a stimulating environment through displays of books and pupils' written work. Resources are good and staff make very good use of facilities to

borrow topic and story books from the local authority's lending service so that pupils have a constantly changing resource. Project boxes are evident in all classrooms to encourage independent study and provide material for pupils' research. This helps to overcome the fact that space for such activity is limited in the main school libraries.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

75. Throughout the school the pupils' literacy and language skills are constantly being very well applied and improved in other subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils extended their speaking and listening and reading skills as they compared the modern-day version of the Christmas story with the actual Bible text. There are many examples of research using both printed and electronic sources. Pupils record their findings to a very good standard using a variety of genres, such as reports or explanatory texts. They write instructions linked to their design and technology work using a sophisticated range of devices, including sub-headings, numbering and bullet points. Overall, the promotion of language and literacy across the curriculum is very good.

Modern Foreign Language Spanish

76. The teaching of Spanish in Year 6 is an example of the school's innovative approach to the curriculum. Lessons are taught collaboratively by a parent governor volunteer and the classteacher. Pupils enjoy the sessions, which combine fun activities with more formal learning. Pupil evaluations are positive: "I love doing Spanish. I have lots of fun", "It will help me a lot on holiday in Spain". The lessons promote an awareness of other cultures and countries and promote speaking and listening skills very well. They also give pupils useful experience of learning a modern foreign language before they transfer to their secondary schools.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Current standards in Year 2 are above average and in Year 6 they are well above the national average.
- All pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching, very good support from teaching assistants and highly effective intervention strategies.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively for teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management are very good and contribute to very high standards and very good improvement since the last inspection.
- The use of mathematics across the curriculum is good.

Commentary

77. The school's results in the 2004 national assessments at Year 6 were in the top five percent of schools nationally. Staff and pupils can be justly proud of this result. Furthermore, six out of ten pupils reached the higher level 5. These results are very impressive and represent a very good improvement since the previous inspection, especially in terms of the attainment at the higher level.
78. Pupils achieve very well because of the very good teaching in lessons and the additional programmes put in place for those who need them. There are booster

classes after school for pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6 to help them achieve the expected levels in the national assessments. Master classes are provided for the higher attaining pupils. The emphasis placed on developing literacy in the younger age classes is beneficial in promoting pupils' acquisition of mathematical vocabulary and their understanding of text in mathematical problems. There is no evidence of any significant difference in achievement between boys and girls in lessons and completed work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because they are very well supported in class by very well qualified, well briefed teaching assistants and are given work that is accurately matched to their abilities. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make the same, very good progress as the majority.

79. By Year 2, pupils solve number and money problems using different strategies. They collect data and display the information in the form of a table or simple graph such as a pictogram or bar chart. By Year 6, many pupils are working at a level well above that expected for their age. They are highly competent at solving problems and mental computation is quick and accurate. In one very good lesson, pupils were able to use their knowledge of how triangular numbers are built up to determine the 20th, 50th, and 100th terms in the sequence of triangular numbers. This type of challenge is more usually seen at high school level. They have a very good understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages and can use graphical methods to convert metric and imperial units.
80. The quality of teaching is very good and this leads to very high standards. Three members of staff are mathematics graduates. Their expertise and enthusiasm is translated into exciting lessons that pupils thoroughly enjoy. Consequently, pupils' investigative skills are very well developed and this accounts largely for the very high attainment at Year 6. Teachers make very effective use of assessment data to inform their planning and to determine pupils' immediate and long term learning needs. They provide frequent feedback in their teaching and in their marking so that pupils know how to improve and how to build on previous learning. This accelerates the pace of progress. Teachers make very good use of ICT in their teaching. In a Year 1 lesson the teacher used the interactive whiteboard to illustrate very clearly how data can be displayed in the form of a pictogram. This helped the pupils to produce their own pictograms by giving them a clear understanding of the process.
81. The subject is led and managed very well. The subject leader has raised standards through a number of measures and interventions. There is a clear vision for the way forward that is shared with other members of staff. Test scripts are thoroughly analysed and used to determine areas of strength and weakness in the mathematics curriculum. Assessment results are used very effectively to track pupils' progress and to set individual and group targets for improvement. The manager and headteacher keep a watchful eye on the attainment of different groups of pupils, including those of different ethnic and social backgrounds, to ensure that all are achieving their best. The subject leader monitors teaching and learning closely and takes swift action where problems occur. These measures have led to a very good improvement in provision since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

82. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is good. Pupils are given many opportunities to use and develop their mathematical skills. For example, pupils produce graphs in science, geography and design and technology and they measure accurately in science. There is good use of timelines in history to sequence events and promote a sense of chronology.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The rich and interesting curriculum motivates pupils very well.
- The current focus on scientific enquiry and investigation is having a positive effect on raising standards and achievement.
- There is very good use of information and communication technology to support learning in science.
- Very good leadership and management are driving standards up.
- The systematic and thorough assessment systems ensure that planning meets individual needs and stretches those who are capable of higher attainment.

Commentary

83. Pupils develop a good understanding of science as they move through the school and achievement is very good. In Years 1 and 2 they cover a wide range of topics and standards of attainment are above average by the end of Year 2. Science was a focus of development planning last year and more time was allocated for lessons. As a result, Year 6 attainment in the 2004 tests was above the national average and much improved. Inspection judgements show that this improvement has been sustained and extended. Indications from the observation of lessons and an analysis of pupils' work are that standards are well above average in the present Year 6.
84. Very good teaching and learning ensure that pupils are enthusiastic about their work and learn very well. Lessons are planned carefully to meet the needs of pupils with differing attainment levels and include substantial challenge for the higher attainers. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers and all support staff. Those in the SEN department have individual sessions with an adult, aimed at the same topics and objectives as the mainstream classes, and are highly supported. Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard because many lessons are practically based and teachers plan an exciting range of problems and investigations. For example, Year 1 pupils were thrilled to experiment with shiny and non-shiny objects. There was a "buzz" of purposeful activity throughout the class and pupils came to some interesting conclusions. Year 5 pupils used the electron microscope to investigate a flower head, dissected it and drew very accurate diagrams. This lesson formed a very good cross-curricular link with art and design and ICT and pupils were fascinated by all they were discovering.

85. The use of ICT in the subject has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. For example, teachers use the interactive white boards very effectively to help pupils plan their experiments, which is helping to raise the level of attainment.
86. The subject is very well led and managed by teachers who are very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about science. Excellent assessment systems are in place to help teachers know how pupils are progressing and this is another factor underpinning the improved attainment. Resources in the subject are good and very well organised so that pupils can access them easily. There have been very good improvements in provision and standards since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is above average and they achieve well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled and knowledgeable in ICT.
- There has been a very significant improvement in resources since the previous inspection.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to consolidate their ICT skills when studying other subjects.

Commentary

87. Very significant progress has been made since the previous inspection in the curriculum, teaching and resources for ICT. Standards are now above average by Year 2 and Year 6. Very good subject leadership and the development and use of the new computer suites have been major factors in this improvement.
88. Pupils now achieve well across a very broad range of work in ICT. This includes the achievement of higher attaining pupils, some of whom work at a level well above that expected for their age. Those who have special educational needs use ICT resources very well. For example, they read along with a 'talking book', re-draft their written work using spell and grammar check facilities or practice hand-eye co-ordination through use of the mouse. Pupils, from Year 1 upwards, show great enthusiasm for computer work and are keen to try something new. Working in pairs, Year 6 pupils were observed delivering multi-media presentations to the whole class. They had made good use of animation effects to organise text, images and sounds in order to engage their audience fully.
89. Since the previous inspection teachers and teaching assistants have received a good amount of training and have become enthused about teaching ICT. Teaching is good and staff demonstrate a good level of skill that acts as a strong stimulus to pupils' learning. Several parents have taken advantage of the school's training opportunities to enhance their own skills so that they can better support their children's learning.
90. The school makes very good use of the two computer suites. Pupils are often seen using the computers totally independently for research well before school begins, at

lunchtime and in the extra-curricular ICT clubs. Very good leadership has contributed a great deal to the success in this subject through phased development planning. There is now a very good range of software to complement the school's broad and balanced curriculum. Excellent enrichment for the subject includes visits to experience the application of ICT in the world at large. For instance, pupils visited Leighton Hospital to look at monitoring equipment in the neo-natal unit and experienced control technology in the aerospace industry. Excellent systems of assessment provide teachers with information which is used well to target individual needs and provide extended work where appropriate.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

