

INSPECTION REPORT

MABLINS LANE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Crewe

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111216

Headteacher: Mr S Webb

Lead inspector: Mr C B Green

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd June 2005

Inspection number: 267264

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: 4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 530

School address: Mablins Lane
Crewe
Cheshire
Postcode: CW1 3YR

Telephone number: 01270 580437
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Dr I Eastwood

Date of previous inspection: January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Mablins Lane Community Primary School is situated in Crewe, Cheshire. It is bigger than most other primary schools with 530 children on roll. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly in line with that expected for their age although their language skills are less well developed than those in other areas of learning. About five per cent of pupils have minority ethnic backgrounds, with very few pupils having English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well below the national average. Three children have statements of special educational need. Pupils move into the school in increasing numbers year on year, which has a significant impact on the school's overall performance. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2771	Mr C Green	Lead inspector	Geography History Religious education Personal, social and health education Special educational needs
1112	Mr P Oldfield	Lay inspector	
29989	Ms P Goodsell	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education
30745	Ms P Thorpe	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
21227	Mrs B Crane	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school, with many very good features. It provides **good** value for money. The school is committed to working closely with its partners and is particularly successful in involving parents in their children's education. This helps pupils to see the relevance of school and to have very good relationships with each other and with adults. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and art and design. Achievement in most subjects is good. The leadership team has identified appropriate areas for improvements with a good understanding of what needs to be done and the capacity to bring about these improvements rapidly.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- very good achievement in mathematics and art and design;
- the teaching of early writing skills which is not effective enough and the use of writing which is under-developed;
- highly effective personal support which leads to pupils having very positive attitudes and behaviour;
- effective teaching overall which engages the pupils' interest well;
- the rich curriculum that is enhanced by a very good programme of visits and visitors;
- the leadership of the school which provides clear purpose and high levels of care;
- provision in Reception which is under-resourced in important aspects and so limits pupils' achievement.

This school has made good progress since the time of the previous inspection. Standards reached, pupils' achievement and teaching have improved considerably and, particularly, communication with parents. However, the additional issue raised about developing the outdoor play facilities for Reception remains one that requires urgent action.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	C	C	C
mathematics	B	B	C	B
science	A	B	C	C

*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 overall is **good**. In mathematics and art and design, standards are well above average and achievement is very good by the time the pupils leave the school. Standards in English are also well above average. These are significant improvements on the standards achieved in 2004. In English, science, history, geography and religious education achievement is good, and in information and communication technology (ICT) it is satisfactory.¹ As a result of the good introduction children receive in Reception, they make satisfactory progress and mostly reach the goals expected of them. They achieve particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development but less well in developing communication, language and literacy skills. By the end of

¹ . Due to timetabling constraints, judgements about standards of achievement in design and technology, physical education and music were not made during the inspection.

Year 2, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory in English, science and ICT. Standards in mathematics, geography, history, and art and design are above average and achievement is good, mainly because the teaching is effective. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in handwriting and spelling by Year 2 because the teaching does not support them enough in gaining these early skills. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress throughout the school and achieve well in Years 3 to 6. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and achieve well. The few pupils who have English as an additional language do well. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are very good by the time they leave school. However, whilst they listen and use their skills in reading very competently, they do not apply their writing skills effectively in subjects other than English. Competencies in ICT are satisfactory and are used effectively. Pupils' personal development is **very good**; their spiritual and cultural development is good and their moral and social development is very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes and they behave very well. Their punctuality is good and attendance rates are above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**, as are teaching and learning. Effective use is made of the assessments of what pupils have already learned when planning the targets for their next steps. The rate of progress pupils make in Years 5 and 6 is particularly good. Planning in the other year groups does not always take sufficient account of what pupils have already achieved; for example, weaknesses in the pupils' writing are not always identified and corrected swiftly enough. The curriculum is well designed; it is broad, relevant and diverse. Opportunities for enrichment through visits and clubs include a wide range of extra-curricular activities available in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are very well cared for and have a sense of security that helps them to do well. The very good partnership with parents and with other schools, nurseries and colleges helps the staff and pupils develop a positive and outward-looking approach to education and learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher sees a clear purpose for the school, which is shared by governors and key members. There is a strong recognition that learning extends beyond the school boundaries and so the school values and utilises the very good contribution made by the wider community. Senior staff are skilled at evaluating the school's performance. They have recently become more adept at ensuring that information is used effectively to bring about the improvements necessary to raise the pupils' standards of achievement. Staff provide good role models for others. Governance is good, though it is supportive rather more than it is challenging. The governing body has well-embedded procedures to ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the good progress their children make. Pupils' views are also very positive. They feel well represented by their council and find the headteacher and staff very approachable. They feel that they are helped in their work and life at school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- teach handwriting and spelling more effectively in Reception and Years 1 and 2;
- increase opportunities for pupils to write in subjects across the curriculum;

- improve achievement for children in Reception in imaginative play and physical development including the resources to support this, particularly the outdoor learning area as reported at the previous inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above average by the time they leave the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and art and design are well above average.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics and art and design.
- Achievement in English, science, history, geography and religious education is good overall.
- The handwriting and spelling of pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 are only satisfactory.
- Writing is not developed well enough in subjects other than English.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.
- Children's achievement in imaginative play and physical development is restricted in Reception because of limited resources.

