

INSPECTION REPORT

MEIR HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124145

Headteacher: Mr P Siddley

Lead inspector: Mr J Morris

Dates of inspection: 6th – 10th June 2005

Inspection number: 267302

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: 356

School address: Golborn Avenue
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Stoke-on-Trent
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr M Powell

Date of previous inspection: 1st March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an above average sized primary school. There is no nursery but there are 52 children in total in the two reception year classes. There are slightly more boys than girls in the school. There has been a slow, steady rise in numbers since 2000. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The vast majority of the pupils are from white British families. None of the 11 pupils from other ethnic backgrounds has English as an additional language. The percentages of pupils with special educational needs and with a statement of special educational needs are well below average. These pupils have a range of learning and social difficulties. The percentage of pupils starting or leaving school other than at the usual time is low. Attainment on entry to the school is generally average, although the school has secure evidence to show that the current Year 2 and Year 5 groups were relatively less able when they started. The school's socio-economic context is favourable, with high employment levels and high parental aspirations. The school received the following awards in recent years: Activemark 2001 (silver) and 2004 (gold); Basic Skills Quality Mark 2002 and 2005; Investors in People standard 2003; School Achievement Award 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23696	Mr J Morris	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Curriculum Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
9224	Mr M Vineall	Lay inspector	
20010	Mr J Sangster	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Modern foreign languages Music Physical education
32827	Mrs J Marshall	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Religious education Personal, social and health education and citizenship Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. It is characterised by a great common sense of purpose amongst pupils and staff, very good relationships and a very good atmosphere for learning. All pupils achieve well. Teaching and learning are good, with very good features. Leadership and management are very good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils really want to learn and they achieve well because teachers provide very interesting and well-organised lessons;
- The pupils' personal development is very good throughout the school and, by Year 6, pupils have become very mature and thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education;
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership. There is a very strong vision and sense of teamwork in the leadership group and staff as a whole;
- Computers are not used often enough to enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum;
- This is a very caring school, in which pupils know who to go to if they have a problem and what they need to do next in their work;
- The deployment and development of teaching staff, including specialists, significantly contribute to pupils' achievements across the curriculum;
- Pupils are not sufficiently aware of the multicultural diversity in modern Britain;
- The school works very well in partnership with parents and other education providers.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 has been good overall. In relation to the previous key issues for action, there have been very good improvements in pupils' handwriting and the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and good improvements in the teaching of mathematics and use of worksheets. In relation to the minor issues, there have been good improvements in teachers' marking, the setting of targets for pupils and the formal procedures for child protection, and very significant improvements in the quality and use of the accommodation.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

All pupils achieve well. The attainment on entry of children into the reception year is broadly average. However, the school has secure evidence to show that there is some variation between year groups and, for example, the current Years 2 and 5 are comparatively less able. Children in reception achieve well because they make particularly good progress in their personal development and literacy skills. They are in line to reach the standards expected by the time they start in Year 1. The results of national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 for the last four years suggest that pupils' achievements in English and science are good but that they are only satisfactory in mathematics.

Inspection evidence is that pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well in English, mathematics, science, religious education and physical education. They achieve very well in personal, social and health education and music. They achieve well in the key skills of ICT but teachers do not make enough use of these skills and the good resources available to maximise learning across the curriculum.

Pupils' personal qualities are very good. The pupils' very good attitudes to school, work habits and behaviour result from the very good relationships between all members of the school community and the clear, high expectations of staff. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Nevertheless, more could be done to raise the pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity in modern Britain. By Year 6, pupils are very confident and mature for their age. Their understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community is excellent. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. There are very good features in Years 1 to 6. These include the teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach, their understanding of how different pupils learn, their high expectations of work and behaviour and the pupils' positive response. All pupils are interested and involved in lessons and they work very well on individual, paired or group tasks. Teachers assess pupils' progress well and the resulting information is used very effectively through individual target setting. Pupils know their targets, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This gives them a very clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The school provides very good learning opportunities for all pupils. It provides good additional learning experiences, especially in sport and music, beyond the normal school day. Accommodation and resources are good. The quality of care, support and guidance provided for pupils is very good. Pupils are very involved in the school, for example through membership of the school council and acting as prefects. Partnership with parents and other schools and colleges is very good and partnership with the community is good.

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and he is supported very well by other key staff. Consequently there is a clear vision and real sense of purpose to the work of the school. The recruitment and use of staff to promote pupils' learning across the curriculum are exceptional. The school makes a very significant contribution to teacher training. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school and there were no significant concerns raised with inspectors. A very small number of parents expressed some concerns about the identification of pupils with special educational needs and the involvement of the parents of pupils with special educational needs in their children's learning. The inspection finds that the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils have very positive views of school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- make better use of the pupils' good ICT skills to support their learning across the curriculum;
- increase the pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity of modern Britain.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

All pupils achieve well. Standards are currently in line with expectations in the reception classes, average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school across a good range of subjects.
- The pupils' achievements in their personal development and the good teaching and learning are the most significant factors in their academic achievements.

