

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **MANLEY VILLAGE SCHOOL**

Manley, Frodsham

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 110999

Headteacher: Mrs L McNamara

Lead inspector: Mrs J E Platt

Dates of inspection: 7 – 9 February 2005

Inspection number: 267268

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	64
School address:	Manley Road Manley Frodsham Cheshire
Postcode:	WA6 9DU
Telephone number:	01928 740291
Fax number:	01928 740708
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs I Jones

Date of previous inspection: 14 June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Manley Village School is much smaller than other primary schools and is currently undergoing building alterations to extend the old building. Currently, 64 pupils are taught in three mixed age classes. Attainment on entry varies from year to year because of the small numbers involved but is broadly average. The school serves a socially and economically advantaged rural area. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. A very low number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils need help because English is not their first spoken language. A below average number of pupils have special educational needs and two of these pupils have formal Statements of Special Educational Need. Difficulties include specific and moderate learning and Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The school has successfully achieved a Basic Skills Quality Mark which is awarded to schools that provide evidence of improved standards in literacy and numeracy. In 2002, the school's success was also rewarded by a School Achievement Award for improvement in national tests. The school aims to provide a stimulating range of experiences with a focus on the arts and this is evident in the gaining of the nationally recognised Artsmark Gold Award in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Lead inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language
19557	Mrs E Halls	Lay inspector	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>32</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with some very good features. Every pupil is valued and thrives in this welcoming atmosphere. Achievement is good overall and pupils leave school with standards that are above average. Teaching is good so that pupils are eager learners. The school is effectively led and managed. The headteacher is a good leader and has effectively inspired governors and all staff who work as a team with a shared philosophy of making learning an exciting adventure. The school offers good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards in reading and science are well above average by Year 6;
- in Years 5 and 6 teaching is very good with all lessons challenging pupils so that much is achieved in this class and the presentation of pupils' work is often outstanding;
- leadership from the headteacher is purposeful; subject leaders provide action plans but targets for improvement are not always measurable and limited time is available to follow them up;
- assessment in literacy and numeracy is good but is not as rigorous in other subjects; individual targets set in Years 3 to 6 are not always promoted sufficiently;
- the curriculum is good overall although the experiences for children in the reception class are not always matching their age and needs; an excellent range of extra activities enrich the curriculum;
- the ethos of the school is very good with excellent opportunities for cultural development.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school has responded positively to the issues raised. Teachers' planning is much better and effectively guides teaching. The role of subject co-ordinator has improved and the school is preparing to extend their monitoring role. Homework and the quality of marking are now good. High standards have been sustained and the school received a School Achievement Award for its improvement in the national tests in 2002.

### 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	A	A*
Mathematics	A	E	C	B
Science	C	C	A	A*

*Key: A\*-very high; 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.*

Overall achievement is **good**.

Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year because of the small numbers involved but is broadly average. Overall achievement in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> is satisfactory. Children make good progress in their reading and mathematical development

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage starts when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class.

and exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. They reach the expected goals in other areas of learning including language and communication and their personal development.

The results of national tests in Year 2 and 6 fluctuate considerably because of the small numbers involved which means each pupil represents a high percentage of the overall results. This was very evident in 2004 in Year 2 when results were well below the national average in reading and below

average in writing. This was linked to higher attaining pupils not doing as well as expected. These pupils are now more closely identified and challenged in lessons. Achievement in Year 2 is now good and current standards are more like the usual picture in Manley and are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Year 6 pupils were very successful in the 2004 national tests in English and science and results were well above the national average. Current standards are not as high because a third of this year group has special educational needs. Nevertheless, standards are above average in English and well above average in science. Results of national tests were average in mathematics last year. In response to challenging teaching especially for the higher attaining pupils standards are now above average. Considering the national test results of the current Year 6 when they were in Year 2 and the number of pupils with special educational needs these standards reflect good achievement. Many pupils make very good progress in reading and science. Achievement is good across the curriculum and high quality work was seen in art and design and religious education.

Personal development is very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is **very good** and pupils show genuine concern for the needs of others. They are very aware of life in a multi-cultural society. Pupils give very close attention to their work and behaviour is very good.

Attendance rates and the punctuality of pupils are both very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 is a result of teachers' flair for imaginative teaching and this greatly accelerates learning for the older pupils. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with strengths in the practical approaches to teaching reading and mathematics. In other activities, tasks set are not always clearly focused and do not fully foster children's spirit of enquiry. A positive feature in most lessons is effective management of behaviour so that lessons run smoothly. Many lessons go at a brisk pace and include a variety of activities that capture pupils' interest and so ensure effective learning. Teachers and support staff work well together and this is especially beneficial when supporting pupils with special educational needs. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively to prepare pupils for tasks and give them ideas. The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory with strong features in literacy and numeracy. Teachers make good use of assessment information in these subjects to plan future work and adjust the curriculum when a weakness arises. In other subjects assessment systems are not as well developed. Clear targets are set for pupils to encourage their involvement in their own learning. Older pupils need more reminders of their targets so that they recall them when working.

The curriculum is stimulating and promotes the school's vision of learning through real experiences enriched by the arts. An excellent number of clubs, visits and opportunities to work with experts enable pupils to produce some stunning work. All pupils play a full part in school life. The school is very caring. Pupils feel secure because staff show genuine concern for their well-being. Resources are good. Accommodation, although improving, still has drawbacks in the size of the hall and classrooms. Very good links with schools and the community extend pupils and staff's experiences.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management overall are **good**. Under the good leadership of the headteacher a real sense of commitment and a strong staff has been established. She is



instrumental in setting high expectations for both staff and pupils. The overall quality of leadership and management of subjects is satisfactory. It is better in English, mathematics, science and art and design because leaders have a more informed view of what is happening. Governance is good. Governors willingly share their expertise and all statutory requirements are met. Financial management is good and money is spent wisely.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents have very positive views of the school and it is held in high esteem in the locality. Pupils are very proud of their school and want to be there.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise awareness of the needs of the children in the Foundation Stage;
- extend assessment procedures to all subjects and make more use of pupils' individual targets;
- strengthen the role of subject leaders; include clearer targets in action plans and provide opportunity for the impact of these action plans to be monitored.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall achievement is good and standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading and science are strengths in the school and standards in Year 6 are well above average and achievement in these subjects is very good.
- Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in reading and mathematics.
- The good support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress.
- Stimulating activities motivate pupils so that achievement is widespread across the curriculum and goes beyond the subjects tested nationally.