Commentary

1. The school shows a trend of improvement in most subjects over the achievements in 2004, especially in English. Children in Reception make a good start to school and satisfactory progress is maintained to Year 1. Progress by Year 2 is good in mathematics, art and design, history, geography and religious education. Standards are above average and pupils achieve well in these subjects. Progress is slower in English, mainly because of weaknesses in handwriting and spelling, and in science and ICT. Nevertheless, achievement in these subjects is satisfactory and standards are average; they remain so ICT by Year 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (15.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.1 (15.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.1 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 84 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. By the time pupils leave the school, standards in English, mathematics and art and design are well above average. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and art and design. Good teaching means that pupils make good progress and achieve well in English, science, history, geography and religious education. Standards in these subjects are above average although writing continues not to be developed enough in subjects other than English. Pupils listen well but speaking, which is often good, is not used as the basis to develop writing about the very good knowledge and ideas gained in these subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (27.3)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.6 (28.2)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.7 (30.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 80 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because the individual education plans prepared by the school identify accurately what the pupils need to learn. Teachers use these carefully to adjust their lessons so as to meet the pupils' requirements well. Progress is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 where the pupils are organised into groups, based on the levels of their prior achievement, for English and mathematics. These 'setting' arrangements, in Years 3 to 6, and good teaching help those pupils with special educational needs to reach average levels by the time they leave.
4. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress. The school uses the advice from outside agencies to address pupils' particular needs well.
5. Satisfactory progress is made through Reception. Children make good strides in their personal, social and emotional development but do less well in developing their communication, literacy and language skills. Although children start school with language skills that are less well developed than in other areas, their attainment on entry is broadly in line with that expected for their age. It is average by the time they move on into Year 1. The supportive ethos that exists in Reception and the very good relationships with parents provide a secure range of learning experiences. However, limited resources restrict achievement in imaginative play and physical development.
6. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is good. They are given responsibility to develop their skills independently and contribute well in group situations.
7. On balance the school has improved the trends in the standards reached and the levels of pupils' achievement since those reported in the previous inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development is **very good**. Moral and social development is very good, and spiritual and cultural is good. Pupils develop very good attitudes and values and behave very well. Attendance is above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Behaviour is very good in and around school.
- Pupils are happy at school, get on very well together and have very good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils develop very good levels of confidence and self-esteem and take responsibility well.
- There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development.

Commentary

8. As at the time of the last inspection, the school teaches very good attitudes to learning and to understanding the need to behave very well. These aims are achieved, with the great majority of pupils responding very well to the high expectations of members of staff. The pupils feel happy at the school and feel valued. Pupils feel behaviour is good and are happy with the way staff deals with problems. A few pupils receive special support because they do not fully understand these expectations. The school council has conducted a survey about 'feelings' and is exploring improvements in support arrangements, including the extension of the successful 'buddy' scheme.
9. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Most pupils understand the behaviour code and behave sensibly in the playgrounds and around the school. They are polite and in lessons they co-operate well. Throughout the school, children's achievement in personal, social and emotional development is good.
10. The school is highly effective in promoting very good relationships amongst all parts of the school community. This is a significant factor in the very high levels of confidence and self-esteem shown by pupils. They are happy and generally feel very secure. This has a positive impact upon learning.
11. Pupils are given very good opportunities to take responsibility. The active school council gives pupils the chance to express their opinions and develop a very good understanding of the rights and responsibilities of living in a community. Pupils feel confident their views can be expressed and that staff will listen carefully to what they have to say.
12. Moral and social skills are promoted very well. Pupils learn that there are others less fortunate than themselves and they support a range of charities. Visitors to the school who come to share their experiences are well chosen and a number of visits, including residential visits for older pupils, contribute well to pupils' achievement. Spiritual development is supported appropriately, a good example being the thoughtful and respected periods of grace and reflection before lunch. Pupils have a good awareness of their own cultures but there are fewer opportunities for them to celebrate the cultural diversity of society by visits within the locality. The well-developed personal, social and health education programme does allow pupils to appreciate the value of healthy eating and regular exercise.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.5
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

13. Attendance rates are above the national average. The learning mentor has a crucial role in encouraging some pupils. Her liaison with the educational welfare officer has brought impressive improvements to the attendance of these pupils. Pupils are keen to come to school and arrive punctually. There are very good procedures for

monitoring attendance and all applications for holidays during term time are fully investigated by staff before agreement is made in writing to parents.

Exclusions

14. There were no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. The school provides a good curriculum. Accommodation and resources are good overall but less so in Reception. Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported and respond well to the extra opportunities for them to learn, which are good. Very good links with parents, other schools and the wider community contribute significantly to pupils' progress.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good at engaging and encouraging pupils to do well and to enjoy school.
- Very good behaviour means that pupils are able to learn well in groups and independently.
- Teaching resources in Reception are too limited.
- The teaching of early writing skills is not effective enough.
- Time in lessons is not always used as well as it should be.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	6 (13%)	27 (60%)	11 (25%)	1 (2%)	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.

15. Overall teaching is good. Teaching is interesting and engages the pupils well. They enjoy school because of this. Invariably they are praised and encouraged to do well and this is particularly effective in securing very good behaviour, which enables them to work well independently and in groups. When a small minority of pupils occasionally presents challenging behaviour or use inappropriate language teachers and teaching assistants handle these situations calmly and constructively and solve the problem without drawing unnecessary attention to it. On the whole pupils are very keen to learn, obliging and confident about the tasks they are to tackle.
16. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Reception. Teachers provide a very supportive atmosphere that engages children and helps them to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The teachers and teaching assistant often give children a good range of learning experiences and focus individuals and small groups on learning new skills well. However, the teaching

resources available for physical development and imaginative play and those available for teaching early skills in reading and writing in Reception and Years 1 and 2 are not used as effectively as they should be. Opportunities to extend children's learning in these aspects are limited. This is particularly the case where there are weaknesses in the pupils' basic writing skills, weaknesses that are not consistently identified and swiftly corrected by the teaching.

17. Teaching across the school, however, generally utilises good quality resources. This helps pupils to achieve well by the time they leave. Clear learning objectives are set and these focus pupils' attention on making good progress in those areas where it is most needed. The introductions to lessons bring exciting promise and are invariably interesting in their presentation and content. Teachers know their material well and have easy command of their classes. Pupils with special educational needs have appropriate provision within the normal teaching programme and good teaching ensures that they achieve well.
18. Time is not always used effectively. This is because teachers often talk for too long in lessons and leave insufficient time for pupils to respond as fully as they might to the subjects under consideration. Too few opportunities are made for pupils to write enough, and especially using more advanced writing skills in subjects other than English, particularly in science, history and geography. There is also an overuse of worksheets that require pupils to fill in odd words, rather than develop and record the ideas and arguments of which they are well capable in more individual ways.
19. The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the previous inspection. There is now much more good teaching than previously.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **good**. A good range of extra activities boosts pupils' skills in sports, arts and personal development. Overall the accommodation and resources for learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good variety of activities that enrich the overall curriculum provided for the pupils and the school makes good use of local and national initiatives to develop specific areas of the curriculum.
- Very good provision is made for the personal, social and health education of the pupils.
- The good number of extra-curricular activities, especially for the older pupils, augments their learning opportunities outside of the classroom.
- The use of writing skills across the curriculum throughout the school is limited.
- Some facilities and resources are sparse in the Reception classes.