Commentary

1. Children achieve well in the reception year. Nearly all the children are in line to achieve the standards expected by the time they start in Year 1. This is because of the good teaching and learning and teamwork among the staff and children's enthusiasm for the school. Children achieve best in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Physical development is satisfactory but the accommodation and resources make it difficult for staff to provide a good variety of outdoor activities daily.
2. All pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. The current Year 2 is a relatively less able group. The pupils in this year group have made good progress since they started school so that standards are currently average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and above average in religious education. All pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6. Standards are currently well above average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Standards are above average in religious education.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.6 (16.6)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.2 (15.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.2 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.0 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.9 (27.2)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.6 (29.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. There have been good improvements in the standards of handwriting and mental calculation in mathematics, and very good improvements in ICT, since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well against the targets in

their individual education plans. In addition, throughout the school, pupils achieve well in art and design and physical education and very well in music and personal, social and health education and citizenship. This is because teaching and learning are good throughout the school, including in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, there is a very good ethos, and leadership and management are very good. Furthermore, the school makes very good use of part-time specialist teachers in music and physical education and individual strengths and expertise within the full-time teaching staff. The pupils' achievements in their personal development are extremely good and underpin their learning and achievement. By the end of Year 6 they demonstrate great maturity for their age, have an excellent understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The consistently very good behaviour and very good attitudes to work underpin much of the commendable work seen in this school. Very good personal development results, by Year 6, in very mature, confident young persons. Attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good behaviour has been made the norm and results in a very orderly community.
- The very positive attitudes to work and to school create the right atmosphere for learning.
- Personal development is very good, with excellent social development and very good moral development. Spiritual development is good.
- Cultural development is good, but more could be done to give pupils an understanding of the implications of living in a multicultural Britain.
- Very good work by the school maintains good attendance levels.

Commentary

4. No visitor to this school can fail to note the atmosphere of harmony and order that exists and the thirst for work shown by the pupils. Such an ethos is based upon the very good relationships that pertain between all adults in the school and the pupils. Adults provide very good role models, with the staff truly operating as one team and this is reflected in the good relationships seen between the children themselves. The desire to learn comes from the pupils themselves. They quickly settle in lessons, co-operate in joint work and work independently well. As a result, behaviour is very good and the school is a harmonious community. There were no exclusions last year and there have been none this year to date.
5. The confidence of pupils and their ability to speak to adults sensibly are evident from the reception year to Year 6. This arises not just from good teaching and very good relationships but from the wealth of other activities, not least music, where public performance is nurtured and encouraged even for beginners. The consequence is that, by Years 5 and 6, a delightful maturity is evident and was regularly seen during the inspection. Thus, Year 5 pupils confidently and charmingly interviewed older local residents on their World War II experiences. Year 6 pupils interviewed Year 5 applicants wishing to be next year's prefects, making mature judgements and showing remarkable sensitivity to the applicants' nervousness.

6. Personal development is another area of great strength and this draws on a well-integrated and consistent approach right across the school. This approach is seen in lessons, assemblies, extra-curricular activities, lunchtimes and breaks and countless casual conversations between pupils and staff. Provision for the pupils' social development is excellent and it is very good for their moral development. The harmonious community of the school is the immediate product of these, but such development is a good preparation for life. Spiritual development is good, with self-knowledge particularly good. Cultural development is also good, with music a very clear highlight here. All Year 1 pupils learn the recorder, many children learn another instrument and singing is most impressive across the school. The whole school singing their favourite song in assembly was of very high quality and a real act of community. Where cultural development could go further is to give pupils more insights into the nature of the multicultural society we live in, beyond that covered in the study of different religions.

Attendance

7. Attendance has been slightly ahead of national norms for several years and, this year to date, has moved even further ahead. This is due to a consistent and continuous drive by the school and the education welfare officer, with good support by parents. Pupils are rarely late for school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The curriculum is very good, enrichment is good and accommodation and resources are good. The care of pupils is very good. Partnership with parents and other education providers is very good and partnership with the community is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are highly motivated to learn because lessons and other activities are well organised and capture their interest.
- Teachers know how pupils with different abilities and with different needs learn and take this into consideration in their good planning.
- The use of individual pupil targets is very effective.
- All teachers have very high expectations of work and behaviour.
- Teachers do not use the computer suite and classroom resources often enough to promote learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

8. Teaching and learning are good overall and throughout the school. They are good or better in over 90 per cent of lessons. They are good in the Foundation Stage. There are some very good features to much of the work in Years 1 to 6. The most significant characteristic of lessons is that the pupils want to learn. They are involved and interested in lessons and it is extremely unusual to find individuals who are bored, off task or behaving inappropriately. Pupils work well in a wide range of situations including completing individual tasks, working in pairs, for example in the computer suite, working in groups, contributing to discussions, making presentations to the class or performing to a large audience. This pupil motivation arises from the very high expectations of work and behaviour communicated by all staff and the teachers' very good knowledge of the curriculum which results in interesting lessons. The implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and the grouping of pupils by ability for literacy and numeracy lessons are effective. Support staff are used well and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

9. Teachers assess the progress of individual pupils well in English, mathematics, science, ICT and personal development. The information is used well in the next stages of planning and to inform parents. Teachers take good account of this information and their good knowledge of learning styles in planning and delivering different challenges and support strategies for different pupils, including those with special educational needs. In addition, pupils throughout the school have personal targets. These are very effective, particularly in Years 3 to 6, because the pupils have a very clear understanding of what they need to do next to improve their work. This good practice starts in Years 1 and 2, and even the reception year, when the children have simple targets which they remember well. Although the teaching of the key skills of ICT is good the use of ICT to promote learning in other subjects is only satisfactory and this is an important relative weakness.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (9%)	16 (34%)	23 (49%)	4 (9%)	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. In addition to the lessons in this table, inspectors made brief visits to six other lessons, which they did not grade, observed lunchtime and after-school clubs and examined a wide range of pupils' work.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is very good overall. Opportunities for the enrichment of the curriculum are good. The quality of resources and accommodation is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very good curriculum that engages and encourages pupils to achieve well.
- The deployment of teaching staff and specialist teachers significantly contributes to pupils' good achievement across the curriculum.
- Pupils' personal and social education is very well promoted and plays an important part in creating the whole school ethos.
- There have been good improvements in the accommodation since the last inspection.