#### Commentary

1. When they start school, children have broadly average levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. However, with such small numbers starting school attainment on entry varies very much from year to year and the full range of ability is represented. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in the same class as Year 1 and 2 pupils. The teacher plans carefully for their needs but on occasions tasks are not fully matching this age range and the cramped accommodation limit the breadth of experiences that are provided. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Effective teaching of reading and a practical approach to teaching numeracy skills enables children to make good progress and many exceed the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> and apply these skills well to other areas of the curriculum. Satisfactory progress is made in other areas of learning<sup>3</sup> and children reach the level expected by the end of the reception class and settle happily into school life.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores<sup>4</sup> in 2004*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.5 (17.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.9 (16.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.6 (17.0)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. With small numbers caution is needed when interpreting test results because one pupil can represent a high percentage and this distorts the overall picture of school

<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

<sup>3</sup> Areas of learning include communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

<sup>4</sup> The average point score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades by all of their pupils with the grades attained by all pupils in another similar school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The score is obtained from the National Curriculum level attained by pupils in the national assessments. For example, in mathematics pupils are awarded 9 points for a level 1, 15 points for a level 2 and 21 points for a level 3. The average score is calculated by adding up all of the points and then dividing by the number of pupils who were tested.

performance. This can be seen in the fluctuating pattern of results of national tests in Year 2 which fell below the

national trend. In 2002 and 2003 results were generally well above the national average and the school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for improvement in basic literacy and numeracy skills. However, the grid of results shows that in 2004 results were well below the national average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools they fell into the lowest five per cent in the country in reading and were well below average in writing. Two key factors contributed to these results. Firstly, last year the school had some staffing disturbances at the time of the tests which led to some misunderstanding about assessment. Secondly, the higher attaining pupils did not perform as well as expected. The progress of higher attaining pupils was a focus for the inspection. These pupils are currently set tasks that challenge them and they achieve well in lessons. With a more stable situation and improved assessment procedures standards have returned to the previously high standards. Achievement is good and standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

3. The grid to show test results at the end of Year 6 in 2004 is omitted because there were less than 11 pupils in the group. An erratic picture of results is evident in Year 6 and the overall trend in results was below the national trend. Analysis shows a fall in standards in 2002 and 2003 especially compared with similar schools and pupils had not made enough progress from their test results in Year 2 to Year 6. With the appointment of the new headteacher assessment was tightened and additional booster classes were organised. In mathematics, a new scheme of work was put in place to guide teachers. The headteacher's stimulating teaching in Year 6 also played a significant part in the turn around in results last year. Test results in mathematics were in line with the national average and below the average for similar schools. More improvement was evident in English and science. A significant number of pupils exceeded the level expected for their age and when compared with all and similar school results were well above average. The school received a nationally recognised Achievement Award to celebrate this success. Current standards in Year 6 are not as high because a third of pupils have special educational needs. Tracking back to the results of these pupils in the national tests in Year 2 reveals good achievement in the junior classes. Standards are now above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. In English, the strength is in reading which is well above average with pupils being enthusiastic readers. The overall standard in writing is average with the difficulties experienced by the pupils with special educational needs being linked to their ability to get their ideas down in writing.
4. Pupils with special educational needs are welcomed at Manley School and this enables them to thrive in this family atmosphere. Assessment of their needs is good and support put in place to enable them to make good progress to meet the targets set for them. Pupils with formal Statements of Special Educational Need benefit from individual support with very clear specific targets shared with pupils. When one target is reached another is quickly set and this significantly accelerates their learning in these sessions. Academically gifted pupils make good progress in response to the challenging teaching and when required the school works closely with the local secondary schools to ensure work fully extends the learning of these pupils. This link is also used effectively to provide challenging tasks to enable pupils talented in arts and physical activities to make good progress in developing these special skills.
5. The school requested the inspection to review the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. Teachers use ICT well both as a stimulus for teaching and as an aid to learning. Overall achievement is satisfactory

and standards are average with strengths in word processing and research skills and developing skills in using ICT for modelling and control.

6. Achievement is good in religious education and pupils reach the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and exceed them in Year 6. The scrutiny of work in religious education shows a focus on learning through talks from visitors and practical activities which enable pupils to gain a real insight into both Christianity and other major world religions.

7. The school was eager for the inspection to celebrate the school's obvious strengths in art and design. Although it was only possible to see one lesson it is very clear from work in that lesson and the impressive displays in school that work is highly individual and imaginative. Similar high standards were also seen in physical education.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal qualities are very good. Their personal development is very good, with spiritual, moral, social and cultural development all very strong features. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The stimulating and caring school ethos permeates all activities and helps to promote very good relationships, attitudes and behaviour.
- Staff provide very good role models for pupils in their conduct and relationships.
- Pupils take pride in their work and present this beautifully.
- Very effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development underpins their very good behaviour and the rich variety of opportunities to learn; provision for pupils' cultural development is excellent.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and as a result attend very regularly and arrive punctually.

### **Commentary**

8. Pupils' positive attitudes and very good behaviour are strengths of the school that have been maintained since the last inspection. No pupils have been excluded from the school. Pupils are very well behaved, polite and courteous and respond well to the caring and stimulating school ethos. They enjoy coming to school and show great interest in their lessons and activities. They show considerable pride in their work, which is presented beautifully. Parents are very happy with the values the school promotes. Staff deal quickly and effectively with the very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour that occur and the school is calm and orderly.
9. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and so children are sociable, communicative children with a clear understanding of right and wrong. They get on well with each other and have established friendships. Sound provision in the Foundation Stage enables the youngest children to make steady progress in their personal development. The organisation of the classroom, with the role-play corner in the hall, makes it difficult for children to fully develop their skills of working independently and making choices.
10. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, mix well in class and at break time and lunchtime. The school places a very strong emphasis on promoting friendship and helping each other in assemblies and in lessons. Pupils report that there is very little bullying, but are confident that any incidents of bullying brought to the attention of staff would be quickly dealt with.
11. Pupils show increasing levels of self-discipline and maturity in their lessons and activities as they move up through the school. When given opportunities to work independently or in groups they work co-operatively, sharing and valuing ideas, and concentrating well on tasks. They are keen to take responsibility and to be helpful in and around the school. Older pupils carry out responsibilities efficiently and are

sensible when working outside of the classroom. They confidently take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in accessing the materials they needed for an art lesson they could be trusted to do things on their own.

12. Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are very good and have a positive impact on their learning. They are supportive of each other and interact well with their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs experience success in their learning, and play an increasingly



full part in school life because staff and fellow pupils support and include them well in all activities. Pupils are happy and secure, and enjoy school life in an atmosphere where all are valued. They respond well to the help provided and to the praise that is regularly given. They enjoy receiving rewards for good work and behaviour. Pupils are also encouraged to share their successes at home with family and parents. Peer counsellors are being trained to help provide additional support and guidance for those pupils who find making and sustaining relationships difficult.

13. The curriculum makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through art, music, history, science, religious education and personal, health and social education. Many examples of art and poetry have a spiritual element reflecting the school's focus on inspiring the pupils to appreciate the world in which they live. For example, after visiting Delamere Forest a pupil in the juniors writes, *the smell of pine wavering in the air*. Similarly, the fantastic textile wall hangings following a whole school workshop looking at the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Pupils learn to respect the views of others and develop appropriate social skills. They learn to act according to their own principles and to challenge things that they consider to be unfair. Older pupils are given opportunities to exercise their initiative and take responsibility, for example in being 'buddies' to younger pupils. The School Council meets regularly and pupils are keen to be involved in decisions about the school and to share their views and ideas. Their recent presentation to the governors about the school visit to Stratford-upon-Avon was greatly appreciated and governors were impressed by the use of ICT in the presentation and the pupils' confidence and maturity. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is excellent and they celebrate both their own and other cultures. The emphasis on art is very evident in the school and pupils are well informed about famous artists as well as having an interest in classical authors and music. Every chance is grasped to inform pupils about other cultures, by celebrating their festivals and traditions, as a result pupils show great respect for other cultures.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.4	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