Commentary

20. Teachers work well to ensure that a well-planned and comprehensive curriculum is provided for all of the pupils in the school and the curriculum has improved since the time of the last inspection. The overall planning of the curriculum is good and there are a wide variety of activities that enrich the overall curriculum provided for the pupils. The school is making good use of local and national initiatives to develop the curriculum further. It is presently extending the range of learning styles and strategies

designed to meet the needs of different groups and individual pupils – and to develop links between subjects. Good attention is paid to the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies preparing the pupils very well for the next stages of their education. However, further opportunities are needed for pupils to use their writing skills across different areas of the curriculum throughout the school.

21. Very good arrangements are in place for the delivery of personal, social and health education resulting in the high levels seen in the personal development of the pupils.
22. Since the last inspection the resources for the school to deliver the planned curriculum for teaching ICT skills have improved and the pupils have good opportunities to use the well-equipped suite and other ICT applications such as interactive whiteboards and laptop computers. The classrooms, in both the newer and older parts of the school, provide the pupils with good workplaces. The school is in the process of improving the library facilities for personal study and group work.
23. The children in Reception are well supported by the teaching staff and the full-time teaching assistant who are frequently helped by volunteers and trainee teaching assistants. The resources for imaginative play and physical development, however, are too limited.
24. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and the teaching assistants. This enables them to make satisfactory progress and achieve well by the time they leave. Good arrangements are in place to review the individual education plans on a regular basis and to determine the areas to concentrate on.
25. Visits and visitors greatly promote the pupils' enthusiasm for learning and contribute well to their personal development. The curriculum is enriched and consistently motivates and interests pupils in their learning. Members of staff organise a good range of clubs although these mainly cater for the older pupils. They include sports, music, art and chess and are enthusiastically attended. In addition the school premises are made available to outside organisations that provide clubs such as the highly popular judo classes.

Care, guidance and support

The school very effectively promotes the pupils' welfare in a very secure and caring environment. Their development is supported very well. The school is very good at taking pupils' ideas and opinions into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Members of staff ensure that pupils work in a very safe environment where levels of care are very good.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to make their views known.
- There are good induction procedures for children in Reception class; new pupils receive very good support when they join the school.

Commentary

26. Since the previous inspection the school has made progress and now provides a very high level of care and ensures pupils work in a very safe environment. Teachers and other adults in the school provide very good personal support, based upon a

comprehensive understanding of pupils' needs. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are clearly established and carefully followed. This ensures all pupils feel confident and can concentrate upon lessons.

27. The needs of pupils are very well met as very good contact is maintained with a range of support services. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into school life. A senior teacher has the designated responsibility for child protection and this duty is discharged very well in a sensitive manner.
28. The good induction procedures allow staff to get to meet parents and their children and include good contacts with pre-school providers. Older pupils settle well into routines because they are offered 'buddy' support, a system which often results in good friendships being formed.
29. The school values and encourages pupils' views very well. The elected school council representatives share pupils' ideas and present a very good forum for debate. The school supports their ideas and acts upon them very well, an example being their request for pupils to wear blue wristbands to support an anti-bullying drive in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good partnership between home and school.
- The school works very closely with the local community.
- There are very effective links with other schools and colleges.

Commentary

30. At the last inspection, information and communication with parents were an issue for action. The school has responded vigorously and has been proactive in taking steps to improve this. The very high number of parents now comfortable about approaching the school and the positive impact this has on pupils' learning is an indication of the school's success. The general ethos is one of continuing development. This aspect is contained in the school improvement plan, so that the co-ordinated efforts of all parties, including the parent-teacher association, are well directed. There have been very thorough responses to particular concerns, such as over incidents of bullying. The commitment to overcoming such problems has been total, so that all pupils feel very comfortable during their time at the school. There were no bullying incidents seen during the inspection period.
31. A few parents said that they were not always well informed about how their children were getting on. A recent open day, to see work done, was extremely well supported by very high numbers of parents. Parents are now provided with a very good range of information about school life and activities. The pupils' reports have been altered to show targets for improvement. The parent-teacher association is very well organised and supportive. It has provided many social and fundraising events that have been well supported by the school and local community. It has provided very good support

in opening lines of communication and in providing equipment to support children's learning opportunities.

32. The school has established very good links with other schools and colleges, some as part of the 'Excellence in Crewe' programme, others with Manchester Metropolitan University and with a local agricultural college. A very good planned programme has been established so that pupils who may transfer to a number of secondary schools do meet teacher representatives whilst at school and take part in an induction programme to prepare them very well for an important start to secondary education. A transition project helps pupils in Year 6 to be involved in working on projects that are taken with them to secondary school. They understand the purpose of this work and that it is helping them to get ready for a smooth transfer to the next phase of their education.
33. These well-developed partnerships contribute very positively to pupils' learning opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and ensures high levels of care.
- Leadership and management involve the community very effectively in the life of the school.
- The school has a high commitment to including and meeting the needs of all pupils.
- The deputy and assistant headteachers and other key staff are skilled at evaluating the school's performance.
- The co-ordination of teams is not as effective as it should be in bringing consistent actions to raise achievement.
- Governors take pride in the safe environment they oversee and fulfil their statutory duties well.

Commentary

34. The headteacher has built on the school's previous achievements and set a good course for improvement. He delegates leadership and management tasks to senior staff and has time to share the purpose he sees for the school with others, both in school and beyond. His approachable leadership style gives confidence to pupils and parents and this has contributed significantly to the effective partnerships developed across the community. The good leadership he provides, coupled with that of the deputy and assistant headteachers, has ensured the school's continuing success.
35. A high level of commitment to inclusion by the school leaders has created a very good ethos. This has been successful in establishing a proper concern for the needs of individuals, their health and safety and the importance of them enjoying their learning both in school and beyond. Matters that are important to the pupils are seen as central to the purpose of the school and these are reflected in the management priorities. A positive climate that is conducive to care, learning and progress has been established. Senior staff, teachers, teaching assistants and adults in school provide good role models for others.