Commentary

10. The curriculum is very good overall because many activities are interesting and exciting for pupils and meet their needs very well. Effective links are made between different subjects. For instance, in a very good lesson, pupils were highly motivated as they delivered weather forecasts to one another. Aspects of geography, design and technology, English and pupils' personal development were all carefully brought together to deepen pupils' understanding and enhance their learning. Opportunities to develop pupils' personal and social development are evident in every aspect of school life as well as in personal, social and health education lessons. There is a very strong commitment to enabling the pupils to become caring, thoughtful members of the community who are willing to take on responsibilities. This, in turn, plays a significant part in fostering pupils' very good attitudes towards work and their good achievement.
11. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting competitions and many different musical opportunities from the choir to instrumental lessons, which enrich the curriculum well from Years 3 to 6. Many pupils take part and

enjoy representing their school, whether performing in musical concerts, such as the highly professional and entertaining 'Summer Concert' seen during the inspection, or in sporting fixtures. These again provide further opportunities to develop pupils' personal and social skills. A good range of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest, including the local area, provides pupils with many varied experiences. French and German are taught in Years 5 and 6 and contribute very well to the pupils' understanding of language and their appreciation of different cultures.

12. The school employs a large number of staff and uses them very well. A very good number of teachers, with expertise and experience in all areas of the curriculum, provide very good support to pupils. Pupils achieve well in physical education and very well in music and French because these subjects are predominantly taught by specialists with a high level of expertise. Teaching staff within the school are also very well deployed, by effectively taking account of their own subject expertise and targeting groups of pupils with similar abilities. Pupils throughout the school, but particularly in Years 5 and 6, work with a variety of teachers and other adults each week. This provides very good preparation for their move to secondary school. Well-qualified teaching assistants are actively involved in lessons, including supporting pupils with special educational needs well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, because in addition to the good support they receive in lessons, the targets in their individual plans are realistic and reviewed regularly.
13. Accommodation is good overall and the improvements since the last inspection have been as a result of the headteacher's and the governors' careful planning. The school now has a library and recently added a mini computer suite to one of the classrooms in addition to the current larger suite. All available space is used and additional classrooms have been thoughtfully adapted to ensure access for all, whilst also providing extra space for small groups of pupils to be withdrawn for specific work. The school benefits from spacious grounds which are used very effectively as outdoor classrooms, for sports and during playtimes. The wildlife area, with its twisting path and bird hide, is a magical resource that is used very effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils are actively involved in developing their environment through the school council and have contributed to the activities available during playtime which are used enthusiastically by all. Whilst the reception classes have access to an outdoor classroom, this is limited as it serves as one of the school's playgrounds. The school has already identified the need to develop the reception children's opportunities and plans are underway to create for them a designated area that can be also used by pupils in Years 1 and 2. Resources for learning are good. They include new interactive whiteboards in some classes that contribute well to pupils' good achievements in ICT and other subjects, and improved library provision that is used well to support learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

All issues relating to pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very well attended to. The school also works very well to involve pupils in the work and development of the school. Very good support and guidance are provided.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Meticulous attention is given to all factors influencing pupils' health, welfare, care and safety.
- Pupils are very successfully involved in the appraisal of their own work and in the day-

to-day running of the school.

- Pupils receive very good guidance both academically and in personal development because of the teachers' knowledge and understanding of individuals.
- Induction into the school is very good.

Commentary

14. Very thorough and systematic attention is given to all matters relating to the safety, health and welfare of every pupil. At governor level and in daily school life, responsibilities are clearly identified and carried out well. Thus, on health and safety, a nominated teacher works with a professionally involved governor and a pro-active caretaker to ensure hazards are identified and dealt with. Risk assessments are regularly carried out and for some activities, in subjects such as design and technology, pupils are involved. A trained first-aider is available in each part of the school and all drills and procedures are well supervised and appropriately documented. Child protection is another area where a trained teacher leads the process, closely working with the headteacher, and ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities. Staff have recently received training on this important issue.
15. A very good feature is the way pupils are engaged in the day-to-day running of the school and their own education. At the parents' meeting, one parent praised the way the school 'empowers pupils'. This phrase succinctly echoes the responsibility taken for younger children by older ones, the parts played by pupils in running the school, such as membership of the school council or serving as prefects, and the involvement of pupils in drawing up their own learning targets. Those moving on to secondary school are very well prepared indeed.
16. This very good involvement of pupils draws on the close relationships that exist between all adults and pupils. Pupils spontaneously approach the headteacher and other members of staff to celebrate some achievement or relate some news. In such an inclusive environment, pupils are confident in reporting any concerns.
17. The guidance of pupils is similarly driven by these relationships and the good detailed knowledge and understanding of each child by staff. Supported by the good assessment data the school maintains, pupils are very well advised and guided both in their academic work and on matters of personal development. Many children are able to speak at length of their longer term ambitions and expectations and of their achievements in school. The very broadly based use of rewards and praise for all types of achievement create much pride and self-worth in the children. As one parent put it, "They even get awards for caring for others."
18. Induction into the school is especially well planned and implemented. There are good links with local nurseries, potential parents are informed very well and those selecting the school are well inducted into the process of starting school. Children have 'taster' sessions and the actual start is made as smooth as possible for them and their parents. Several parents at the parents' meeting praised the work done when their children had joined the school in the middle of their primary education. All spoke of improved progress, both academically and personally, compared with attainment in previous schools.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has built very good and beneficial links with parents and with other local schools and colleges. There are good links with the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive attitudes towards the school.
- Parents make a good contribution to the school's running and development.
- There are very good links with other educational establishments at every level, which bring many benefits to teaching and learning and which enhance the curriculum.
- The good links with the local community contribute well to the curriculum.