14. Attendance is well above the national average and levels of unauthorised absence are broadly in line with the national average. Parents ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive punctually. The school takes effective action to promote good attendance and registration practice is efficient. Most absences arise through sickness or medical visits, although a minority of parents withdraws their children from school to undertake holidays during term time.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The overall quality of education is good. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good. The school provides an excellent range of extra activities. The attention given to pupils' care, welfare health and safety is very good. Links with other schools and the community are very good.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good. These are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 to 6. The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory with strengths in the procedures adopted in numeracy and literacy.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the mixed age Year 5 and 6 class teaching is very challenging and much new learning takes place.
- Teachers' planning is very good in the infants and juniors and teachers use a good variety of teaching methods to make learning exciting.
- Teachers are very supportive and pupils are eager learners.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is good and staff ensure pupils of all ability have equal access to the curriculum.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is supportive and based on warm relationships but tasks are not always fully meeting the needs of this age range.
- Assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics and science but not as well developed in other subjects; individual targets are set but not used as effectively as they could be to help pupils improve their work.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	7	4	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.*

15. Although there have been several changes in staff since the previous inspection, teaching remains a strength in the school. All of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better and the school has fully resolved previous concerns about marking, homework and the presentation of pupils' work. Homework is set regularly and effectively extends learning. Teachers mark work promptly and often include comments to help pupils improve. Presentation of work is often excellent because it is usually the culmination of a theme and pupils have great pride in their achievement.
16. The best teaching is in the mixed age Year 5 and 6 class where all of the teaching seen was very good. In this class teaching is very challenging and the enthusiasm of the teachers is infectious and inspires the pupils so that much is achieved. In these lessons teachers often set pupils' targets and time constraints and this leads to a hard working atmosphere as pupils strive to meet the target and complete the task.
17. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and is similar to that seen in the last inspection. A common strength is the staff's genuine concern for the children and their wish to help the children do well. As a result, the children are happy and behave well. Reading and mathematics are taught well through practical activities closely matched to the children's age and ability. This good practice is not always evident in other aspects of the curriculum and this does not lead to effective learning. Planning is linked closely to the nationally recommended curriculum for these children who are taught in a mixed age class alongside Year 1 and 2 pupils. However, in practice the organisation of resources and the classroom make it difficult for pupils to make choices and select their own tasks.
18. A weakness identified by the previous inspection was teachers' planning which lacked detail and rarely related to the National Curriculum. This is certainly not the case now. Planning is very good and the adoption of national guidelines ensures all tasks are

linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Subjects are usually linked together under one theme and teachers are very imaginative at ensuring tasks have a real sense of purpose and this enhances learning as pupils are eager to extend their knowledge. Effective use of visits

and visitors also enhance lessons. Testimony to this is the recent visit to Stratford-upon-Avon linked to Year 5 and 6 studying *King Lear*. As a result, their drama lesson showed a real enthusiasm for the text and style of writing.

19. A strength in many lessons is the broad range of activities including the very effective use of the interactive white boards, that provide pupils with ideas that capture their interest and so enhance learning.
20. Another positive feature in all lessons seen is the warm and encouraging relationships between all staff and pupils. Lessons are carried out in a warm and relaxed atmosphere which gives pupils the confidence to ask questions and to try out their ideas. This is very evident in science lessons and contributes to the high standards achieved.
21. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good with some very good teaching seen when pupils are supported in a one-to-one situation. In these sessions led by a teaching assistant, targets are very sharp, clearly visible and pupils are very eager to share their success with visitors. Support is also available in class to enable pupils to play a full part in lessons. Individual educational plans are clear but are not always used as a working document by teachers. Future plans include involving teachers in the writing of these documents so that they track more closely when a target has been met.
22. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. In English they are good with some very good assessment of writing which checks on pupils writing in a range of styles and links progress closely to National Curriculum levels. This new system is being used effectively to spot when a pupil has a difficulty with a specific genre of writing and additional practice then put in place. Assessment in mathematics is also effective and the school now has a tracking system to show progress from the Year 2 national tests to Year 6. The school is using this information to predict targets and also to adjust the curriculum when a weakness is spotted. This has been most effective in mathematics with a change of scheme of work and adaptation of this to provide more numeracy practice which has led to improved standards. The school encourages pupils to evaluate their own work and also sets individual targets in English and mathematics. In Years 1 and 2 these are helping pupils to improve because they are on display but in the juniors this is not the case and pupils are forgetting them. Assessment in science is especially good in the juniors but in the infants and in other subjects is less well developed. The assessment at the end of units is recording pupils have completed a task but is not always helping to track pupils' progress or guide teachers' planning.

## **The curriculum**

The overall quality of the curriculum is good and is enriched by an excellent range and quality of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation, staffing and resources are satisfactory overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' planning is effective and results in a rich curriculum for most pupils.
- In Years 1 to 6, planning for different attainment levels in mixed age classes is good.

- The curriculum for the pupils in the mixed age reception/Year 1/Year 2 class does not take enough account of the needs of the children in the Foundation Stage.
- Visits and visitors make learning very exciting for pupils.
- Provision for special educational needs is good, although some support means pupils miss important parts of other lessons.
- The school makes best use of improving accommodation although it remains very cramped.

## Commentary

23. In Years 1 to 6, the school provides an interesting curriculum which is very much in tune with the government's advice in the documents *Excellence and Enjoyment* and *Every Child Matters*. As a result, pupils learn purposefully and gain good understanding through well-planned practical experiences centred on relevant and stimulating themes. These themes are meticulously planned with the threads of subjects linked purposefully together. The culmination of the theme is a collection of the pupils' best work presented to a very high standard in a hand made book. At the school's request, the arts was made a particular focus of the inspection. The school's provision of high quality of experiences in this area is a particular strength. The arts combined with literacy are central to the school's exciting approach to the curriculum. The school is currently seeking to renew its prestigious Artsmark Gold Award.
24. Since the last inspection, the school has considerably improved its planning for the differing attainment of pupils in the mixed age classes. National or local authority guidance has been adopted so that themes are taught in a two-year plan to avoid repetition or omission of any aspects of the National Curriculum. Teachers' day-to-day plans effectively identify suitable tasks for groups of different attainment. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are applied successfully and provide for the logical progression of skills. Literacy and numeracy are promoted very well in other subjects. Information and communication technology is used effectively to promote learning across the curriculum.
25. The school is very committed to educational inclusion and makes very good arrangements to ensure that all pupils in Years 1 to 6 have full access to a relevant and stimulating curriculum. The mixed age classes are used to the benefit of pupils with special educational needs so that they work at a level matching their ability and experiences. Additional literacy and numeracy sessions are provided to boost achievement when assessment identifies a pupil starting to lag behind the expected level. These are beneficial but when taught during the introduction of the literacy lesson mean pupils miss important aspects of the lesson.
26. The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is planned appropriately towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning. However, the full needs of Foundation Stage children are not met in the mixed age class with Years 1 and 2. Insufficient attention is given to the particular needs of this stage of education and this leads to satisfactory rather than good progress. The organisation of the classroom does not always make it easy for children to be independent and active in their learning.
27. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. National guidelines are followed and every class has a lesson dedicated to this aspect of the curriculum. Circle Time<sup>5</sup> sessions enable pupils to discuss a range of themes which get more serious as pupils get older. The school capitalises on its small size with many opportunities for older pupils to help the younger ones so that a real family atmosphere is evident. Statutory regulations regarding sex education are fully met and the school deals sensibly with drugs education.