36. The senior leadership team evaluates the past performance of the school carefully and shares this information with those key groups of staff who carry leadership and management responsibilities. This information has been used particularly well this year in raising the achievement of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Leadership and management of special educational needs are effective with pupils doing particularly well in these years also.
37. Effective delegation of leadership and management responsibilities and successful team working are seen by the school to be important because the school is large. It has therefore established a series of teams and leaders for different functions and subject leadership. In some respects these teams perform very effectively but their impact in different parts and aspects of the school is inconsistent. The implementation of the school's most successful practices throughout the school is not as well co-ordinated as it might be in raising achievement. The leadership and management of Reception are satisfactory and have benefited from a recent project that has honed skills in self-evaluation through careful observation of how different teaching styles engage children's interest in learning. As yet, however, it is too early to see much impact from this initiative in terms of boosting children's achievement. Professional development opportunities for staff are very well planned and taken. The impact of these on pupils' achievement is often good but in Reception and Years 1 and 2 the impact is not as high as in Years 3 to 6.
38. The governors fulfil their statutory duties well. The governors are aware of the strengths of the school and, through their good relationship with the headteacher, know about those areas that are in need of greatest improvement. The good quality of the leadership and management of the school has been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. The main key issues for action reported at that time have been dealt with very well. One of the additional issues, to develop outdoor play facilities for the under fives, has not been satisfactorily achieved due to planning uncertainties. Despite this and a significant overspend, which the school has planned to remove this financial year, the school provides good value for money overall.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,179,232
Total expenditure	1,163,768
Expenditure per pupil	2,270

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-55,170
Balance carried forward	-39,706

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. The overall provision for the Reception children is satisfactory; children's achievement is satisfactory, overall. The leadership and management of Reception are satisfactory and are particularly effective in promoting the children's introduction to school and the very good partnership with parents that supports children's learning at home and in school. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, with considerable strengths upon which to build, as well as important areas for improvement. Recent checks have been made on what is working well and what needs improvement in order to spread good practice and eradicate weaknesses. Senior management has not, however, always ensured that children's learning has benefited from investment in resources and facilities to boost achievement. Children with special educational needs are satisfactorily supported and make sound progress. Children who are learning English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily, with some good advice and support from outside agencies. The level of assistance for teaching is currently low. The teaching assistant, who has a very high level of expertise, is hard pushed to support children's activities when teachers are involved in teaching groups. This means that timely interventions in children's play activities are restricted and this limits opportunities to extend children's learning. There are plans in hand to increase the level of staffing from September 2005.
40. There has been satisfactory maintenance and improvement since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children respond very well to the daily routines and feel secure.
- The consistently high expectations of staff mean that children happily share and take turns, listen carefully and behave very well.
- All adults provide very good models for children to follow in respecting and showing courtesy to others.

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are very good and most children are likely to exceed the goals for their age by the end of the Reception. The main factor in promoting children's very good achievement in this area of learning is the consistency with which adults create an atmosphere in which children feel a sense of belonging. The pattern of the day is well defined and promotes harmony and order that ensure children feel secure. Relationships are very good and children want to please. In turn, adults set a high standard for courtesy and consideration in the way that they deal with children. Children develop sensitivity to others' needs because adults talk to them about their feelings. This develops their understanding of how they can help others. In one session, for example, a teacher invited children to consider how they felt when they first started at school and how they could support those children who were visiting the

classes for the first time before joining in September. Children were quick to offer ideas such as explaining where things were and joining in games with the newcomers so that they felt at home. Children know how to behave because adults' expectations are clear and consistent. Good behaviour and effort are recognised by frequent praise, as well as being rewarded by certificates as 'stars of the day'.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's speaking is often developed very well through effective questioning.
- Lively reading by adults and a good range of books mean that children enjoy reading.
- Teaching does not promote the correct formation of letters effectively or help children to overcome hurdles in spelling.
- There are too few opportunities to write in play situations.

Commentary

42. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Overall, children's achievement is satisfactory. Most of the children are likely to reach the goals for their age in speaking, listening and reading, but not in writing. Teaching often extends children's speech effectively through questions that encourage children to extend their replies. In one lesson, for example, children's descriptions of how a character in a story felt were extended from simply "sad" to "Jack's mum was grumpy because there was no milk left". Children listen carefully to adults and to each other because of high expectations on the part of all staff.
43. Adults engage children's attention and interest very well when they read stories, especially by their dramatic use of voice, and so children find books exciting. At times when children can choose their activities, many turn to books, often settling to share these with a friend. The sounds of letters are well taught and learned and children look carefully at the pictures to find clues about what might be happening.
44. The teaching of writing is less effective however and is unsatisfactory. About half of the children do not form letters correctly and these difficulties are not resolved. Some children do not hold pencils correctly and are not adequately supported in developing the correct grip. While children often have good ideas for writing, many struggle to put down their ideas. They are daunted by the task because they cannot spell the words and have few strategies and little support readily at hand to help them. Their poor letter formation means that they often cannot read back what they have written. Resources for writing activities, such as small whiteboards, are in short supply and this limits children's learning.
45. Opportunities for children to write in play situations are too infrequent. Resources are not always sufficiently stimulating to engage their interest and so few children choose to write.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching promotes children's mathematical vocabulary very well.
- There is a good level of challenge for more able children.
- Some opportunities are missed to engage all children in activities when they are taught together in classes.

Commentary

46. Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well and most are on course to exceed the targets set for their age by the time they start in Year 1 because of their good understanding of number, shape and measurement. Resources are good in this area of learning and children's learning benefits. Adults place a very good emphasis on teaching the correct mathematical language and encourage children to use this when they talk about their work. This was seen in a session where the teacher in one class involved children in solving problems involving numbers up to ten and children learned that 'more' meant that the calculation required them to add and 'less' meant that they needed to take a number away.
47. More able children are prompted to go further in their learning by careful questions that probe their understanding. They are given the opportunity to follow their line of thinking and respond to more difficult problems. In one session, for example, a child offered a solution of how to check that a structure made of sand matched the height of another built in bricks by using a spade to check the height of both.
48. At the start of lessons, when the children are taught as a class, there are times when teaching does not fully involve all children in activities. Children watch others perform tasks or calculations for too long and this means that some of their attention and interest wanes slightly.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good direct teaching of ICT skills.
- Children's cultural development is well supported.
- There are too few opportunities for children to learn through displays that stimulate their curiosity.

Commentary

49. Children's achievement is satisfactory and most are on track to meet the early goals for learning by the end of Reception. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and there are sound links to other areas of learning. Children watch how beans grow, for example, in connection with their work on 'Jack and the Beanstalk' in literacy. Basic skills in ICT are very well taught, so that they develop good skills in using computer programs in the computer suite and in their classrooms. In one session observed, for example, skilful teaching, involving the use of the interactive whiteboard, meant that children confidently logged on to computers, accessed the correct program and used

a range of drawing tools to create a design. The very good support provided meant that all were able to achieve the task set for them.