Commentary

19. Through their questionnaire responses and the parents' meeting with the registered inspector, parents were extremely supportive of the work of the school and positive about all it does for their children. They praised, in particular, the communications between school and home, the approachability of all the staff, the dedication of the headteacher and the sporting and extra-curricular activities. Parents are well informed. There are three parents' evenings each year and these give insights into the work being done, feedback on how pupils are settling and working and include a discussion of pupils' targets. Good newsletters keep parents informed and the school website is being developed as an additional way of telling parents what is happening.
20. Several parents help in school, for example with reading, and many more help on school trips. A very active Parents' Association runs several popular events that provide social links with school and staff and raise substantial funds. Parents are consulted on school issues and a true partnership has been built between home and school.
21. There are also very good partnerships with various local educational establishments. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other teachers are involved in helping other schools, which ensures an outward vision and new ideas being brought in. Good links exist with all nurseries that feed this school and an active 'pyramid' of primary schools brings benefits in terms of support and joint action for extra funds. Links to secondary schools are especially productive. Sandon High School currently provides teachers for modern foreign languages and a technician for ICT (one day a fortnight) and in the recent past has provided support for work with gifted and talented pupils in mathematics. Close liaisons have also been built up with Blythe Bridge High School, which is currently providing a very impressive course for Year 6 pupils, composing music on computers. Such links benefit and enhance the curriculum and help the smooth transition of pupils to secondary education. The school provides work experience for secondary school and college students. Major benefits come from the very active graduate teacher training scheme with Derby University. Two students were in school during the inspection and the school has recruited several of its teachers through this route.
22. Links with the local churches are good. The Methodist minister takes assemblies and local churches are visited. Several valuable sporting links to local clubs bring coaching benefits, not least coaching provided by Stoke City Football Club. An observed session was attended by 75 pupils, both boys and girls. The local windmill, featured on the school badge, is being restored by people in the local community. The participation of pupils in this project has been helpful and much appreciated by local people. It was this interest by the school that triggered the visit by several older residents to support the

Year 5 pupils' study of World War II. Other visitors to the school include doctors, dentists, firemen and theatre groups. These and trips out to local museums, theatres and music festivals significantly enhance the curriculum. The school supports several local charities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is very good. Management is very good. The governors carry out their duties well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, with a clear sense of purpose. He is supported very well by other key staff.
- The school is exceptional at recruiting and retaining staff and making use of individual expertise and makes a highly effective contribution to teacher training.
- The governors have a good understanding of the school and its strengths.
- The management of finances is excellent.

Commentary

23. The headteacher provides very strong, clear leadership and vision to guide the work of the school. He is strongly committed to celebrating the pupils' and the staff's achievements. His first reaction to any difficulty is to look for a way to make things better. This is embedded in the school's ethos and, for example, when the registered inspector asked a pupil what the school council was about the instant reply was "finding solutions". The headteacher also plays an important part in providing support for other schools as a consultant, as do other members of the staff who are leading or advanced skills teachers. Any areas of weakness in the school are quickly identified and support is provided where it is necessary. As a result of the headteacher's leadership, the school has maintained a broad and relevant curriculum, with very good provision of specialist teaching in music, modern languages and physical education, giving as many pupils as possible an opportunity to excel. At the same time high standards have been maintained in English, mathematics and science and standards in ICT have improved considerably. The headteacher is supported very well by the deputy and assistant headteachers, who have specific responsibilities for new and trainee teachers as well as for the curriculum and other areas.
24. Co-ordinators for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT have very good opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in their subjects, by observing teaching and analysing teachers' planning and pupils' work. The use of specialist teachers for most of the physical education and music lessons ensures that standards are maintained in these subjects. The school has an agreed system of performance management whereby teachers observe each other, but there is no provision for systematic monitoring and evaluation in the other National Curriculum subjects of art and design, design and technology, geography and history or religious education. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good.
25. The school makes an excellent contribution to teacher training through its participation in the graduate teacher training scheme, through which it has established a strong link with Derby University. The trainee teachers have the opportunity to work alongside experienced teachers in every year group in the school and speak highly of the training

and support they receive. When opportunities arise, some subsequently take up appointments at the school. Very good support is given to newly qualified teachers. Other staff have very good opportunities for training. They benefit from a deliberate policy to establish a work-life balance, for instance providing for phased retirement for teachers nearing the end of their career, as well as very good opportunities for some teachers to work part-time to fit in with their other commitments and responsibilities. Because of this, the school is very effective in recruiting and retaining staff, or preparing them for further responsibility. The turnover of staff is low, which helps to provide continuity of education and care for pupils.

26. All statutory requirements are met. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas for its development. It provides the school with strong support, for instance in the maintenance of two form entry and in the provision of planning and preparation time for teachers. Governors are actively involved in the formulation of the school's development plan. Although some members have only recently joined the governing body, they have all received appropriate training.
27. The school's management of its finances is excellent. Although the funding per pupil is low, the school makes full use of its financial resources for the benefit of all the pupils currently in the school. Careful planning, for instance in the staged implementation of a new computer suite, ensures that the school keeps within its budget while making full use of the available resources and ensuring best value. Spending is monitored closely by the headteacher and the governing body's finance committee.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	836,570
Total expenditure	821,106
Expenditure per pupil	2,346

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-6,614
Balance carried forward to the next	8,850

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

28. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The two teachers and support staff work together well as a team. Planning is closely based on the Foundation Stage curriculum, paying good attention to all of the six areas of learning, and preparing the children for the start of the National Curriculum in Year 1. The use of a 'Teddy Bears' theme at the time of this inspection was particularly effective in capturing the children's interest and demonstrating the teachers' planning at its best. During an excellent activity, when children had to find bears hidden in the school's tremendous wildlife area, the children made very significant gains in learning the first stages of recording data using tally marks, which was the main objective. However, this activity effectively included the successful promotion of aspects of every one of the six areas of learning. There are very good arrangements for induction when the children start school and care and partnership with parents are very good. Overall, the children achieve well.
29. Teaching and learning are good overall. They range from satisfactory to very good. The very best lessons are characterised by lively, stimulating discussions with many children contributing, very good relationships and very well planned and organised activities. Assessment procedures are good and teachers effectively track the children's progress through the year, in all of the areas of learning. Less able children are supported very well but the most able are not always stretched quite enough. Very occasionally there is too much teacher talk and discussions go on too long. Sometimes the teaching style is rather too formal for children of this age. This is partly because of the size of the classrooms and difficulties of providing good quality activities outside on a daily basis. There are very good plans to develop the outside facilities for children in reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 in the very near future. Currently accommodation and resources are just adequate and the staff make good use of what they have.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children learn very well about school routines and rules in their first year.
- Children achieve well in their personal qualities.