91. This is an area of particular strength. ICT is now used across a very wide range of subjects. Pupils have good keyboard skills and this helps their word processing and desktop presentation. They use spreadsheets for complex computations in mathematics and analysis in science. Computer programs are used well in subjects such as English, geography, history and art and design, both for research and recording. The Internet is used extensively for personal study and the school has a safe firewall and policy for this purpose.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good** and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very enthusiastic and achieve well.
- There is good coverage of the curriculum and good teaching.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills and to use ICT in their studies.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

92. From the lessons observed and an analysis of pupils' work, indications are that pupils achieve well throughout the school and reach average standards. This is a significant and good improvement since the previous inspection.
93. Attainment in Years 2 and 6 matches expectations. In Year 2, pupils follow eagerly the travels of a toy bear, which they call Barnaby. This helps develop their knowledge of locations beyond their own. With careful questioning, they make relevant comparisons between life in Crewe and that on a Scottish island. They focus on differences in transport, housing and landscape, showing a sound understanding of places and settlements. Pupils in Year 6 use secondary sources for their research and have a good knowledge of mountain environments. Their study of weather round the world gives them a good insight into how places have evolved and how human activity is influenced by the conditions of the area.

94. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers communicate their high expectations and set challenging tasks, which promote learning well. Resources have recently been improved and are now used very effectively. Good use is made of information and communication technology. Teachers use the electronic white boards to bring the world into the classroom. For example, Year 1 pupils made very good use of the photographs which they had taken using the digital camera in the previous week. The task was to consider how the view from their classroom window might change if the proposed development of a housing estate was to go ahead. They were very interested in the project because it was local and topical. Teachers make very good use of the local area to provide field study experiences. For instance, pupils carry out traffic surveys in various places and try to explain the different patterns of movement. Those in Year 2 travelled farther afield to compare the features of a seaside town with their own. Pupils use ICT well to present results when, for instance, they made a graph illustrating the time taken for pupils to walk to school from various locations. In mapping studies pupils use coordinates, which helps to extend their skills in mathematics.
95. Leadership and management are very good and are driving standards upwards. Geography is one of the latest subjects to be highlighted for development and a thorough audit of provision has been made to guide the improvements. The subject manager monitors standards of work efficiently and ensures that planning guidance is implemented well. There is a very good portfolio of completed assignments to guide teachers' assessment and to inspire high standards for future work. The school is now in a good position to build on the very good foundations made in the past year.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average.
- Pupils achieve well due to very good teaching.
- There is good emphasis on the teaching of enquiry and interpretation.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Excellent enrichment, including educational visits and visitors to the school, bring the curriculum to life.

Commentary

96. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Topics are chosen to interest boys and girls so that all are well motivated and become enthusiastic learners. For example, Year 1 pupils learn about washing days in times past and enjoy trying out some traditional washing implements. Those in Year 2 extend their skills of empathy as they try to understand what it was like to be a soldier in the trenches. This work was timed to coincide with Remembrance Day and this inspired pupils to find out about the past. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they research from different sources, making very

good use of the Internet, books and artefacts. For example, a practical lesson in Year 3 introduced pupils to the wonders of archaeology and promoted enquiry skills very well. They carefully uncovered 'treasures from the past' and drew their own conclusions about the age of the objects and what they might be used for. The work on Life in Victorian Times completed by Year 6 pupils shows good skills of interpretation. They had examined reports from different view points and detected bias in the reporting.