50. Children's awareness of different cultures is well promoted through first-hand experiences. They remember, for example, what they learned about African clothing, music and daily life from a workshop session earlier in the year. This event stirred children's curiosity and interest very well and they were keen to talk about the artefacts on display.
51. Overall, however, there are too few displays that stimulate children to look, feel and touch as essential ways of learning. This limits children's opportunities to ask questions, explore for themselves and find out about the world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's finer skills are developed well, except in handwriting.
- Dance and more formal physical outdoor and indoor lessons are well planned.
- The outdoor learning area has few resources for exploring space and developing children's larger movements.

Commentary

52. Children's achievement is satisfactory and most are on track to meet the targets for their age in learning by the end of Reception. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are plenty of opportunities for children to model with different materials, draw, cut and join and so they develop a good level of dexterity in these areas. They often make slower progress in developing the correct grip for pencils when writing and controlling the direction and size of letters. This is because teaching places too little emphasis on assessing children's capabilities and acting swiftly to resolve problems.
53. Teachers' planning shows a good range of opportunities for more structured lessons, such as children performing a dance based on a traditional fairy tale, or in throwing and catching activities on the playground. Specific activities such as children following the path that Jack may have taken to find the giant's castle are well structured and implemented.
54. However, opportunities for children to explore space freely and imaginatively are more restricted because there is no designated outdoor learning area that is equipped for these activities. The staff make the best use of what is available, moving equipment such as wheeled vehicles outdoors, as well as large building blocks, but the children still lack opportunities to climb, crawl and balance on large equipment. This was a point for improvement at the last inspection. There are plans in hand to improve provision that need to be realised as soon as possible to enhance children's learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The basic skills in drawing, modelling and painting are taught very well.
- The lack of stimulating resources for imaginative play limits children's learning.
- Singing is lively and the children join in enthusiastically with action songs.

Commentary

55. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Overall, children's achievement is satisfactory. Most of the children are likely to reach the goals for their age by the start of Year 1. A particular strength is the extent to which children learn how to observe detail and use it when they draw or paint. This is evident in their drawings of teddy bears and their painted self-portraits, which have good proportion and fine features. Good teaching promotes these skills very successfully. Children respond very well to planning that means they can explore a range of media, as when they make hats to represent fanciful creatures.
56. In the play areas, however, where children act out different roles, there are too few resources such as costumes and other props to stimulate their play and enable them to make use of the vocabulary they have learned. When they sing they do so with gusto and learn effectively both from the words they learn and the actions they undertake.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well in reading and writing because of very effective teaching.
- Handwriting and spelling are not taught sufficiently well in Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 promotes pupils' speaking very well and listening is very well developed throughout the school.
- Writing skills are not promoted well enough across the curriculum.

Commentary

57. Standards are well above average in Year 6 in reading and writing. In Year 2, standards are average in reading and in writing. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, but with important variations for different aspects of English in different parts of the school. There has been satisfactory improvement, overall, since the previous inspection and encouraging signs of the school's use of self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement. Pupils' achievement in Years 5 and 6 is very good. This is because of the very good analysis of what needed to change to improve pupils' progress in these years. This analysis has been used very effectively to improve their learning. As a result, standards in reading and writing are high by the time pupils leave the school, with nearly half of the pupils gaining the level above that expected for their age in

English. Pupils' listening skills are very well nurtured in all year groups and pupils listen carefully both to adults and to each other. In both Year 2 and Year 6, listening is better than expected for pupils' ages.

58. Taking the school as a whole, pupils' achievement is good, but there are differences in some parts of the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make progress that is similar to their classmates. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is often good. Pupils read competently, gather information efficiently and can talk about aspects of stories with fluency and understanding. The content of their writing is often good because teaching ensures that they have had plenty of opportunities to talk about their ideas. Teaching places a good emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary. As a result, pupils' speaking is above average by the time they start in Year 3. Teaching of basic skills such as reading, handwriting and spelling are weaker. A significant number of pupils start in Year 1 unable to form letters correctly and some have not established spacing between words. These problems persist through Year 2 and into Year 3 because teaching does not effectively pinpoint weaknesses and resolve pupils' difficulties. Pupils often struggle with spelling common words and teachers have few consistent strategies to help the pupils overcome these difficulties. Some pupils, of all abilities, become discouraged from writing because they find it hard to read what they have written.
59. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is good, overall, and it is very good in Years 5 and 6. It is in these upper years that the more able pupils are very well challenged to produce their best and they know exactly what they need to do to improve their work. More able Year 6 pupils' understanding of how a narrative can be viewed and presented from different perspectives was very well promoted, for example, in one lesson based on extracts from *The Lord of the Flies*. The thoughtful and insightful reading of the extracts, guided by very good teaching about what elements to consider, led to one pupil concluding that, "Their reaction would not have happened if they had not been so far from civilisation. Law and order would have prevented the boys' violence." Pupils organise their thinking equally well in writing, with complex sentences, accurate punctuation and spelling and neat handwriting. A weaker aspect of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is the promotion of pupils' speaking. There are times when teachers talk for too long, restricting pupils' opportunities to contribute to discussion and air their views. As a result, standards in speaking are only average by Year 6.
60. The leadership and management of the subject are good and have looked in detail to see what needs to be improved in pupils' performance and how this can be better supported through teaching. This has resulted in sharper identification of any underachievement by the older pupils and measures to eradicate it. Additionally, work in improving sessions when pupils in Years 1 and 2 read together in groups has paid dividends in boosting the achievement of all abilities. As yet, however, there is insufficient guidance for developing handwriting and spelling across the school.
61. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Overall, the use of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Speaking and reading are aspects that are carefully planned and pupils use these skills effectively to support their learning. Opportunities for pupils to use their skills in writing, however, are too often restricted by worksheets that prevent them from

extending their writing. This is particularly the case in history, geography and religious education where their good achievement, evidenced orally, could enhance their writing more than it does.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are above national averages by the age of seven and well above by the age of eleven.
- Very good systems to assess and track progress and set new targets are now in place but individual pupils do not all get consistent information about what they can do to improve their learning.
- Teaching in mathematics is good and enables the pupils to achieve very well by the time they leave the school.
- Leadership and management of mathematics are very good and contribute to the high standards seen.
- The quality of presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent.