Commentary

30. The children are in line to reach the standards expected by the start of Year 1. A good number exceed these expectations. Children make good progress in the basic social skills such as taking turns, sharing and helping others. This is because teaching and learning are good. In most lessons, teachers give the children good opportunities to contribute to discussions. The children appreciate when the teachers are being humorous and also recognise when they are being serious. Joint playtimes and hymn practices with Years 1 and 2 pupils and participation in whole school assemblies successfully promote a sense of belonging to a bigger community. Every day two children are chosen as special helpers and are given a badge to wear. This gives them a good early understanding of responsibility and co-operation. Children are introduced at an early age to personal targets, one for home and one for school. These are

appropriately 'low key' and written in simple language. As a part of the 'Teddy Bear' theme, the children made satisfactory gains in understanding about looking after pets and distinguishing between living creatures and soft toys.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in the early stages of reading and writing and achieve very well in speaking and listening.

Commentary

31. The children are in line to reach the standards expected by the start of Year 1. A good number exceed these expectations. Communication skills in a range of situations are given a high priority by the staff. Great emphasis is placed on speaking and listening and vocabulary development in whole class teacher presentations, individual learning activities and free play. As a result the children are very attentive and confident and mostly answer questions in phrases or complete sentences rather than single words. For example, during a group session in the computer room one child asked, "What do you click on to start?" and during a numeracy session the children learnt that 'estimate' is a new word meaning 'guess'.
32. Daily sessions promote reading and writing skills well and teachers use big books, puppets and other good resources effectively to capture the children's interest. Most of the children handle books carefully, turning pages and following text correctly. They know that they have to put a finger space between words when writing. Several children spell simple words out loud well and the most able recognise an exclamation mark. During a good session, the children made good gains in understanding what a list of instructions is and how to make one for making sandwiches.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in basic skills, including numbers, shapes, sequences and colours.

Commentary

33. The children are in line to reach the standards expected by the start of Year 1. Children count out loud and write numbers well. Most of the children identify simple shapes such as circles, squares and triangles. During a numeracy session, the children showed a good understanding of taller and shorter in their answers to questions and through matching different bears to houses of different sizes. The most able children estimate well, for example when guessing how many bricks would make a tower the same height as a bear or using their hands to work out distances when programming the floor turtle device. Less able children find this difficult and at times adults give them a bit too much help rather than letting them learn by trial and error.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in a range of activities using computers and other devices.
- The use of topics and themes successfully develops the children's knowledge and understanding beyond the classroom.

Commentary

34. The children are in line to reach the standards expected by the start of Year 1. They know how to give instructions to the floor turtle device, to use a listening centre and to use a computer mouse and keyboard to play simple games. Children know that it is important to wash their hands before handling food and understand that they can choose different fillings when making sandwiches. The children's topic books show that they have completed a lot of activities this year which have effectively developed their knowledge and understanding of babies, the seaside, toys and colours. For example, they know about differences such as living/not living and healthy/not healthy.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children benefit greatly from sessions with a specialist teacher.
- The daily use of the classrooms and outside facilities to promote physical development is not good enough. The school has good plans to address this in the very near future.

Commentary

35. The children are in line to reach the standards expected by the start of Year 1. A small number exceed these expectations. A specialist physical education teacher takes one lesson a week with the reception children. This gives them very good instruction in physical skills and prepares them very well for Year 1 and beyond. Classroom activities effectively promote the development of skills for using tools such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors and hand-eye co-ordination. However, there are not enough opportunities on a day-to-day basis for the children to learn through the use of bikes, scooters and other equipment outside and activities such as sand and water play inside. There are good plans in place to provide exciting new facilities in the playground for children in the reception classes and Years 1 and 2. A very good session involved all of the children in groups in turn using wheeled toys, participating in parachute games, playing a group chasing game and playing a search and find game. However, this arose as a part of the 'Teddy Bear' theme and an examination of planning does not show this level of physical activity to be the norm.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in creative and imaginative activities.

Commentary

36. The children are in line to reach the standards expected by the start of Year 1. A small number exceed these expectations. During the year most children progress from drawing barely recognisable people to figures which have facial features, arms and legs and the most able include items such as fingers and eye-brows. They make patterns in different ways using a limited range of colours quite well. They enjoy rhymes and songs and join in with singing and actions enthusiastically.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

37. English was inspected in full and is reported on below. The school makes very good use of specialist staff from the nearby Sandon High School to teach French and German in Years 5 and 6, with Spanish teaching planned for next year. This provision was sampled. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about teaching and learning but standards are clearly above average and pupils achieve very well.

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan interesting and challenging activities that make pupils want to learn and achieve well.
- The many planned opportunities in all areas of the curriculum to write, speak and read allow pupils to practise what they have learnt in literacy lessons very effectively.
- Very good leadership and management of the subject have been instrumental in the good improvements made since the last inspection.

Commentary

38. Standards are well above average in Year 6 and average in Year 2. Pupils achieve well. This is the result of good, and at times very good and excellent, teaching throughout the school. Teachers target pupils' learning and raise standards because of their good use of assessment. This informs teachers' planning and ensures that the pupils have tasks that are well matched to their abilities. Pupils are very clear about the next steps needed to improve their work and confidently explain what they need to do to reach the next level, particularly in writing. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 take increasing responsibility for this process. Whilst most teachers' marking is used very successfully to show pupils how they can improve, opportunities to share very good practice could be developed even further. Overall, assessment is used very effectively to target pupils for literacy support throughout the school. Good support for learning is provided through the efficient deployment of teaching assistants and adults in lessons and the practice of setting, through which pupils of similar abilities are challenged and extended well.