97. Teaching is very good and planning is often imaginative in linking with other subjects. For instance, in a Year 5 lesson pupils used their speaking and drama skills to re-tell the story of a battle. They enjoyed this collaborative and practical exercise very much. Interesting work such as this promotes a keen interest in the past. The two managers provide very good leadership in the subject, sharing their expertise and experience effectively with colleagues. Classroom displays are especially good. They celebrate pupils' work and include artefacts and books that invite pupils to enquire. Assessment systems are very good and keep a check on knowledge, skills and understanding acquired. The resulting information is also well used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and to make changes where needed.
98. There are very good links between history and literacy. For example, Year 6 practised their Christmas play based on 'A Christmas Carol' as an interesting finale to their study of The Victorians.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is above expectations by Year 6 and achievement is good throughout school.
- Planning covers all elements of the subject and includes a very good emphasis on world religions.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development and supports pupils' personal development very effectively.

Commentary

99. The curriculum meets fully the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. There have been good improvements to provision, the quality of teaching and attainment since the time of the previous inspection.
100. Across the age groups, pupils have a sound understanding of Bible stories, and older pupils investigate their relevance in our everyday lives. There is a strong emphasis on learning about world religions and pupils are knowledgeable about the main leaders, festivals and important events in different faiths. The scrutiny of work showed that pupils have a sound understanding of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism and of how people's faith influences their everyday lives. In conversations with pupils it is apparent that they have a good respect for other people's beliefs. Some Year 4 pupils created a Buddhist shrine in the classroom and learned about meditation at first hand. This was a spiritual occasion and learning was very good as

pupils soon realised that 'clearing the mind' is not an easy task. Year 6 pupils worked at a challenging level as they compared events recorded in the different books of the Bible and in history. They posed some searching questions when looking at the Christmas story. For example one pupil asked 'How do you follow a star?' and others discovered that the number of wise men is inferred from the number of gifts and is not actually stated. Skills of speaking and listening are well developed through interesting discussions. No extra help with language is required at present for the bi-lingual pupils, all of whom are fluent in English, but it is available if needed. Drama is used well and some pupils had enjoyed enacting the story of the Good Samaritan, exploring the motives and feelings of the main characters.

101. The teaching is good. There are very good links with personal, health, social and citizenship education. For instance, Year 1 pupils talk about their friends and write messages to put in the advent calendar. Leadership and management are good. The subject manager has developed a new assessment system which provides more detailed information for teachers' planning and is very good. The resources are good and well organised. The school makes very good use of the local authority's loan facility to provide a good range of artefacts in lessons and for display. There are good links with a local church and visits by a representative are very much enjoyed by the pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers stimulate pupils' curiosity with excellent opportunities to investigate a variety of materials and to experiment with a range of tools.
- Pupils enjoy the freedom to express their individual responses to a range of art forms.
- Pupils develop a wider understanding of different peoples and cultures by exploring a range of artistic works.
- Excellent displays throughout the school celebrate the creative work of pupils of all abilities.

Commentary

102. Standards in art and design are above expectations for pupils in Year 2 and well above expectations for pupils in Year 6. Many pieces of work are beautiful and are so well displayed that they enrich the whole school environment. The subject has a very high focus in the school, which is evident not only from the quality of the work produced by the pupils but from the fact that the school has applied for the Artsmark Gold award. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent.
103. Art and design is led by a gifted and outstanding teacher who takes lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6, drawing creative and accomplished work from them. Her knowledge, enthusiasm and drive permeate the whole art curriculum and encourage

the use of art and design as a support in other subjects. She inspires other staff to develop their own skills and interests and those of the pupils. Lively enjoyment, imaginative content and outstanding achievement characterise lessons in this subject.

104. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good. The pupils are introduced to an excellent range of different art and artists of various cultures and times in history. As a result, they appreciate an excellent range of art forms. They explore a wide range of materials and techniques to create their own, original compositions and sculptures. Lessons are planned along the National Curriculum programmes of study and they are adapted skilfully to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities, including those who are gifted and talented or have special educational needs.
105. Visits to places of artistic interest and a very good range of artefacts and natural materials enhance learning. There are some clever links with other subjects. For example, the designing and making of Roman shields and Aztec masks serve to deepen pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of art in history. Developing links with other creative subjects such as music, drama and poetry extend learning even further. The curriculum is very well enhanced by after-school clubs where pupils engage in a range of activities covering all aspects of art. Various artists come into school to share their talents and inspire pupils. Of particular note are the striking, vibrant sculptures made during such a session.
106. The whole school takes genuine delight in the work produced, which adds to pupils' spiritual awareness. Collaborative assignments and evaluating each other's work extends pupils' social and moral development. They are careful to find something good to say about a piece before offering constructive advice. Pupils who have special educational needs often do well in this creative subject and several pupils have extra challenges in their work because of their talents. The school has made very good progress in art and design since the previous inspection.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The knowledgeable subject leader provides excellent direction for the subject.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the design, making and evaluation processes.
- The school has excellent links with outside agencies which provide excellent enhancement for learning.