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<sup>5</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk free from any interruption by other children.

28. The curriculum is enriched through an excellent range of activities beyond the school day and pupils benefit greatly from the contributions of a wide range of visitors and visits. Residential visits, for instance, to Stratford-on-Avon for Years 3 to 6 and to Burwardsley Outdoor Education Centre (Year 2) not only foster independence but are used effectively to promote learning across the curriculum. Theatre visits to the opera or the pantomime, together with drama, visual art and music workshops in school raise pupils' awareness of the arts. Cultural development and religious education are promoted very imaginatively by visitors as when the Year 1 and 2 class prepared a Passover meal or when pupils experienced Indian dance and



storytelling. Instrumental tuition in guitar, keyboard, piano and flute is available for some pupils. There is an excellent range of clubs with something for both infant and junior pupils. A very good range of sports including competitive events is well catered for. Stimulating experiences and clubs in textiles, art, choir and music reinforce the arts curriculum considerably.

29. There are sufficient teaching and support staff with qualifications and experience to meet the demands of the curriculum. The job-share situation extends the number of teachers working at the school and this usefully widens the expertise base of the school. The headteacher's class teaching commitment is managed well although she does carry a heavy load of responsibilities and the governors are aiming to reduce this in line with government guidelines on reducing workload.
30. The school is welcoming, and very attractive displays of pupils' work are presented with artistic flair. The accommodation enables all areas of the curriculum to be taught. However, conditions throughout are very cramped. In the hall, the siting of the library is not conducive to private study, and the imaginative role-play area is not accessible to groups of pupils without adult supervision so limiting opportunities for independent play. Building work is under way to provide appropriate facilities for the disabled and suitable outdoor play facilities for reception children. Resources are generally good with strengths in the good range and quality of art resources and in the provision of ICT equipment.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for pupils' care, health and safety is very good. Pupils have good access to helpful support, advice and guidance. The involvement of pupils in the work of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very happy that they can establish good and trusting relationship with staff.
- Pupils are confident that they will be listened to and that staff will take action regarding their concerns.
- Good induction arrangements help pupils settle into school quickly.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
- Staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' health and welfare needs are met.
- Pupils have good access to advice and guidance but are not always clear about the next steps they need to take to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

31. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and make a significant contribution towards pupils' good achievement. Pastoral care is given a high priority, although procedures to record progress in their personal development are largely informal and include observations collected in portfolio of achievements. This is a useful document to follow up on the pupils' all round development and staff use this information effectively to ensure pupils are happy at school. Academic progress is monitored on a regular basis and tracked carefully. Pupils are beginning to evaluate their own work by using a smiley or frowning face to show how they thought they had completed the unit of work. In the infants pupils are also learning more about their own learning by referring to their individual numeracy and literacy targets while they are working.

Although clear targets are set for older pupils they are not as readily available and so they are not recalling them as they work.

32. The guidance and support given to pupils with special educational needs are effective because the assessment records and individual learning plans on which they are based maintain a clear and accurate picture of each pupil's needs and progress. Staff pay close attention to their individual requirements, both academic and personal, and pupils benefit from the school's effective liaison with outside agencies.

33. First aid provision is appropriate and most staff are trained to provide assistance in the event of an emergency. Safe practice is promoted well in lessons both in school and when out in the community. Equipment is regularly checked and tested and governors and staff carry out regular risk assessments. Child protection procedures work effectively because staff are experienced, well trained and vigilant.
34. Induction arrangements are good for the youngest children when they start school and for pupils joining the school in other year groups. They are helped to settle quickly into their new surroundings and the buddy system helps them to make friends. These arrangements help to develop good and trusting relationships between pupils and staff and give pupils the confidence to seek support and guidance when they have a personal problem or when they want to share news of something special. Staff appreciate the importance of forging trusting links with pupils at all times provide a positive response to such requests.
35. The school involves pupils in the life of the school through the allocation of many responsibilities that help with the running of the school. For example, they look after the resources used on the play ground and the books in the library. The School Council meets regularly and have made the pupils' discontent with cars parking on the playground very clear. Their opinions are taken seriously and the school is endeavouring to find a solution for this difficulty.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents, other schools and the local community are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very happy with the education their children receive.
- The school's partnership with parents makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Links with the community and with other schools enrich pupils' learning and provide very good opportunities for personal and social development.
- Parents and other adults support and enhance the work of the school.

### **Commentary**

36. Staff and governors give a high priority to developing and maintaining positive relationships with parents. The pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting with parents showed a very positive view of the school and reflected an overall high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision.
37. Overall the quality of information provided for parents through newsletters, meetings and pupils' annual progress reports is good. The school prospectus and governors annual report to parents are informative. Pupil's annual progress reports demonstrate teachers' good knowledge of pupils but do not always inform parents what their children need to do to improve and to progress to the next stage in their learning.
38. A key factor in the school's very good links with parents is the 'open door' policy. Parents have access to the school at any time if, for example, they wish to discuss their children's progress. Staff normally manage to resolve any concerns of parents informally. However, in the event that a parent should wish to make a formal approach, there are very effective procedures. The school warmly welcomes parents into the school and a number of them come on a regular basis, contributing well to pupils'

progress, for instance in reading and helping on school trips. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of individual targets and progress, and have good opportunities to play a full part in the process of review and support.

39. The very active Friends Association is run by a small but hardworking committee and successfully raises funds to provide additional resources and learning opportunities for pupils. Their hard work is greatly appreciated by staff and benefits pupils well. As Manley is a widespread village these events are also valued for the links they bring between parents to meet on a social basis.
40. Pupils benefit academically and socially from the schools very close links with the community. An extensive range of visits and visitors provide excellent enrichment of the curriculum and support pupils' personal and social development well, broadening their experiences and giving them opportunities to learn about the local and wider community. The recent investigation into the Sandstone Trail which runs alongside the school has been especially imaginative. The sculpture installation in the grounds is a testimony of the high quality of this work as well as a reminder to the locality of the school's heritage. Links with other schools are very effective and Manley plays an active part in the local group of schools. Links with the local on site pre-school and the main feeder secondary schools are very good. Arrangements support the transfer of pupils to secondary education well by providing opportunities for them to visit high schools and gain an understanding of the next stage of their education. Pupils identified as academically gifted and those talented in arts and physical education benefit from support from a local secondary school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are good. Governance is good and governors are very supportive of the school. Leadership from the headteacher is good and is satisfactory from other key staff. The effectiveness of the management of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new headteacher has effectively changed the school's philosophy about education; she leads the curriculum very well and the school has a very clear vision for the future.
- Governors willingly share their experiences and ensure all statutory requirements are met.
- The school's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils is very good.
- Leadership and management of English, mathematics, science and art and design are good.
- Curriculum action plans are not always linked to pupils' learning and standards and subject leaders do not have enough opportunity to follow up their plans.
- Monitoring performance and teaching is carried out effectively by the headteacher.
- Financial management is effective and the school spends money prudently.

### **Commentary**

41. The headteacher is in her second year of headship and leads this successful school well. She has successfully accomplished several changes. Her management style is based on collaboration so that staff and governors support these changes. Her hard work has earned the respect of governors, parents and staff. The most significant change has been in the delivery of a curriculum based on learning through experience and practical activity. This has led to rewording the school's mission statement to *a place of joy and learning with a vision to develop a happy, caring and experience rich environment where children develop a love of learning and an enquiring mind*. In implementing this vision the headteacher has been very successful and as a result this is a flourishing community. There is always a buzz of purposeful activity with everyone playing a full part and feeling valued.