39. The school has been effective in promoting speaking and listening skills in all classes and curriculum areas throughout the school. This has been a recent area for development and the use of 'talk partners' and planned opportunities for pupils to share their ideas are working well. An excellent example was seen when Year 6 pupils interviewed Year 5 pupils for the role of school prefect. Both classes had already worked on the speaking and listening skills they might need to use in this situation and these were used highly effectively by Year 6 pupils, in particular, to put the candidates at ease and draw out their answers. Pupils achieved very well in their speaking and listening and personal and social skills, because the lesson planned was a 'real life' situation and pupils were highly motivated.

40. As a result of her work as a leading literacy teacher, the subject leader has been able to bring new ideas back to the school to trial and improve the quality of teaching even further. In her own classroom she leads by example as well as sharing good practice

with the rest of the staff. The subject leader's very good subject knowledge and highly effective checking of all aspects of the subject have enabled her to develop a very good understanding of the strengths and current areas for improvement. These areas are addressed very effectively in whole school action planning and through support for individual teachers. This systematic approach has led to good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in respect of the library resources and the teaching of handwriting throughout the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. Pupils' literacy skills are developed highly effectively across the curriculum. Reading and writing skills are regularly taught through other subjects, whilst pupils are encouraged to use the skills they have learnt in literacy sessions in their writing across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils used what they had learnt in science to write very good story books to share with younger children explaining how rocks changed into soil. Year 5 pupils developed their understanding of how to use open-ended questions to encourage answers when interviewing local residents as part of their World War II history topic.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 achieve particularly well and standards are currently well above average.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and pupils are given good opportunities to apply their mathematics skills to real-life problems.
- The subject is led well and effective action is taken to remedy any weaknesses.
- Sometimes lessons are too long.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects.

Commentary

42. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are particularly able in mathematics, achieve well. In the National Curriculum tests in 2004, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards which were above the national average. In the current Year 6 pupils are achieving standards which are well above average, because nearly all pupils are achieving the expected level and a higher proportion than last year are exceeding it. In the 2004 national assessments in Year 2, pupils achieved average standards. Standards this year are similar, with a smaller than average proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level, and this is a relatively less able group for this school.
43. In the current Year 2, pupils in the higher ability set were helped to understand the links between multiplication and division by the clever use of hoops by the teacher to enclose different groups of pupils. This understanding was also applied well in different contexts, such as "If there are two tables, how many legs are there?" or "If there are fifteen fingers, how many hands?" This skilful introduction of problem-solving by teachers was a feature of lessons throughout the school. For instance, in a lesson in Year 5, lower ability pupils were able to apply their newly acquired understanding of percentages, decimals and fractions, to calculating discounted prices in a shop sale. In Year 6, pupils showed a good understanding of the basic principles of algebra, when they wrote instructions in words and symbols for a game. All pupils make good progress from the level of knowledge and understanding they have when they start at the school. There is no evidence of any significant disparity in the respective achievement of boys and girls.

44. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and plan lessons very well to engage and motivate pupils. Sometimes the tasks set are not always matched closely enough to pupils' known ability. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson, the middle ability group could have completed their independent task more easily if they had had more guidance on how to tackle it. Some lessons are too long and pupils are not moved on to the next stage of learning quickly enough. Occasionally a lack of pace in the teaching does not give pupils sufficient time to complete the task they have been set. In the best lessons, however, teachers have high expectations of pupils and challenge them well. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher gave very clear explanations about replacing words with symbols, which enabled pupils to understand the task they were set and achieve well. In another very good lesson in Year 3 the teacher used an Internet site with a version of the story of the Three Little Pigs to introduce pupils to Venn diagrams. They subsequently had to solve problems using Venn diagrams on the classroom computers. However, computers are not used often enough to aid the development of pupils' mathematical skills.
45. The subject co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. Standards have not always been as high in mathematics as in English but the co-ordinator has analysed where there are weaknesses and taken effective action, for instance by increasing the element of problem solving in teaching. She monitors teaching and learning well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils now make good progress and achieve very good standards in Year 6. A weakness in mental mathematics, which was a key issue at the last inspection, has been fully resolved.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical skills in other subjects. For instance, in ICT pupils make good use of data-handling skills in constructing graphs. They measure carefully in design and technology. In a Year 2 physical education lesson, numeracy skills were developed when pupils counted the number of cones they collected during a warm-up session. Year 6 pupils carried out simple calculations in a German lesson, and, in science, they calculated the growth of bacteria in the throat if the bacteria double every 20 minutes.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well and standards are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are good, with a very good emphasis on developing investigative skills.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

47. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs. Boys and girls and pupils of different abilities make progress at a very similar rate. In the National Curriculum tests in 2004, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards which were well above average. Standards in the current Year 6 are similarly well above average. In the teacher assessments in Year 2 in 2004, all pupils achieved the expected level, but the proportion exceeding it was below average. Standards are average in the current Year 2.

48. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils applied their previously acquired knowledge about the different states of water when learning about the water cycle. They drew satisfactory conclusions from their investigations into 'What happens to puddles?' Written work shows that they have a sound understanding of how the human body changes as it gets older and how materials change when they are heated. They have learned about electricity and planned an investigation into how ice can be melted. Some of their work is also linked well to other topics. For example, they gain an understanding of food decay when they are learning about shops.
49. Although no lessons were observed in Year 6, pupils' written work shows that they have a very good understanding of topics such as electric circuits and dangers to healthy living. They have also carried out good investigations into rocks and minerals and the solar system, using the Internet to find further information. Pupils in Year 5 were observed carrying out an investigation into factors affecting germination. They showed a good understanding of scientific method, helped by the teacher allowing them to plan their own investigation.
50. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have a very good understanding of the subject and introduce pupils well to the methods of scientific enquiry. As a result, pupils in Year 1 are already showing an awareness of the need for a 'fair test'. Teachers place a good emphasis on pupils using appropriate scientific words, and good links are made with literacy, for example when a teacher in Year 5 encouraged pupils to use connectives when writing an account of their investigation into plant germination. Teachers use a wide range of resources to further pupils' understanding, including ICT, for instance consolidating Year 2 pupils' knowledge and understanding of water with a quiz they complete on the computer.
51. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over this responsibility but has a very good understanding of it and plans to continue the previous co-ordinator's effective monitoring of teaching and learning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because good standards of teaching and learning have been maintained and pupils' achievement is consistently good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well in the basic skills of ICT because teaching and learning are consistently good in all classes and all elements of the subject.
- The computer suite and classroom computers are not used to best effect to develop pupils' use of ICT in other subjects.
- The knowledgeable co-ordinator provides a good lead to developments.

