

# INSPECTION REPORT

**MOBBERLEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VOLUNTARY  
CONTROLLED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Mobberley

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111277

Headteacher: Mrs S Greensides

Lead inspector: Mrs B Magson

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 267335

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary Controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 103

School address: Church Lane  
Mobberley  
Knutsford  
Cheshire

Postcode: WA16 7RA

Telephone number: 01565 873242

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs H Mountney

Date of previous inspection: April 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small primary school situated in the rural village of Mobberley in Cheshire, admitting pupils aged from 4 to 11 years, from the parish of St Wilfrid's and surrounding districts. Social indicators are mostly above average and very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Movement of families in and out of the area is above average. All pupils are of white, British origin. In September 2004, pupil numbers increased significantly when a nearby village school closed. Currently there are 60 infant and 43 junior pupils on roll, with similar numbers of boys and girls overall. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are taught in mixed age classes. There are 19 children in the reception class, admitted at the start of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. On entry attainment is average. By the start of the National Curriculum in Year 1 most pupils exceed the Early Learning Goals expected for their age. Pupils identified with special educational needs are below average overall, although there are higher than average numbers in Years 5 and 6. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is very low. A small number of pupils in each year group are identified as gifted and talented. There have been considerable changes in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection, including the appointment of three permanent headteachers and an acting headteacher. In this school year, there has also been a significant increase in staffing, due to the rise in pupil numbers.

The school has gained the Cheshire's 'Healthy Schools' award for each of the last three years.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18143	Bernice Magson	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Design and technology Religious education
13723	Jean Overend	Lay inspector	
18370	Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Information and communication technology Art and design
33022	Jeff McCann	Team inspector	English as an additional language Science Geography History Music Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school** providing a good quality of education for its pupils. Standards are above average overall. There is very good teaching and learning and leadership and management. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in reading and writing are well above average by Year 2;
- The personal development of pupils is very good and they have very mature attitudes to work by Year 6;
- Teaching is of a very good quality;
- Assessment systems are used very effectively to track pupils' progress and provide them with very good advice about how to improve further;
- There are many very good learning opportunities to enrich the curriculum;
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good.

There has been a very good rate of improvement since the last inspection. All the key issues have been addressed. Governance of the school has improved significantly and there is very good monitoring of pupils' progress by the headteacher, key staff and subject managers. Systems for the assessment of pupils are very good. Standards have improved in information and communication technology (ICT) by Year 6, and in reading, writing, mathematics and science by Year 2. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved to very good levels.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* indicates a result in the bottom 5 per cent.*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils' achievement is very good**, including those pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented. Currently standards are above average by Year 2 and average by Year 6. Care must be taken when interpreting test results, as the numbers of pupils in each year group are small and the performance of one or two pupils can affect results. The test results of junior pupils are also influenced by above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs and higher than average levels of mobility. Nevertheless, in 2004 the rate of improvement of Year 6 pupils was much greater than nationally. Increasing numbers of pupils attained the higher levels in English and mathematics. Strategies to support less able pupils were effective in raising their attainment. In Year 2, the rate of improvement is greater than nationally over time, particularly in writing where standards are well above average. However, as a consequence of the under performance of one pupil in 2004, results were below average in mathematics. Inspection findings are of above average

standards overall by Year 2 and well above average in reading and writing. Inspectors judge standards by Year 6 to be average overall. Children in reception achieve very well and the great majority exceed the goals expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. Their most marked achievement is in their personal, social and emotional development, where many children are in line to well exceed national expectations.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** Relationships are very good between pupils and staff. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. Attitudes to learning are very good. Attendance and punctuality are average overall. A small number of pupils are persistently late, missing some parts of lessons.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are very good.** Very good lesson planning, based on precise assessment information, ensures that all pupils are challenged rigorously. The needs of higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are given very good consideration and suitable tasks are provided to make their learning meaningful. Teachers use a very good range of teaching methods and maintain a very good pace, so that pupils sustain their interest well and have very good attitudes to their work. Support staff give very good support to pupils. In the reception class, the teacher has an excellent understanding of how young children learn and she provides an excellent range of activities to encourage and engage them.