42. The chair of governors is a good leader of the governing body. As a regular visitor she is well informed not only of school changes, but also of national initiatives and how these affect the school. This can be seen in the governors' determination to make the school accessible to all and in their review of the headteacher's workload. Several governors are very willing to

share their expertise both in advising the headteacher and in supporting pupils by helping with visits, supporting pupils with special educational needs and leading a design and technology unit. The skills of another governor enabled every pupil to receive a compact disc as a memento of a musical project. Other governors are less involved and rely on others to inform them about the impact of current initiatives and changes in the school. Nevertheless, the majority have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

43. Governors have worked very hard to ensure the school is accessible to people in wheelchairs and are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in the school. This can be seen in practice in the priority given to the role of special educational needs co-ordinator. Every week the co-ordinator has weekly time away from teaching to carry out the role. This is appreciated by parents who visit to check on their children's progress and how they can help at home. Support is managed effectively and the requirements of the Code of Practice<sup>6</sup> are fully met. These pupils benefit from additional individual support as well as help in lessons and play a full part in all activities.
44. The headteacher has extended the role of subject leaders and they now produce curriculum action plans which make up part of the school development plan. These plans show a clear picture of what co-ordinators want to achieve in the subjects they lead. However, a common weakness is the targets for improvement which cannot always be clearly measured to check on their impact on standards. Leadership of English, mathematics and science is strong because assessment information is more readily available to guide co-ordinators in improving their subjects. Art and design is also strongly led and this ensures the curriculum richness is sustained with art often being the key focus. Other subjects are soundly led but the lack of assessment information and opportunities to monitor their subjects means they are less well informed about what is happening in the subjects. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. New planning has been put in place but the school is not always checking that the best use is made of resources to put these plans into practice.
45. The headteacher is developing the tracking of pupils' progress and this is now providing a clear picture of the school's overall performance as well as helping to spot pupils who need extra help. A very clear programme is in place to check on the quality of teaching and this includes observing lessons, reviewing planning and pupils' work. As a result, the headteacher has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the staff and changes have taken place to develop a team with a shared approach to teaching and learning.
46. The benefit of a small school is the clear picture of what happens both daily and in the long term. The headteacher expands this picture with more formal evaluation of the school and as a result the school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. This information is used well to compile the school development plan which provides useful guidance for the school. The headteacher has recently refined this document to avoid an overload of priorities and so make it easier for governors to check on the progress towards the agreed priorities.

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<sup>6</sup> Special Educational Needs Code of Practice- this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive most appropriate support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Needs and disability Act 2001.

47. Financial management is good. Governors come into their own here and support the headteacher very well in setting the budget and tracking on-going spending. Additional funds are sought and this is enabling the school to extend the building and provide more space and an improved area for the administrative staff. The current surplus has been accrued with additional grants and is earmarked for the school refurbishment. Value for money is sought when making spending decisions with more attention now being given to the impact of spending on standards and teaching. A good example of this is the spending on interactive whiteboards and governors and teachers are very clear this has made lessons more exciting as well as helping in preparation of lessons.



**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	266,020
Total expenditure	242,188
Expenditure per pupil	3,561

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	3,316
Balance carried forward to the next	23,832

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

The nine children in the Foundation Stage are taught in the same class as the Year 1 and 2 pupils. Currently 26 pupils are in this class. From an average starting point on entry to school overall achievement is satisfactory and children are on course to meet the early learning goals in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. Children exceed the expected goal in their mathematical development and the reading element of language and literacy. Children with special educational needs are fully included and also make satisfactory progress relative to their prior attainment. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Most lessons are practical and support staff work well to help children enjoy their lessons and this develops their self-esteem. Occasionally, because children are taught alongside older children, the work is not always sufficiently challenging or matching their age or experience. Similarly, although the curriculum is planned to meet the children's needs in practice the cramped facilities and organisation of the room mean children do not always have enough opportunities to work independently and express their ideas, such as in role play. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The role of the curriculum co-ordinator needs further development to raise the profile of the Foundation Stage in whole school planning.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff establish a calm and secure working atmosphere where children feel welcome and happy and relationships are good.
- Opportunities for independent learning are limited.
- Visitors enrich the curriculum.

#### **Commentary**

48. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory and children are on course to reach the early learning goal. The teachers establish clear routines so that children know what is expected and grow in confidence and self-esteem. Staff communicate their high expectations of good behaviour and use their praise and encouragement effectively. As a result, children get on well together and respect the school's values. Opportunities for children to select tasks or to make choices in how to solve problems are limited because of the class organisation and lack of space. Consequently, children's ability to organise their own ideas and work independently is not well developed. Visitors, like the Jewish lady who involved children in making a Passover meal enrich the curriculum very successfully. Children are becoming aware of, and show interest and enjoyment in, cultural and religious differences.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good teaching of early reading skills leads to good achievement and children exceed the early learning goal in reading.
- Some activities are not focused clearly enough to support learning well.

## **Commentary**

49. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory with strengths in the teaching of reading. Letters and their sounds are taught very clearly and systematically. As a result, many children know most letters by shape and sound. They are beginning to use this knowledge in their reading and writing. Most children already recognise some key words and read accurately and confidently from the first readers and exceed the early learning goal. Writing skills are close to those expected of this age group. The weakness in the teaching of writing is that some tasks are not always focused clearly enough, or rigorously linked to earlier work to provide good challenge. Staff do not always insist on careful listening and children do not listen well to adults or each other. More attention is given to speaking and pertinent questions encourage discussion and children talk confidently to adults. Children enjoy taking part in adult led role-play activities in the hall and are able to take on the role of different characters. However, the use of the hall for group speaking and listening activities is not always supportive to learning because of the distractions from the adjacent classroom.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good with many children exceeding the early learning goal by the end of the reception year.
- Group work is well organised to teach skills and teaching assistants and parent helpers are deployed efficiently.
- Good use is made of attractive resources, including ICT.

## **Commentary**

50. Teaching and learning are good. Lively group activities, like finding and counting coins in the sand, support learning well. Adults are well briefed and deployed effectively to support small groups. Through perceptive questioning, they challenge children of differing attainment to explain what they are doing. Attractive resources, including the interactive white board keep children interested and increase concentration. Whole class introductory and plenary sessions are not always successful in challenging the full range of ability in the mixed age class. Most children count objects correctly and name the numerals to 10 accurately. They use their skills confidently to count along a number line and calculate how many more is needed to make 10.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers provide practical, hands-on experiences.
- Tasks are not always well matched to children's needs.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support learning.

## **Commentary**

51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Overall achievement is satisfactory and children are on course to meet the early learning goal by the end of their time in reception. Lessons are well managed and resources prepared carefully to provide children with opportunities to investigate. However, sometimes the adults' expectations are not closely matching the

children's experiences and are too closely related to the work older children in the class are doing. For instance, the focus of a lesson, planned for reception children to investigate materials, got lost in attempting higher level skills of prediction and fair testing. This led to some lack of interest and confusion. Most children observe carefully, and thoughtfully describe what they see. They are less confident in suggesting how to find out more or in offering words to describe the properties of the materials they are investigating. The teacher makes effective use of the interactive white board to prepare children for the next part of the lesson and also demonstrates basic computer skills. As a result, children confidently use the mouse to select items and click on the screen.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships are good and staff manage pupils well.
- Clear instructions and demonstrations promote learning of skills successfully.
- Provision for outdoor play is currently under development.