Commentary

52. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards in the current Year 2, a relatively less able group, are in line with national expectations. Standards in Year 6 are above the national average. In Years 1 and 2 pupils acquire basic mouse and keyboard skills well and learn how to open and close programs, change the appearance of text, create simple graphs and print their work. In Year 3, pupils learn how to create and send e-

mail. By Year 6, pupils know how to use databases and spreadsheets in different ways to enter and analyse information and produce different graphs. They complete word-processed texts of reasonable length and modify them well in a range of different ways. Many Year 6 pupils have created very interesting computer art using different shapes and effects well. Throughout the school pupils complete a good amount of work covering a wide range of ICT skills.

53. Teaching and learning are good throughout Years 1 to 6. All classes have lessons in basic ICT skills in the computer suite and these are planned and delivered well. Because teachers have good knowledge and prepare interesting activities using good resources, pupils are highly motivated and nearly always successfully complete the tasks set, at a good pace. Pupils work very well in pairs, taking turns and discussing problems and solutions sensibly. For example, pupils in Year 5 made very good gains in understanding how to program traffic lights by creating a set of instructions, running a test and analysing what they could do to improve their work. Lessons in Years 3 and 4 effectively presented challenging tasks, which stretched pupils' thinking skills. This was less successful in the Year 4 lesson simply because the pupils did not read the written instructions carefully enough. Nevertheless, this lesson was effective in reinforcing basic literacy skills and this was also seen in a Year 1 lesson when pupils worked well in using both the computers to create graphs and books to find out about mini-beasts.
54. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and very well organised. There is very good subject action plan. Teachers use pupil self-assessment booklets well to record pupils' progress in knowledge, understanding and skills, although the co-ordinator feels that these could be used more consistently. Resources and the quality of teaching have improved very significantly since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. Although the use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory, this is a significant weakness in the school. Teachers do not use the pupils' good ICT skills and the good resources available often enough in other subjects. There are some good examples of teachers using the interactive whiteboards well, for example in English and history, and of pupils using computers for research, such as in science. However, this does not happen often enough and teachers are clearly not planning systematically the use of the classroom computers and the computer suite, which is under-used, for cross-curricular activities.

HUMANITIES

56. Religious education was inspected in full and is reported on below. **History** and **geography** were sampled and no overall judgements about provision were made. The school enhances its provision in these subjects well through educational visits, and teachers plan effectively to provide first-hand experiences to support pupils' learning. These experiences help to bring the subjects alive and contribute well to developing pupils' understanding of the world around them and of what happened in the past. During the inspection pupils in Year 5 made very good progress in understanding about life during World War II as they interviewed local elderly residents about their experiences and memories. Pupils were highly motivated by the experience that imprinted many facts indelibly on their minds. The examination of a sample of pupils' work indicates that pupils' attainment in both history and geography is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils make good progress when teachers plan activities that allow them to demonstrate their understanding but this is not always the case. In some lessons pupils are capable of making even more progress than they do currently because teachers use inappropriate worksheets that have little impact in moving on pupils' learning and understanding.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because good links are made between different faiths and this deepens their understanding.
- The knowledgeable subject leader supports staff well.
- Whilst teaching overall is good, few opportunities are planned to develop the pupils' understanding of living in multicultural Britain.

Commentary

57. Pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs. Standards are above average in Years 2 and 6. The majority of pupils in all year groups reach the expected levels in the locally agreed syllabus and a good number exceed them. From evidence in lessons, pupils' work and displays around the school, pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the key elements of the main world religions as a result of good teaching. Where teaching is good and better, effective use of questioning by teachers also extends and reinforces the pupils' understanding. Pupils in these lessons are highly motivated and talk animatedly about their learning. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a secure understanding of the similarities and differences between religions and pupils are taught to respect the beliefs and

faiths of others. Teachers are good at planning opportunities for pupils to learn about aspects of other faiths by relating them to the pupils' own experiences. For example, in Year 4 pupils learnt about the importance of rules in school and their own lives whilst finding out about the ten Christian commandments, the five pillars of Islam and the rules that Jewish people observe on the Sabbath.

58. Whilst there is good quality work in pupils' books, much of their learning has come from first-hand experiences, opportunities for discussion and drama. As a result pupils talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about what they have learnt. For example, Year 6 pupils talked confidently about similarities and differences between the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths. This is the consequence of good prior teaching. The knowledgeable subject leader supports staff well, developing resources to help them teach about different faiths. She has made links with other faiths and currently plans visits and visitors that can bring meaning to pupils' learning. However, opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of living in a community along with members of other faiths and cultures are sometimes missed in teachers' planning. The provision was previously judged to be good and this has been maintained.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

59. Music and physical education were inspected in full and are reported on below. Art and design and design and technology were sampled and no overall judgements about provision were made. In **art and design**, standards are above average in drawing, printing and painting. Throughout the school the pupils' art work is displayed well, both enhancing the learning environment and celebrating their success. Pupils in Year 2 have used pencils, crayons and paints to produce striking large portraits of all the school staff. Pupils in Year 3 have used a wide range of observational and drawing skills to produce oil pastel portraits of Boudicca. Some of these include very good detail and interesting effects in the facial features, jewellery and clothing. A strong feature of the art work in this school is that it is highly individualised even when pupils are asked to base their work on a given example by a famous artist. For example, Year 2 pupils looked at several pieces by the Japanese artist Hiroshige before producing pleasing drawings based closely on one specific example.
60. In **design and technology**, pupils throughout the school complete planning and evaluation sheets well, whenever they carry out a 'design and make' project. Year 6 pupils have carried out good investigations into different shelters in terms of the suitability of different materials and the use of different structures. A small number of pupils from different year groups participated in a very exciting project when they designed and made full-size go-karts with family and friends. The finished go-karts were judged by a local motor vehicle expert. This project made a very significant contribution to the pupils' design and technology, numeracy and science skills and their personal development. It also amply illustrates the school's very good partnership with parents and good partnership with the local community.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well, especially in performance skills.