There is a good curriculum, enriched through a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. A skills approach to learning has been developed, incorporating all subjects. Pupils use specialist skills in a variety of situations to consolidate knowledge and develop their innovative ideas. The curriculum provides pupils with a very good grounding in literacy and numeracy. Residential and day visits offer opportunities for focused work, for example in writing development for Year 2 pupils. Staff are very effective in promoting pupils' personal development through sensitive and pertinent discussion of relevant issues. Links with other schools and colleges further extend learning, especially in sport. Very good support provided by parents extends children's learning in the home.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good overall.** The headteacher has a very good vision and provides the school with a very clear sense of direction. There is now a good stability and consistency in decision making and strategic planning is proving very effective. The school has a very effective system for evaluating its performance. The recent and significant increase in staffing and pupil numbers has been managed very well. New arrangements are becoming embedded successfully. Governance of the school is good overall. Statutory duties are fulfilled and good attention is given to racial equality. Key staff and subject managers work together well and are very effective in monitoring their subjects and in tracking pupils' progress.

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

Parents and pupils hold very positive views of the school. Parents of the newly arrived pupils commented on how well they have settled and are happy in school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

There are no significant weaknesses for the school to address. The inspection team judges the priorities in the school improvement plan to be appropriate.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve very well. Standards are above average by Year 2 and average by Year 6.

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

- Standards in reading and writing are well above average by Year 2;
- Pupils' performance has improved in English, mathematics and science by Year 6 and more pupils are attaining the higher Level 5.

#### **Commentary**

1. When children join the school in the reception class attainment varies considerably, but overall it is average. Children achieve very well and by the time they enter Year 1 they have exceeded well above expected levels in their personal, social and emotional development and above expectations in all other areas of learning. They are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.1 (15.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.8 (15.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.6 (17.3)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The trend of improvement by Year 2 pupils is greater than that seen nationally over a five year period. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection. Inspectors judge standards average in speaking and listening, well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics and science. Care must be taken in interpreting results in national tests because of small numbers. For example, in 2004, the dip in mathematics scores was as a consequence of the underperformance of one pupil. Nevertheless, pleasing results in writing were attained by Year 2 when twice as many pupils attained the higher Level 3 as nationally. In science, there were good gains in performance at Levels 2 and 3. The school has analysed their test results because of a dip in the performance of higher attaining pupils in reading and mathematics. Teachers are focusing on developing pupils' comprehension skills in reading and problem solving activities in mathematics and it is predicted that increased numbers will achieve the higher levels in 2005.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (24.8)	26.9 (26.8)

mathematics	27.0 (25.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.8 (27.5)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. By the age of 11, pupils are attaining average standards in English, mathematics and science, similar to the last inspection. Although the trend of improvement over time is below the national trend, the steep decline in 2002 has been arrested and continuous improvements have taken place in all core subjects. In 2004, pupils' improvements in performance was much greater than nationally. Inspectors agree with the school's predictions that standards will improve further in 2005, with increased numbers of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics. Strategies to support less able pupils are proving effective in raising their attainment in all core subjects. However, care must be taken in predicting results in national tests, as significant factors have adversely influenced the results of Year 6 pupils over time. These include significant numbers of pupils with special educational needs and above average pupil mobility.
4. In the infant and junior classes, there are differences in the performances of boys and girls but there is no consistent pattern over time. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, because of the quality of monitoring and support they receive. Gifted and talented pupils achieve very well because of additional, challenging activities appropriate to their needs.
5. In ICT, standards are improving rapidly and are now average by Years 2 and 6. Increased resources are providing pupils with many more opportunities to practise skills regularly. Pupils now use ICT skills confidently in other subjects. Research skills are good. Pupils make good use of ICT in the home as a means of recording school based tasks. There is an increased use of the digital camera to record achievements and for assessment.
6. Standards are above average in history, design and technology and music by Year 2, and average in art and design by Years 2 and 6. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of other major faiths.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Despite the best efforts of the school, a small minority of pupils are persistently late.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils are eager to learn and by Year 6 they have very responsible and mature attitudes;
- All pupils enjoy school and are happily settled;
- Very good relationships underpin the work of the school;
- The provision for pupils' personal development is of a very high order.