Commentary

63. Present standards of attainment for the seven year olds are above national averages and by the time the pupils leave the school standards are well above those found nationally. The majority of pupils enter Year 1 with average levels of attainment in mathematics by the end of their Reception year. As the pupils move through the school they continue to acquire good basic numeracy skills and all, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. The rate of progress increases as the pupils move through Key Stage 2 and the pupils achieve very well against their prior attainment.
64. Standards have improved since the last inspection and the number of eleven year olds achieving the higher level (Level 5) has risen and is continuing to do so. This very good rate of progress is maintained as the pupils move through the school because there are very clear systems to assess and track progress of pupils. The high standards reached by the time the pupils leave the school is due to the good use being made of the information gained to group by ability across each year group and match the work to the needs of the whole range of abilities and attainment. In some year groups extra teachers ensure there is a boost to the learning opportunities provided for the pupils. In Key Stage 1 in particular, there is an over-reliance on worksheets. The school is aware of this and is continuing to refine its approaches to the way it supports the delivery of the National Numeracy Strategy, using other materials and practical experiences.
65. Clear targets are set for development and most pupils know what they have to do to improve although this is not yet consistently the case throughout the school. The work is not always carefully presented; for example, erratic use is made of squared paper resulting in the pupils not keeping numbers in the correct columns. Throughout the school all the pupils have very enthusiastic and positive attitudes towards their mathematics lessons, and they work hard to complete the work that is planned.
66. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. Work is planned at a challenging level and pupils are given good opportunities to work things out for themselves. The school plans to increase occasions when pupils can use their skills and knowledge to solve problems or decide which operation to use. Books are regularly marked and positive

comments made but throughout the school the presentation of recorded work is often untidy and erratically presented. For pupils in Years 1 and 2 the school has decided to use plain paper for mathematics rather than squared. Whilst this has the advantage of giving pupils opportunities to show their working out alongside their answers, on occasions it leads to confusion in accurate calculation. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes and the pupils respond by working well and trying hard to complete work set. The pupils with special educational needs are helped effectively to ensure that they understand the work that is planned, to maintain their interest and to build their self-confidence.

67. Mathematics is very well led and managed. The co-ordinators are enthusiastic and hard working and provide good role models for other staff. There have been opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in lessons and the co-ordinators make good use of the information gathered, together with that from detailed analysis of standardised and external assessments, to set new priorities for development. The very good leadership and management of mathematics contribute well to the raising of standards because the co-ordinators have a very clear vision of how the subject can be further improved. This includes continuing to track pupils' progress, setting targets for improvement systematically and expanding the opportunities for real-life problem solving as part of the regular mathematical curriculum. Good progress has been made in mathematics since the time of the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Throughout the school there are good opportunities taken for pupils to use and develop their mathematics in other subjects. ICT skills are used to display and interpret data collected. Mathematical skills are used in science to measure and record data from experiments in different forms. Good examples of this are seen in Year 6 when pupils record readings from force-meters in bar charts and use tables to record the reversible and irreversible change they have observed in their experiments. In a cross-curricular topic based on pirates the pupils learn to use co-ordinates to plot features on the Treasure Island. Throughout the school the pupils are helped to develop a sense of time passing through their learning of chronology in history.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils acquire factual knowledge and a wide range of scientific vocabulary at a good rate.
- Standards achieved by Year 6 are above average
- The increased emphasis on investigations has given pupils more opportunities for practical work.
- Pupils enjoy their science lessons and behave well.
- Older and more able pupils have limited opportunities to initiate their own investigations.

Commentary

69. Pupils reach average standards in Year 2 and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 reach above average standards and achieve well.

70. Teaching and learning are good, particularly for older pupils. The good quality of teaching has played a major part in the progress pupils make, along with a thorough analysis by the staff of what has worked well and what needs improvement. Recently, as a result, there is a more concerted effort to make sure that lessons involve practical experiences and that pupils are able to use the knowledge they have gained by making a hypothesis during experiments and discovering whether it is true. This provides challenge for pupils and encourages them to think for themselves. However, this approach has not yet had sufficient impact to improve overall standards further. Although teachers now plan more guided experimental and investigative work for pupils, older and more able pupils have very little opportunity to follow their own ideas and set up their own investigations.
71. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 use the skills pupils develop in the Foundation Stage as a starting point to broaden and develop their knowledge and understanding of key scientific facts. Teachers plan lessons around experiences and objects that pupils are familiar with, such as the use of electricity and how a simple circuit works. Pupils use simple scientific language when discussing their ideas and recording their work.
72. Through Years 3 to 6 these basic skills are developed systematically. All parts of the science curriculum are now covered in sufficient depth and teachers are rightly putting more emphasis on improving pupils' investigative skills. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the work they are doing and are becoming increasingly familiar with a broad range of scientific terms. Relationships are very good and pupils enjoy their lessons. They are encouraged to develop social skills by working with groups or partners. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, so practical work is safe and well organised. Consequently pupils behave well.
73. The joint co-ordinators are relatively new to the posts and they have worked successfully to give science a high priority in school. They have provided good leadership in the way they promote the subject. They have clear plans to improve teaching and learning alongside an enhanced curriculum. The current school pond is small and the surrounding area is limited but is used occasionally by small groups of children investigating the habitat of small creatures. A new pond and environmental area are planned for the near future. The wildlife and gardening club is available for older pupils to pursue particular interests. Visits, which include an annual residential visit to a farm for Year 6 pupils, and visitors contribute positively to pupils' learning. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources for ICT are good and support learning well.
- Good links with other subjects are being established.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' standards and progress are not fully in place.