- Teaching and learning in lessons are very good and there are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their interest in music at other times.
- The subject is led very well by two specialist teachers.

Commentary

61. The school is justifiably proud of its very good provision for music and the exceptional contribution it makes to pupils' personal development. This was exemplified during the inspection by a concert held for grandparents, in which pupils played a wide range of instruments, including clarinet, flute, guitar and piano, and the large choir performed a version of the 'Pied Piper of Hamelin'. The concentration and sense of achievement displayed by even the youngest pupils taking part were just reward for all the effort put into teaching and preparing them. Musical performances and concerts are a regular part of the school's calendar, as are visits from musicians, including an African group. Pupils also go out into the local community to perform, for instance at Lichfield Cathedral. All pupils learn to play the recorder in Year 1, and there are plans for all pupils in Year 4 to learn the keyboard. In addition to instrumental lessons in brass, strings and woodwind, provided free to pupils, there are regular choir and recorder groups out of school time. Pupils also sing well in assemblies and hymn practices because of the very good lead they are given.
62. Class teaching is by two specialist teachers, one for Years 1 and 2 and the other for Years 3 to 6. Their very good knowledge and understanding of the subject mean that pupils learn very well in the sometimes short lessons. In a lesson observed in Year 1 pupils quickly progressed to playing 'Au Clair de la Lune' on the recorder through the clear instructions they were given, and also sang the song and played the tune 'Pease Pudding Hot', having just learned to play an additional note. In another very good lesson in Year 4 the teacher introduced pupils to the idea of music conveying mood by their listening to a piece called 'Spooky Spinney', discussing the various elements with them, and then giving pupils the opportunity to create their own piece of music with tambourines, to reflect a chosen mood. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 enjoyed an excellent session at Blythe Bridge High School, where they used computers to compose music with a rondo structure. Because of the very good teaching they receive, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well and standards are at least above average throughout the school.
63. The subject is led and managed very well. The two specialist teachers work very well together in ensuring that all pupils have access to high quality teaching. They also manage the extra-curricular provision very well to involve a large number of pupils. They are trialling an assessment system which will enable them to track pupils' progress through the school. High standards of teaching and learning have been maintained since the last inspection. Improvement has been good.

Physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- There is very good specialist teaching.
- There are very good opportunities for extra-curricular sport.

Commentary

64. The school provides the full range of physical education activities. There is good provision for pupils to learn to swim in Year 3 and the great majority meet or exceed the expected standard. During the inspection it was only possible to observe games lessons. In Year 2 pupils showed the expected level for their age in throwing and catching skills. Pupils in Year 6 were well above the expected level when participating in exercises and games of rounders. Pupils make good progress and achieve well, including those with special educational needs.
65. The quality of teaching by the specialist teacher is very good. She teaches every class in the school and pupils in Years 1 and 2 also have one lesson with their class teacher. In the lesson with Year 6 pupils, the teacher's excellent management of the class ensured that the time available was used very well to develop batting skills and practise them in a game of rounders. Very clear instruction and demonstration were used, as well as individual coaching, and pupils worked very well in pairs. In the only lesson observed with a non-specialist teacher, teaching was good. Pupils in Year 2 were organised well as they practised their fielding skills. The teacher offered good tips to individuals but there was no general teaching to enable pupils to develop their skills further in this lesson before they were involved in a game, which was explained clearly and which they enjoyed.
66. The subject is led and managed very well by the specialist teacher. She has observed other teachers as well as modelling lessons for them. Class teaching is enriched by extra-curricular clubs in a wide range of sporting activities, including netball, football, rounders, cricket and gymnastics. Pupils receive specialist coaching, for instance from Stoke City Football Club. They take part successfully in inter-school sporting events. The school also celebrates pupils' sporting achievements outside school in its assemblies. The school was given the Activemark Gold Award for sport in 2004. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection, and improvement has been good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school plans its teaching programme very well, with links made to many subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils are extremely well prepared for the responsibilities of living in a community.

Commentary

67. Elements of personal, social and health education are embedded in the planning in other curriculum subjects. Pupils learn, for instance, about a healthy life style in science, about co-operation and fair play in physical education, and about teamwork in geography. There are specific citizenship lessons on such topics as responsibilities and choice, and good provision is made for pupils to learn about sex and relationships and awareness of the misuse of drugs. Pupils' personal and social development is supported very well in assemblies, where the importance of 'pupil smart' skills are reinforced and the headteacher and all staff praise those positive attitudes and behaviour that make the pupils valued members of the Meir Heath community.

68. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to take responsibilities such as jobs within their own classrooms, participation in Years 3 to 6 in the school council and the role of prefect in Year 6. These are developed and nurtured by all staff so that by the time pupils reach Year 6 they take their role as school prefect very seriously, helping younger children, all staff and visitors to the school. In a very good assembly prefects were able to explain that being responsible sometimes means having to make hard choices and to make sacrifices. As a result of the consistent approach to teaching throughout the school and in every aspect of the curriculum, pupils achieve very well and are very effectively prepared for the next stages of their education and to be responsible citizens of the future.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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