### **Commentary**

7. Parents are rightly proud of their children's very positive approach to learning. They rise to the challenge of the very good teaching and work very hard to succeed. All children enjoy coming to school, because they say they like their teachers and enjoy

the friendships they make. Pupils who have joined the school from Ashley are very well integrated and consider themselves part of Mobberley School. A very small number of parents expressed some concern over bullying, but pupils are confident that on the rare instances when it occurs it is dealt with very quickly and effectively. Behaviour in the classroom, lunch hall and in assemblies is of a very high order and pupils are very polite and respectful to visitors, staff and each other. Play at lunchtime can be boisterous but is not aggressive.

8. The school promotes spiritual development well. Prayers are said at set times of the day and visits to St Wilfrid's Church gives the children experience of praise and worship. Well planned assemblies provide opportunities for reflection and are used well to boost children's self-esteem by celebrating their achievements. 'Review Time' and 'Circle Time' are used to help the children express their feelings and to learn to understand themselves and their own progress better.
9. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. All staff apply the behaviour policy consistently, so pupils' understanding of right and wrong is reinforced throughout the day. The rapid amalgamation of the two schools is testimony to the staff helping the children handle change very well. Pupils are given very good opportunities to negotiate both class rules and their own targets of improvement.
10. Social development is also promoted very well, with children receiving many age appropriate responsibilities. These include older children looking after younger ones. School council members spend their budget for the good of all and are responsible for representing other's views. They planned and ran fund raising activities for the victims of the Tsunami disaster. The children work together in many social settings as part of the House system, groups, pairs and in teams in inter-school tournaments. The very popular residential activities at Beeston and Winmarleigh Hall contribute very effectively to pupils' independence and team building skills. There is a very wide range of after school and lunch clubs, which extend pupils' social experiences very well.
11. The provision for cultural development is good overall, with pupils' learning of their own culture being a stronger feature than their knowledge of the other cultures in Britain today. The school regularly joins in local events and the link to the local churches helps children be aware of their own historical and religious heritage. The very wide range of clubs, visits and visitors raise awareness of their own culture and the wider community. Pupils appreciated the work of a local artist who worked with them to make the willow sculptures for the playground. The curriculum is being used to help children appreciate cultures from around the world. They study a range of other religions in religious education lessons. Children have enjoyed Indian and African art, celebrated the Chinese New Year and they have had dance workshops for both Russian and Latin American dance.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	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.*

12. Attendance has fallen to just below the national average. A significant number of parents take their children on holiday in term time, even though the school has explained the adverse effect of this on children's progress. While most pupils are punctual, a small number of families persistently arrive late, affecting the efficient start of the school day in some classes.



## **Exclusions**

13. There have been no exclusions in the last school year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching, learning and assessment are very good. There is a good curriculum, enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. There are very good links with parents and with other schools and colleges. Community links are good, especially with the local church.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment of pupils' work is very good overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning in English and mathematics and in the Foundation Stage is consistently very good;
- Lessons have a very good balance between direct teaching and investigative experiences;
- For all pupils, learning tasks are challenging and rigorous because very good use is made of assessment information;
- There is a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development, including their 'study skills'.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	6	13	2	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

14. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now of a very good quality. A scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them confirms this judgement. During the inspection, the quality of teaching varied but was mostly good or better. More than a third of all lessons seen were very good or better. Three lessons were judged to be of an excellent quality. These were in language lessons in the reception class and Year 2, and in a mathematics lesson in a mixed class of Years 5 and 6. The two satisfactory lessons, both in Key Stage 2, were given by less experienced teachers, including a visiting specialist. No lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory.
15. In the reception class, the teacher has an excellent understanding of how young children learn and she provides an excellent range of opportunities, which challenge and engage them. Throughout the day, children are engrossed in learning through investigation and exploration or in direct teaching activities. Learning is made to be fun. In a 'supermarket dash' children learn the names of three-dimensional shapes, or they recall the sequence of a journey in a repetitive game of 'What shall I see?' A very good emphasis is given to the development of personal and social skills. In 'Mobberley station' children play co-operatively as they issue tickets for the train or as they engage in a game of 'follow my leader' stepping into, and using, cardboard boxes as trains on a line. The teacher has very high expectations and all children respond very well to her requests. Intervention strategies are used sensitively as necessary but there is a strong commitment to developing children's independence.