Commentary

107. Since the previous inspection, standards and provision have improved very well throughout the school. They are now above expectations in Year 2 and well above expectations in Year 6. The improvement is a reflection of the very good quality of the teaching and of the subject leadership. Teachers have a range of good resources and plentiful ideas, inspired by the subject manager. There is close

monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress and a very clear and ambitious vision for further subject development. The impressive portfolio of completed work illustrates the high standards and provides a wealth of ideas for colleagues' planning.

108. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and one example of excellent teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers have very good levels of subject knowledge and cover the different stages of the design and making processes very carefully so that pupils understand the purpose of what they are doing. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils enable high levels of practical activity to take place in an organised and productive way. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to carry out product analysis, create design proposals, explore prototypes and finish their products to a very good standard. Pupils are then encouraged to pose evaluative questions, knowing that the answers will help them to improve their work and enhance their skills.
109. Much of the pupils' finished work is celebrated around the school, together with some interesting photographic evidence. There are also very good examples of the use of design and technology to enhance the learning in other subjects, particularly ICT and science. The project undertaken by Year 2 pupils, in which they made vehicles to transport Cinderella to the ball, is very imaginatively linked with art and literacy. Pupils enjoy these practical activities both during the school day and as part of extra-curricular clubs.
110. There are many exciting and innovative aspects to the subject, introduced by the design and technology manager. They make learning fun, relevant and instructional. For instance, some Years 3 and 4 pupils gained much enjoyment and learning through working with pupils from a local school on a 'DT Challenge'. Their problem solving skills were extended well as they designed a car for an accident prone 'Humpty Dumpty'. The school has developed some excellent links with a number of outside agencies, which benefit the pupils' learning enormously. Through these links pupils are introduced to the practical and commercial side of design and technology and its relevance in everyday life. For example, participation in an industry training award scheme involved Year 6 pupils in making a huge tetrahedron in the school hall, which qualified them for the bronze and silver awards. In another project, representatives from the aircraft industry worked alongside pupils to design and make a model of a jig that was capable of transporting aeroplane wings. This involved much problem solving and troubleshooting. Visits to a bakery and a printing works also enable pupils to see the relevance of the subject in the world at large.

Music

Provision for music is **satisfactory** and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and pupils are well motivated as a result.
- Specialist staff and exciting projects make a good contribution to learning.
- The subject is a current focus for development and action planning is very good.

Commentary

111. The pupils attain nationally expected standards by Year 2 and Year 6 and a small proportion reach higher standards in performance work. Achievement is generally satisfactory and, in some cases, is it good for performing. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall and the quality of teaching is much better.
112. Teachers with specialist knowledge take many lessons and this makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Music lessons are fun, with a good balance between promoting knowledge, the appreciation of music and developing performance skills. So, by Year 2, the pupils sing a good range of challenging songs with accuracy and tunefulness. The clarity of diction is satisfactory and most pupils sustain a rhythmical beat appropriately. By Year 6 the pupils sing with a good awareness of dynamics and in a variety of contemporary and traditional styles. Some pupils, who are identified with a gift or a talent, play instruments such as guitars or keyboards with a good level of skill and confidence, contributing well to group compositions. Pupils enjoy their music lessons. However, there are occasions when pupils are over-enthusiastic and lose their very good standards of self-control. This affects the pace of learning, especially when large groups of pupils are working on instruments.
113. Because of other, more pressing needs the school improvement plan has focused on subjects other than music over the last five years. Music is currently a priority for development. The profile of the subject has been significantly raised over the last year through good leadership and management and resources are much improved. The school is in a very good position to build on this good work and improve further.
114. One major initiative in the subject is aimed at teaching all Year 3 and 4 pupils to play the guitar. Led by an outside agency, this project has been very successful; the quality of teaching seen and the progress made was good. Many pupils are very enthusiastic to continue and the school has good plans to provide for this need. There has been a resurgence in extra- curricular music activities during the last year and there are now good opportunities for pupils to perform in concerts and productions for other children and parents.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high because of very good teaching.
- Teachers' planning ensures that all pupils have access to the full curriculum.
- There are excellent enrichment opportunities within the school's extra-curricular programme.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