### **Commentary**

52. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the lesson seen in the hall teaching and learning were good. Staff use praise and encouragement liberally, so that children are confident moving in the space and climbing on the large apparatus. Tasks are varied and encourage the development of skills of control and co-ordination. Children use space well with awareness of others. They control their bodies to balance carefully and make different shapes as they travel safely along a bench. Children do not currently have appropriate access to a suitable outdoor play area. This limits opportunity to control large wheeled toys and negotiate space. Building work in progress will greatly improve facilities in the near future.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

53. A secure judgment on provision cannot be made because no teaching was seen. However, it is clear from children's work on display that they engage in a variety of activities to express their own ideas and learn techniques using a variety of artistic media. They enjoy taking part in regular music sessions. In literacy sessions in the hall, children enthusiastically act out familiar stories with direction from the teaching assistant. They perform with confidence for the rest of the class. There are, however, few opportunities for children to follow up these activities independently in class or to develop their own ideas. The imaginative role-play area in the hall is not well resourced, and is not accessible except with supervision and children do not learn as well as they could from role-play.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is especially challenging in Years 5 and 6 and much is achieved in these years.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- The focus on drama has raised standards in speaking and listening.
- Pupils enjoy reading especially in Year 6.
- The curriculum is rich and literacy is often at the heart of planned themes.
- Leadership and management are good, although the opportunity to monitor is underdeveloped.

## **Commentary**

54. Although standards are not as high as those identified in the previous inspection, this is linked to the differing abilities of the groups. Good progress from Year 1 to Year 6 has been sustained and overall improvement since the previous inspection is good. Although results of national tests vary greatly from year to year these indicate that boys and girls achieve equally well.
55. In the speaking and listening assessments made by teachers at the end of Year 2 in 2004, standards were well below the national average with no pupils judged to exceed the level expected. Similarly, results of national tests were well below the national average in reading and below average in writing. At the time of the tests last year, the school had staff absences and temporary staff were carrying out the assessments. This led to some errors in assessment especially in speaking and listening and also higher attaining pupils did not perform well in the assessments. With the small numbers involved this had a significant effect on the final results.
56. Current standards are above average in speaking and listening. Most have a varied vocabulary and confidently discuss their ideas with each other and adults. Listening is generally good with pupils listening to instructions and to each other in conversations. Achievement in reading is good and standards are above average. Higher attaining pupils are more enthusiastic about their books and have a good knowledge of different stories. However, many pupils still see the book from their school reading scheme as their favourite. Letters and sounds are taught effectively and pupils very confidently use this knowledge to tackle new words. Higher attaining readers successfully locate information in non-fiction books but have limited knowledge of the school library. The great majority of pupils write independently with a few writing imaginatively at a level higher than expected for their age. Most have legible handwriting and overall standards are above average and achievement is good.
57. Results of national tests in Year 6 in 2004 were well above both the national average and the average of similar schools. Current standards are well above average in reading and speaking and listening and average in writing and achievement overall is good. Pupils are very articulate and when observed in a drama lesson showed a good understanding of how language changes in different situations. They listen and respect the ideas of others when working in groups. Reading is a strength and achievement is very good. Pupils are discerning readers and eager to chat about their latest book. A high proportion of pupils exceed the level expected for their age and are quick to read between the lines and spot how authors develop adventures in their writing. Standards in writing are not quite as high as the other aspects of English because a third of the pupils have special educational needs which affect their ability

to express their ideas in well presented writing. However, tracking the progress of these pupils during Years 3 to 6 shows good achievement, especially for the pupils with special educational needs who are well supported in lessons. Literacy is often central to a theme and this enables pupils to write confidently in a wide range of styles including imaginative poems, formal and informal letters as well as structured stories.



58. Teaching and learning are good. The best teaching seen was in the mixed age Year 5 and 6 class where teaching was very good. The review of work for the older pupils shows an inspiring range of writing which both challenges and enthuses pupils so that much is achieved in this class. Throughout the school, teachers make learning fun and the use of the interactive white board adds to the interest in the lesson. For example, in Year 5 and 6 the additional stimulus of scenes and sounds of storms inspired the pupils so that their ideas about King Lear's struggle on the heath became very real to them. Lessons include clear learning outcomes and teachers often share these with pupils so they are clear about the purpose of their tasks. Conclusions do not always fully consolidate learning because not all pupils are included or teachers include new information which clouds the focus of learning. Teaching assistants provide effective support in class and in withdrawal sessions for pupils with special educational needs and their achievement is good. The setting of homework has improved and this is now regular and extends learning in class. In the infants, the teacher reminds pupils of their individual targets so that they are clear about the next steps they need to take. This focus on targets is less evident in the juniors. The process of uniting subjects and producing an attractive book of best work combined with the effective teaching of drafting and editing leads to some outstanding presentation of work. This approach fully resolves the weakness in presentation identified in the previous inspection. A strength in teaching is the warm and encouraging relationships which lead to pupils confidently trying out ideas and asking for help.
59. Leadership and management are good. Assessment has improved and the school is closely tracking progress and providing extra help when it is identified a pupil needs extra help. Some of these sessions entail pupils missing the opening to literacy lessons and this does not lead to effective learning as they struggle to catch up in the lesson. In the juniors, samples of pupils' writing are assessed monthly and this very effectively tracks progress across the range of writing and this has a positive impact on standards. The co-ordinator draws up action plans for the school's development plan. These are a useful review of the subject but success is not always easy to measure or action linked to its impact on standards. The opportunity to monitor the effect of changes on practice is underdeveloped.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

60. Literacy skills are very well promoted in other subjects and the strengths in these skills impacts positively on standards in other subjects. For example, in religious education some sensitive poetry is written and pupils and teachers encourage writing by imaginative presentations. This can be seen in the descriptive writing about the Life of Moses written on scrolls. In design and technology and science, pupils write clearly about their activities and record their findings.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is especially good in numeracy and reflects the good quality of teaching.
- Assessment procedures are thorough but not all pupils are aware of their individual targets.
- The headteacher leads the subject well and has a clear view on standards.

- Cross-curricular links enhance learning significantly.

### **Commentary**

61. Standards in Year 2 are above average. This is an improvement on the national test results in 2004 which for both Year 2 and Year 6 were in line with the national average and below the average of similar schools. Standards vary from year to year but are not as high as at the

previous inspection. However, comparisons between year groups are unreliable because of the small number of pupils in each cohort. The school has sustained the good progress identified in the previous inspection and overall improvement is good. Planning is better and more use is made of ICT. Assessment identifies pupils needing additional help and in the juniors booster sessions support those who appear to be dropping behind in the subject. These changes are reaping benefits and especially more pupils are now working at above average levels.

62. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve well and make good progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and there is no significant difference in the achievement of any group of pupils. In Year 2, pupils' mental agility in applying basic skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division is good. They confidently calculate the value of coins when solving money problems and enjoy selecting different coins to make up a set amount. A review of books shows pupils do particularly well in the area of shape, space and measures. In the juniors, pupils build effectively on earlier learning and broaden and deepen their understanding by applying their skills through all aspects of the subject and across the wider curriculum. Pupils use mathematical terms correctly when naming angles and triangles and use protractors accurately when measuring. They understand the relationship between angles and triangles.
63. Teaching and learning are good overall with very good features in Years 5 and 6. Teachers plan lessons with clear learning objectives which are usually shared with pupils. As a result, pupils know what is expected and work purposefully to succeed. Thorough assessment systems are used with good effect to track the progress of individuals and to set learning targets. Consequently, tasks are planned to build clearly on what pupils already know and specifically to meet the range of attainment in mixed age classes. This enables the needs of all pupils to be efficiently met with appropriate challenge. While there are examples of very good use of individual targets, especially with pupils who have special educational needs, targets are not used consistently enough to make all pupils fully aware of how to improve their work. Brisk mental mathematics sessions are well organised and make pupils think for themselves. Opportunities to consolidate or extend learning are sometimes missed when plenary sessions at the end of lessons are not focused enough on the particular learning objectives of the session. In the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, the teacher's lively approach, clear vision and high expectations promote learning very well.
64. Leadership and management are good. Following analysis of results, planning has been adjusted and now provides continuity as pupils move from year to year and this is raising standards. School action plans, based on clear appraisal of the school's performance, identify areas for development. These now need more measurable targets for success.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. The very good use of mathematics across the curriculum through the well organised and imaginative planning enhances progress in mathematics as well as in the other subjects. Particularly good opportunities to explore areas of shape, space and measures leads to especially good achievement in this area of mathematics. For instance, in work linked with the study of Ancient Egypt in Years 5 and 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of triangulation is strengthened considerably by in depth investigation of pyramids. Very close links with art are used productively when

pupils learn about angles and rotation using the work of Kandinsky. In geography, pupils in Year 2 record their findings about traffic in the locality in graph form and in science pupils of all ages use tables and charts to report and compare measurement in their investigations.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 very confidently follow through their line of enquiry.
- The focus is always on learning through investigation and pupils enjoy science.
- Teachers have high expectations in science and many pupils exceed the level expected for their age.
- Leadership and management are good, although the opportunity to monitor what is happening in class is underdeveloped.

### Commentary

66. Standards in Year 6 in national tests in 2004 were well above the average of all and similar schools. Although with small numbers, standards fluctuate year on year these results show a significant improvement from the previous two years. Very challenging teaching was seen with a strong emphasis on investigation. This teaching, combined with more rigorous assessment and additional booster classes in Year 6 led to three quarters of the pupils exceeding the level expected for their age in 2004. Current standards continue to be well above average and this shows good progress since the previous inspection. Taking into consideration the fact that a third of the current Year 6 are identified as having special educational needs overall achievement is very good and these pupils are working at the level expected for their age. Pupils in Year 2 reached average standards in 2004 although the number of pupils achieving at the higher than expected level was below average. As in Year 6, staffing changes and a change of planning have led to more pupils exceeding the level expected for their age and current standards are above average and achievement is good.
67. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy investigation. The teacher is capitalising on the current building in the school and pupils are busy investigating which materials make firm foundations. They name several common materials used by builders and test out which will provide a firm base for a small fence. Pupils work out how to test their foundations and also appreciate that the test needs to be fair so they will have to use the same depth of foundation. Many confidently make predictions and explain that sand will hold the fence up if they make a bigger pile but it will still blow over because the sand is not a firm foundation.
68. Very effective teaching in Year 5 and 6 challenges pupils to extend their scientific skills. When finding out how quickly solids dissolve, the teacher allows pupils to make mistakes in their investigations so that they gain a real insight into learning from their errors and using this information to improve their investigation. Higher attaining pupils promptly spot when their investigation is no longer fair and all are eager to adjust their ideas. Scientific terminology is used correctly to explain what is happening and also in the recording of their findings. A few struggle with setting out their graph to record their results but with prompting many achieve this well. A review of books show a wide variety of graphs and grids used correctly for recording findings.
69. Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is good in the infants and very good in the juniors. The focus on learning through practical activity makes learning enjoyable and ensures new learning is fully understood. In Years 5 and 6, the teacher does not

allow the small classroom to dictate activities. The photographs of pupils testing for soundproofing are clear evidence of learning through fun and serious investigation. Teachers' planning is very good. Parents had slight concerns that the school's focus on art was at the expense of science. This is not the case because teachers are flexible in planning, and if science does not fit naturally into the current theme it is taught as a separate subject. Numeracy and

literacy are very well promoted as in the accuracy of recording pulse rates and in succinct conclusion *the heart went back to resting when we calmed down*. Teaching assistants play a full part in lessons and this enables all to be involved in predicting and following up their lines of enquiry.

70. During the inspection the co-ordinator was absent and the Year 6 teacher was carrying out the role effectively. The idea to extend the current assessment used in the juniors to the infants is a step forward to improve assessment procedures. The current action plan fails to link action to raising standards, although it does infer the outcome of test results will improve. A priority in the plan is to initiate monitoring procedures which will enable the impact of changes to be monitored in lessons.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils learn skills in logical order but the skills of modelling and the use of sensors are not fully developed.
- Teachers' planning is good, but time is not used well in some lessons.
- There is a good range of resources which are used efficiently to support learning.
- Teachers make very effective use of ICT as a teaching tool to add interest to lessons.

### **Commentary**

71. Standards are in line with what is expected nationally and all areas of the curriculum are now taught. Links with the local high school provide some opportunities for Years 5 and 6 pupils to learn more about modelling and using sensors. However, these skills are comparatively less well developed than the rest of the curriculum because the school has only recently acquired its own suitable equipment. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress in lessons. There is no significant difference in the achievement of any group of pupils. Year 2 pupils confidently write their names and change the size and colour of their letters. They command a programmable toy to follow a set path. They enjoy using an arts program to create their own pictures. In Year 6, pupils show greater skills when word processing and confidently edit and redraft their work. Discussion with pupils revealed a wide range of experiences including research, art and design and retrieving previous work. Pupils describe in detail a data handling project and are secure in entering data and using it in subsequent calculations.
72. Teaching and learning of ICT are satisfactory. The school teaches ICT as a discrete subject as well as planning effectively for pupils to apply their skills in other lessons. Teachers consistently plan work in lessons which helps pupils build skills in logical order as they move through the school. Consequently, pupils generally build new knowledge efficiently on what they already know. Resources are well organised to enable all pupils to have practical hands-on experience. Pupils are very interested in the subject. However, sometimes the teacher's introduction goes on too long and pupils spend too much of the lesson listening rather than doing. As a result, pupils who are enthusiastic to get started on the computer become restless, lose concentration and the pace of learning slows. There are good arrangements to check

pupils' progress at the end of each unit of work. However, these individual assessments are not always used to full effect in moving pupils on at a faster rate.

73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has raised the profile of ICT and been instrumental in improving resources and expertise. This can be seen in many lessons across the curriculum when teachers confidently use interactive white boards to give pupils ideas and extend their knowledge. The co-ordinator's role in monitoring the impact of these developments on standards is not well established.



## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

74. At the time of the last inspection very limited use was made of ICT across the curriculum. Considerable improvements have been made to resources, to teachers' expertise and to planning. The use of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects is now good. Pupils use laptops, networked to the Internet with growing independence to carry out research, for example, in history, geography and religious education. In Years 5 and 6, for instance, pupils explore the work of Kandinsky, on screen, in relation to shape and space. As they get older pupils become increasingly adept at using ICT to create specific effects when presenting their work in literacy lessons.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography and History**

75. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the provision for geography and history. No lessons were seen. Evidence from teachers' planning indicates that geography and history are taught effectively and imaginatively included in school's themes. There is high focus on well planned, purposeful learning with particularly good contributions from visits and visitors.
76. Due to the organisation of themes in a two-year cycle very little geography in Years 3 to 6 and history in Year 1 and 2 was available at the time of the inspection. In Year 2, evidence of work in books in geography indicates that standards are at least in line with national expectations. In history, work on display and in books is of a high standard. Formal assessment systems are not in place to measure pupils' progress as they move through the school. Leadership and management by subject leaders are satisfactory, but their role in monitoring teaching and learning is not well developed.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and the subject makes a positive contribution to their spiritual and cultural development.
- Imaginative teaching and effective links with other subjects promote good learning.
- Visits and visitors enhance the curriculum.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Commentary**

77. Standards in Year 2 meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In Year 6, standards exceed these expectations. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.
78. All groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. Their knowledge of Christianity and Judaism is satisfactory. They retell the story of Jesus' birth and know why Christians give presents at Christmas. They show good recall of preparing a

Passover meal with a Jewish visitor but are unsure of its religious significance. In Year 6, achievement is good. Pupils' knowledge of the importance of religion and its effect on some people's lives is good. Their ability to join in the discussion of ethical dilemmas and to see another's point of view is impressive. They demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of the life of Jesus, His significance to Christians and of the symbolism, for example, of the Cross. They show sound knowledge of some of the beliefs and traditions of Judaism, Hinduism and Islam.

79. Teaching and learning are good overall with very good teaching seen in a lesson in Years 5 and 6. The theme approach to planning is used imaginatively to make tasks more relevant to pupils. For instance, in Years 5 and 6, pupils learn about Moses and the Exodus through their work about Ancient Egypt. Imaginative practical work, like making bricks of clay and straw, give pupils colourful insights into the lives of Hebrew slaves. In the very good lesson seen, the teacher built successfully on the pupils' visit to two churches. An atmosphere conducive to quiet reflection with a lit candle and appropriate music was set. This encouraged pupils to extend their own ideas and feelings. As a result, they were able to describe the meaning of church artefacts in figurative language like *wise*, *lectern* or to associate ideas like *candle* with *hope*.
80. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader promotes a consistent approach to theme planning which makes effective use of carefully chosen visits and visitors to promote learning effectively from lively and illuminating first-hand experiences. These, together with sensitive discussions and perceptive questioning by adults, make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
81. Assessment at the end of a unit checks that pupils have completed the work but assessment is not always providing information to check on progress or guide future planning. Curriculum action plans for the subject show an understanding of the next steps to improve the subject but targets are rather too general to enable the school's performance to be easily monitored.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

82. During the inspection it was not possible to see any lessons in design and technology or music and only one lesson in art and design and physical education was seen. Evidence from reviewing pupils' work and discussions with subject co-ordinators indicates the theme approach to planning works very well for these subjects and pupils experience a rich range of experiences. Art and design is effectively led by the headteacher who has an informed overview of the school and so is clear about priorities in the subject and it is often the focal point for a theme. Other subjects are soundly led and managed. Subject co-ordinators draw up action plans for future development and these show a clear understanding about the subjects. As yet, the priorities for development are not always linked to their effect on standards and limited opportunity is available to monitor the effect of suggested action in the classroom. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and check on pupils' achievement at the end of a theme.
83. **Art and design** very clearly makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The work of many famous artists is incorporated into themes and has led to some very imaginative work. In the lesson seen in Years 5 and 6 the teaching was very good and pupils achieve results beyond those found in most schools. Pupils give close attention to detail after looking at the work of Philip Sutton and apply what they learn to their own work. Most work is imaginative and original and reflects the artist's idea that the choice of colours was linked to feelings. Pupils are skilled at practising their ideas and a review of sketch books indicates a wide range of experiences including using textiles and designing masks. Information and communication technology is used to research ideas. The school's popular art club and the visiting artists significantly extend pupils' experiences. The sculpture installation at the entrance to the school alerts visitors to the celebration of art as all

pupils have contributed to the mosaic foundation and expressed ideas about the sculpture that marks the school's location on the local Sandstone Trail.

84. Limited evidence of work in **design and technology** was available. It is clear pupils design their work and in Year 2 have drawn a simple diagram of what their slippers will look like and list the resources needed. In Year 6 plans are more detailed and identify more attention to the making process and the needs of the slippers. For example, pupils identify what is needed to make the slipper strong and how to join materials together. Evaluation is included in planning, but not yet carried out as the project is not finished.

85. **Music** is taught by one teacher and these lessons did not coincide with the inspection. Planning is good and music is fully included in the school's themes and includes pertinent visitors and visits including a recent visit to the opera. Examples of work point to high expectations as pupils in Year 6 compose their own pieces based on their interpretation of *Celeste Aida*. Work suggests effective appraisal skills as pupils identify what makes the *March Triumphal* so exciting. Singing in assembly and the whole school hymn practice was tuneful and pupils enjoy including actions and singing in different parts. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument and joining in singing in a variety of special performances including the Carol Concert in Chester Cathedral and the Manchester Evening News Arena. The school's recording of their animated production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* shows good use of percussion instruments to accompany singing. The subject makes a major contribution to the school's excellent provision for pupils' cultural development.
86. As at the time of the last inspection, provision in **physical education** is restricted by the accommodation. The school has reorganised classrooms since that time and the school now has the use of the school hall, but it is very small for the older pupils. The school compensates for this with a wide variety of games activities including netball, five-a-side football and hockey. In the lesson seen in the juniors the teaching was good and pupils' hockey skills were better than usually seen for this age. They had good skills of control and passed the ball accurately. In a small games situation they showed a good understanding of attack and defence and worked well as a team introducing simple tactics to improve their game. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have opportunities to go swimming and video evidence shows dance is also included in the curriculum.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

87. No lessons were seen during the inspection and so it would not be appropriate to make an overall judgment on teaching and learning. However, it is clear from the evidence available that the school very strongly promotes pupils' personal development.
88. The national guidelines are followed to help teachers plan interesting activities. Every class has a lesson devoted to pupils' personal development. These are fitted into the school's theme approach so that pupils recognise the importance of the subject. The warm relationships and family feeling in the school is evidence of the success of these lessons. Teachers skillfully encourage older pupils to help the younger ones in the mixed age classes so that they learn about their role as citizens and responsibility in society. This was seen in the Foundation Stage when the Year 1 and 2 pupils help the youngest children with every day tasks so that they are very happy in school. Similarly, the *buddy system* in reading is successful in improving reading as well as pupils' social and caring skills. Members on the School Council take their responsibility very seriously and represent the views of their peers over several issues. Pupils are aware of how they can help in the wider world by raising funds for the needy and also in preserving the environment.
89. Pupils are encouraged to think about living a healthy life. Fruit is provided as a snack and additional activities highlight specific ways of keeping healthy. For example, in physical education pupils carried out a *jump rope for heart* which was a sponsored skip raising funds for heart research.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*