Commentary

74. Pupils reach the expected standards in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school, especially between Years 3 and 6 where standards are beginning to rise.
75. There has been a high level of investment in both equipment and staff training. The school has established a well-resourced ICT suite in addition to banks of computers around the school and several laptops available for pupils to use in the classroom. The very good range and quality of the resources, together with well-planned training for teachers, have enabled the school to establish a climate of rising standards and to ensure that the ICT curriculum is taught in sufficient depth.
76. Teaching is good. Teachers have secure knowledge and this enables them to explain procedures well to pupils. They maintain an effective balance between instruction and pupils practising what they have been shown for themselves, which results in the systematic development of pupils' skills, for instance in creating databases and entering information onto spreadsheets. Teachers plan interesting tasks that make learning these skills relevant and fun. An example of this was seen when pupils in Year 5, keeping to a strict budget, ordered food for a class party using a supermarket website. Some pupils bring good ICT skills from the work they do at home and share these with others readily and constructively as they work in pairs at the computer.
77. By the age of seven, pupils have sound basic keyboard skills and know the function of different keys, such as 'shift' and 'spacebar'. They use these to good effect when writing sentences. Pupils are beginning to use ICT to record and extend their work in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 explore map symbols and locate specific areas on the map of an island being studied in their geography lessons. In Years 3 to 6 these skills are built on well so that by Year 6 they are familiar with a wide range of ICT programs to support the work they do in other subjects. Many examples are seen around the school of pupils using computers for research and for recording their work in different ways.
78. The school is moving forward in enhancing its ICT provision and the current ICT co-ordinators are playing a significant role in this. They have overseen the setting up of the new suite and the provision of new equipment such as the laptops and interactive whiteboards. There are clear indications that ICT training has made a positive impact on ensuring that less confident teachers have the necessary skills to move pupils forward and help them achieve well. Although new procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress have been introduced, these are not fully in place and therefore the monitoring of how well individual pupils are doing and what they need to do next is inconsistent. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Although rightly regarded by the co-ordinators as a continuing area of development, there are many examples of how ICT is used to support learning in science, mathematics, literacy and art and design. The Internet is used particularly well for research in history. Many pupils, especially the older ones, are very aware that ICT is a readily available tool to assist them in their research or to enhance their work in different ways.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of achievement are above average.
- Teaching is interesting and encourages pupils to find things out and interpret what they see and hear.
- Visits to places of interest help pupils' understanding of chronology and bring history to life.
- Pupils do not record historical ideas in sufficient depth.

Commentary

80. Standards in history are above average and achievement is good. The teaching of history is organised in ways that interest the pupils and provides them with extensive knowledge of people and events and how things have changed. They are involved in role-play activities, examining artefacts from different periods and suggesting why things have changed or have remained the same over time. Achievement is good because pupils are asked to research ideas and then use their powers of interpretation and communication to inform others, which they do well.
81. Visits are an important feature of the programme of work across the school. In each year of the school pupils have the opportunity to visit somewhere of historical interest. These experiences of seeing places of real significance make a huge contribution their achievement. The visits to places such as Tatton Hall for the youngest children, to see how family life and history was for others, using the story of Cinderella as a basis, makes a lasting impression. Understanding of the significance of major periods in English history and their chronology are brought to life by visits to Chester, Nantwich and Quarry Bank Mill near Manchester. Year 6 pupils talk knowledgeably about the First and Second World Wars and understand that literature is a major source of historical interpretation about such events. They are able to relate information gained from visits to their reading and are able to express simple ideas about cultural and historical continuity, change and diversity.
82. Reading skills and research from the Internet are promoted well. However, pupils are not challenged enough to record their work and to develop written arguments about their own interpretations of what has been found out. There is too much use made of unchallenging worksheets. These invite insufficient depth in the communication of the pupils' work and fail to provide the sophistication for recording that the pupils' understanding warrants. Apart from this aspect, leadership and management are good. The good quality provision in history has been well maintained since the previous inspection.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well because teaching is organised effectively and uses relevant locations and resources.
- Visits to places of interest and practical approaches to learning help pupils' understanding of geographical ideas and patterns.

- Pupils lack specific geographical vocabulary.

Commentary

83. The teaching of geography is good and organised in ways that interest the pupils and provide them with exciting ideas to consider. Pupils in Year 2, for example, were exploring a wide range of geographical ideas on the theme of islands. They made models based on a book about an imaginary island and supported this work by using high quality aerial photographs and ICT resources about the real island upon which the story is based. Pupils in Year 5 were involved in debating the arguments for and against a proposed landfill site at nearby Haslington. They listened to 'expert' opinion, researched ideas and took on the role of local stakeholders. They adopted particular stances in the arguments for and against and became closely involved in the issues. By weighing the impact that might be felt over time on the environment and on the needs of people, pupils quickly get to the heart of what geography is about.
84. Pupils are asked to use their powers of interpretation based on an appropriate understanding of their grasp of ideas. Achievement is good and standards are above average because of these and other practical approaches in the teaching and learning. Visits and the use of good quality resources such as plans and aerial photographs help pupils to understand the way places are mapped and why understanding direction is important. For example, Reception children visit the local park and pupils in Year 1 go on walks around the areas of the school to gain an understanding about the use of directions and plans.
85. Speaking, listening and reading skills are promoted well but pupils are not challenged enough to use specific geographical vocabulary. Their geographical understanding is not recorded and communicated in writing pieces of sufficient length to give opportunities for recall and revision of ideas. Leadership and management are good. The evaluation of work in geography is difficult because the subject leader does not observe lessons directly and the pupils have little recorded work to demonstrate their progress over time.
86. Since the previous inspection achievement has improved significantly.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Techniques and skills are taught very well and used to enhance work in other subjects.
- Pupils' have good knowledge of famous artists.
- Standards are high.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences.

Commentary

87. Pupils reach above average standards in Year 2 and well above average standards in Year 6. Teaching is very good in all aspects of art and design and pupils' achievement is high.
88. Pupils enjoy a comprehensive range of experiences in art and design and are using a wide variety of two and three-dimensional materials. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop close observational skills and show good levels of skill in drawing, painting and picture composition. They often choose to draw items from the natural world such as fruit and flowers. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy a story from the Caribbean and use the vibrant colours in the pictures as an inspiration for their own work. Older pupils are taught a wide range of techniques which they apply very well. They use art to illustrate work in other subjects. For example, Year 5 produced their own version of the Bayeux Tapestry as part of their work in history.
89. All pupils have very good opportunities to develop a style of their own influenced by the work of many famous artists. Examples of pupils' work in the style of Kandinsky, Degas, Van Gogh and William Morris are displayed around the school. Pupils know how these significant artists worked in the past and use the artists' techniques to bring interest to their own designs.
90. It is clear that teachers value pupils' work. Classroom displays and displays across the school are very well organised and support and celebrate pupils' work.
91. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Planning for art is thorough and based on local guidelines. Visits and visitors enhance the provision for all pupils. Pupils with particular gifts have the opportunity to join the after-school art club when they reach Year 5. The school is currently working towards the Artsmark award. There has been very good improvement in standards for all pupils since the last inspection.

Design and technology

92. Design and technology was not a focus for the inspection. Insufficient evidence was seen to form an overall judgement about standards or quality of teaching. Teachers' plans indicate that the curriculum broadly follows national guidelines and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are provided with a range of interesting activities through which they develop the skills and techniques

begun in the Foundation Stage. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 acquire appropriate skills in choosing and using a variety of tools and materials for specific purposes. By Year 6, pupils are familiar with the stages they need to go through to turn an initial idea into a complete product.