115. The very good provision in this subject has been recognised by the national Activemark award. Physical education is given a high profile in school and there

have been very good improvements in provision and attainment since the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations and all pupils are encouraged and supported to succeed. As a result, standards are above national expectations in Years 2 and well above national expectations in Year 6. Achievement is very good.

116. The physical education curriculum is well planned to ensure a balanced coverage of all aspects of physical education. Swimming is given high priority. Last year 98 percent of Year 6 pupils reached the expected standard in this area with 42 percent working at an advanced level to gain a Life Saving Award. Standards are equally high in games, gymnastics and athletics. Dance has been an area for development and the school has taken effective measures to bring about improvements. In two out of the three dance lessons observed, the pupils benefited from lessons led by a specialist dance teacher whilst the class teachers were able to improve their own skills and knowledge through collaborative practice.
117. The physical education curriculum is greatly enriched by the wide range of sporting opportunities provided within the extra-curricular programme. Where possible, professional coaches are employed. This allows the school to offer an excellent programme of activities which is much more varied than that usually seen in primary schools. These clubs are very well attended and are much appreciated by parents and pupils. The school teams in netball, football, athletics and cricket are regularly and successfully involved in matches and competitions against other schools. This contributes well to their social development and their sense of teamwork and fair play.
118. The quality of teaching is very good. As a matter of course, pupils are reminded about health and safety rules which are closely followed. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and provide clear instructions and demonstrations. They are mindful of health issues and include a good range of stretching and aerobic exercise during warm-up sessions. They provide constructive feedback to pupils to help them improve their performance. Teachers also encourage pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others. For example, in the Year 2 lesson, one group helped another to improve their dance sequence with very useful comments such as "I think that you could use different levels more". In lessons pupils are interested, behave well and are keen to do well.
119. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader actively seeks links with other schools and organisations to enhance the physical education curriculum. There are very good arrangements for monitoring and assessing the standards of pupils' achievement across the school, providing the manager with a clear view of where improvements need to be made. Teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated thoroughly to ensure that pupils have the best possible provision. Accommodation and resources for physical education are good.

Personal, social and health education and citizenship (PHSCE)

120. The school has an ethos of trust and security where every pupil is valued and mutual respect is strongly in evidence. The PHSCE programme is planned very well as an integral part of the school's curriculum, supported by a variety of visits and

visitors. One such example is the community scheme where professional footballers provide very positive role models as they engage in reading activities with the pupils.

121. Themes are also incorporated into other areas of school life and the curriculum such as assemblies, religious education and science. Day to day teaching contributes much to pupils' personal progress in personal and social education. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions in lessons and listen to other views with respect. Good sportsmanship is taught in games lessons and, in religious education, pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of other beliefs and cultures. Citizenship is well promoted through the work of the school council. Pupils in each class elect representatives who attend meetings where aspects of school life are discussed. The pupils are free to make proposals; the planned improvements to the playground equipment have come about through this route. A good sense of social and moral responsibility is encouraged by taking an active part in charitable collections to help those less fortunate. Opportunities such as these contribute well to pupils' sense of community.

122. The specific requirements in relation to health education are fully met and work in this area is extended beyond the norm. Programmes to teach about the dangers of drugs and alcohol misuse and to inform pupils about sex and relationships are well tailored to the age group. They contribute effectively to pupils' personal development. The National Healthy Schools Award reflects the school's commitment to helping pupils achieve a healthy lifestyle through good eating and exercise habits. The subject is very well led and managed by a committed and dedicated subject leader, who is both enthusiastic and well informed.

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	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	1
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	1
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	1

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