Support staff, the graduate teacher and voluntary helpers make a very good contribution to the learning experiences by supporting teachers and encouraging children very effectively. Continuous assessment in lessons helps to maintain the rigour and vivacity in teaching and learning. Although not yet fully embedded, there is a new and good system for children to record their activities and decide their levels of enjoyment.

16. Assessment arrangements are very good in the Foundation Stage. The teacher involves parents and carers very successfully and has a very good understanding of children's attainment on entry, can measure progress accurately and predict targets for the end of the reception year. Children's own targets for handwriting and behaviour are in a long line of little people, strung across the classroom at child height. Children love them and many are beginning to understand that they have control of their learning and are eager to please.
17. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good or better. Both teachers are newly appointed in this school year but they have developed effective teaching styles, consistent with school policies. This is a result of a very good induction programme. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good, which is effective in developing pupils' confidence in an atmosphere of trust and honesty. In the excellent lesson in Year 2, there was very good planning, which built very effectively on what the children already knew and skilfully incorporated links with other subjects. To help pupils improve their writing, the teacher stated 'If I open the window, the room gets cold' to help pupils to understand the notion of cause and effect and then, to clarify the learning, she asked pupils to identify factors of cause and effect in the Great Fire of London. The lesson had a very good pace, with very efficient use of time targets to give rigour to the activities. In both Years 1 and 2, tasks are appropriate to pupils' abilities, with adult help provided when necessary. The use of ICT is aiding teaching and learning very effectively. Pupils enjoy the visual aspect of learning, through the use of interactive whiteboards, and are competent in using the technology when working independently. Assessment information has enabled teachers to measure pupils' progress very well and introduce a very good range of intervention strategies to pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties.
18. In the two mixed aged classes, which include pupils of Years 3 to 6, the teaching is good overall. In Years 5 and 6, the teaching is very successful because the teacher knows the pupils very well. She skilfully promotes and achieves very good relationships between pupils, even though there has been an above average level of pupil mobility. Standards of personal development are well above average and pupils have mature attitudes to learning. This is because the teacher has very high expectations of them. She expects tolerance and teaches the value of the contribution of all participants. She is a very good role model. No time is wasted in lessons. The teacher questions adeptly, asking 'How do you know?', and challenging pupils continuously and at various levels of difficulty appropriate to their needs. Pupils respond very well to her high expectations, using technical terms with accuracy and confidence. The teacher of a class of Years 3 and 4 pupils is newly appointed and is developing effective teaching styles. His keen interest in sport is helping to engage pupils and promote co-operative learning. Support staff are well trained and clear in their roles. There is good use of ICT in many lessons for research and recording. For example, Year 6 pupils are preparing a PowerPoint presentation on the Sacraments as part of a religious education topic.
19. Pupils with special educational needs are usually taught in groups within a whole class. Suitable work is planned to meet their specific needs and they are taught very skilfully. Well managed support is given by teaching assistants. Sometimes groups are withdrawn for more focused work to boost specific skills, such as spelling. The quality of teaching observed in group work was very good.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. There are very good opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning. Learning resources are good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Innovative approaches help to provide an effective curriculum;
- There are very good opportunities for enrichment, particularly in sport;
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is very good;
- There is very good provision for pupils with additional learning needs;
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.