93. Good links are made between subjects so that new learning in one reinforces learning in another. For instance, pupils in Year 2 stitch a picture on hessian to illustrate a legend studied in literacy and pupils in Year 6 craft models of trenches as part of their work on war in history. The school has identified design and technology as an area for development and a significant sum of money has been allocated for staff training and to substantially increase resources.

Music

94. Music was not a focus for the inspection. The school uses a commercial scheme of work that gives the teachers clear guidelines as to what they are to teach and supports the learning with CDs and other materials. This provides pupils with access to all aspects of the music curriculum including composition, listening and appraising music and participating in singing and playing instruments. As no lessons were seen, no judgement is made about the pupils' achievement and progress in musical skills and knowledge. However, the pupils describe how they enjoy making music and taking part in performances. There are satisfactory resources for the teaching of music, including tuned and untuned percussion instruments. At present there is no one person with responsibility for the leadership and management of music.
95. The pupils have opportunities to take part in lessons, on a range of instruments that include violin and brass instruments, for which parents pay. The 'Excellence in Crewe' initiative is providing guitar lessons for all Year 3 pupils and many are making good progress in using the correct fingering, reading music and playing a range of tunes such as the 'James Bond Theme' and 'Postman Pat'. The Sarambamba activities, also provided through the funding from 'Excellence in Crewe', provide interesting and enjoyable musical opportunities for pupils from selected year groups. All the pupils can join the after-school recorder groups run by teachers who give generously of their time to lead these. The recorder players perform for the school at assemblies and other events. The younger pupils have a weekly corporate singing session, which gives them opportunities to practise rhythms and learn a range of songs and use actions to enhance the words. Music is well used to promote the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural education, contributing well to the personal development of the pupils in assemblies. Year 6 pupils joined the Cheshire Massed Choir at the Albert Hall which was a wonderful experience much enjoyed by the pupils.

Physical education

96. As no lessons were seen during the inspection, no overall judgements are made about the quality of teaching and the pupils' achievement and progress. However, the school provides an appropriate and improving range of activities in physical education. This includes gymnastics, games, athletics, swimming and dance. These take place at different times of the year and throughout the time the pupils are at the school. The teachers make good use of the halls, playgrounds and the field and there is a satisfactory number and range of resources to support the learning in physical education.
97. A good range of after-school sports clubs for the older pupils extends opportunities further and the take-up for these clubs is good. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, and to their personal development. Pupils are very keen participants in sport and proud of their success. As the pupils move through Years 3 to 6 they have some opportunity to learn to swim and many, but not all, reach the expected standard of 25 metres; many exceed it.
98. Leadership and management of physical education are good. The co-ordinator is energetic, and keen for the pupils to do well. She makes full use of funding, training and external sources of expertise to enhance and expand the opportunities. Cheer-leading and basketball have been offered to the older pupils and have been taken up with enthusiasm. The pupils enjoy the sessions and develop new expertise.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because pupils understand key ideas in religious stories and ceremonies.
- Good teaching provides opportunities for personal reflection and responsibility.

Commentary

99. Pupils gain good factual knowledge about Christianity and think carefully about ideas within different faiths and how these might affect their own lives and the lives of others. For example, by Year 6, pupils are able to make comparisons between the beliefs of Hindus and those of Christians and can talk confidently about some of the ceremonies and the practices in both. Teachers bring stories to life and use these to help pupils to talk about their own experiences. In Year 2 for example, the teacher encouraged pupils to talk about their own dreams and aspirations using the story of Joseph as the stimulus. Pupils shared a wide range of their hopes and fears using examples in the story to help them. The links they were able to make between the story and the personal ideas they wanted to express gave them confidence in the telling and the listening.
100. Much of the teaching uses a 'Bible Explorer' to give pupils an understanding of the structure of the Bible and how the different stories within it can be found and used. By Year 6 pupils have a wide knowledge of Old and New Testament stories and different Christian festivals and ceremonies. They have some understanding of key ideas in Hinduism and Islam. Written work is limited but good use is made of reading and listening skills when considering different religious ideas, bible stories and other literature and what they mean. One special event during the inspection was an annually acted marriage service undertaken in Year 3. The pupils and staff had prepared most thoroughly. It was just like a real church wedding with beautiful wedding dresses, suits, hats and flowers to mark the important occasion. The vicar carefully drew out the meaning of some of the symbolism in his own clothing and explained key points in the service and the associated responsibilities as it progressed in an atmosphere of serious celebration. The quality of the learning for the main participants, the pupils involved in the 'organisation' of photographs and music and the congregation were very good. The bride and groom from the previous year's wedding attended and this opportunity for reflection and consolidation of ideas was well taken and set a lovely example for the younger pupils.
101. There has been significant improvement since the previous inspection. Achievement and teaching are now good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Involvement of the learning mentor ensures that particular pupils are well supported.

- PSHE is well embedded across the curriculum.
- Personal and social elements are well taught in Reception and pupils respond very well.
- The school's links with outside agencies contribute well to personal, social and health education.

Commentary

102. The school sees this subject as an important area of learning and because of this it is woven into the curriculum whenever opportunities allow. However, where personal, social or health issues arise for particular pupils, the learning mentor is on hand to respond to their needs and assist very effectively in finding good ways forward.
103. The policy ensures that this subject is well embedded into the life of the school. This is evident in many lessons, particularly in religious education and in participation in the school council. Pupils show positive feelings and encourage each other very openly; because of this pupils are often able to resolve difficulties for themselves. Many aspects of history and geography bring forward citizenship issues in discussions. These promote the personal, social and health education of pupils effectively and particularly their awareness of those aspects of citizenship where they learn to recognise and respect differences between people and to prepare to play an active role as members of the community.
104. Good behaviour and positive social attitudes are taught as soon as children enter Reception. The standards achieved in these early days prepare pupils well for later life. These children are helped to develop confidence and are taught to recognise the difference between right and wrong. They are taught that friends care for each other and the examples set for them by adults, and particularly the teaching assistant, are very good.
105. The Year 6 teachers and visiting medical staff teach sex and relationships education and issues about preventing drugs and substances abuse effectively. Further instruction on related aspects and personal safety is provided by them and outside agencies. Through effective teaching and a rich curriculum the pupils, by the time they come to leave the school, see many options to develop rich and exciting opportunities in life and are ready to make sensible choices.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	3
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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