## **Commentary**

20. The school provides a rich and worthwhile curriculum, which helps all pupils to achieve very well. The principles of 'Excellence and Enjoyment' (recent DfES guidance) have been fully embraced to make learning across subjects more meaningful. There is added purpose to pupils' work, in the way they apply the skills they learn in one subject to achieve work of good quality in others. This culminates in very well presented pupils' books, where literacy, ICT, history and art and design, for example, are drawn together under one theme. The level of skills applied are assessed by the teachers. Current results show much promise.
21. The school places much emphasis on pupils gaining first-hand learning experiences to stimulate learning. To that end, a very good range of activities is arranged. Visitors to the school include artists in residence, dance troupes, musicians and poets. Representatives from organisations who help disabled people or talk about healthy lifestyles promote pupils' personal development and their self-awareness. There are visits to places of interest, such as the Science Museum, a Victorian Mill and the theatre. Residential trips provide pupils with much valued support for their learning, as they learn ICT skills or outdoor pursuits. Good links with a local sports college help to foster pupils' interest in sport. There is a very good range of opportunities outside of lesson time whereby pupils can improve their skills. Pupils have the chance to apply these in soccer, rounders, netball, swimming and cross country tournaments with other schools. Sports teams also compete in local leagues.
22. Pupils' personal development is very well provided for. There is a very well planned programme of work, which takes account of personal safety, misuse of drugs and other substances, and sex and relationships. These are taught to an appropriate level to each age group. Aspects of citizenship are also dealt with in the way pupils are given responsibilities around the school, including the opportunity to represent others as members of the school council.
23. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs. Individual learning plans are very good. They identify precisely the particular needs of the pupils and give very clear guidance on teaching strategies and success criteria. Plans are annotated to record pupils' progress and reviewed regularly, so that pupils progress to the next steps of learning. Assessment of special needs provision is thorough and constructive and provides a very clear picture of each pupil's development. Pupils who have particular strengths are identified and they are supported well. All staff are aware of pupils' individual gifts and talents and seek opportunities for them, both in and out of school. Some Year 6 pupils, for example,

attend mathematics sessions on Saturdays run by the local authority, whilst during the inspection a Year 6 pupil played the piano for school assemblies.

24. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The curriculum is in line with recommendations for children of reception age. It has a very good balance between child-initiated activities and direct teaching. Activities follow a central theme and are promoted through a 'study skills' approach. Children practice and improve skills in a range of activities, culminating in a study book of completed work involving all areas of learning. Very good use is made of the outdoor area. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, allowing greater opportunities for meaningful play. Despite the best efforts of staff it is difficult to provide continuous access to water play. This is currently not possible in the reception class.
25. Due to the influx of pupils from the school that closed, some shared areas have been redesignated. This has resulted in the school losing a well appointed library, making books less accessible for younger pupils. The area allocated for administration is sufficient, although very confined.
26. Overall, the school has made very good progress since the previous inspection, particularly in provision for ICT and music. Planning ensures that subjects as well as literacy and numeracy have a sufficiently high profile, so the breadth and balance of the curriculum has improved. Learning resources are good, with significant improvements in those for ICT and special educational needs.

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

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. Very good support, advice and guidance is offered to pupils, which is an improvement since the last inspection. There is very good involvement of pupils in the life, work and development of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good assessment systems which are used very well to meet pupils' needs;
- Pupils are given a very good understanding of how to improve;
- Relationships throughout the school are very good and staff know the children very well;
- Children with special educational needs and those designated gifted and talented are very well supported;
- The school consults with, and listens to, pupils very well;
- Induction into the school and transition are very well considered.

### **Commentary**

27. The new staff and pupils have settled very well into the school, and parents and pupils are confident that the teachers are very caring and concerned about their children's welfare. Care of pupils is well organised, including thorough child protection procedures. Very good relationships enable pupils to take their concerns to staff. The school is situated on a site free from graffiti and vandalism and is very well maintained. All relevant health and safety documentation is in place, up-to-date regulations met and the school makes good use of expertise available from governors and the local authority. Staff regularly use risk assessments and are aware of those children with special medical needs. The school places a strong

emphasis on teaching children how to keep safe and is encouraging them to adopt long-term healthy practices, having achieved the Cheshire's 'Healthy Schools' award for the last three years.

28. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' progress. This information is used very well to determine content of lessons and for setting individual and group targets for pupils. Through understanding their targets and clear lesson objectives pupils know how to improve. Traffic light colours are used in lessons as a means of self-review, to help teachers know how pupils feel about the learning. Support staff are used very well to meet the needs of pupils and so that pupils with specific needs can make very good progress. The school also provides very well for children designated gifted and talented, both in class and using cluster group events to extend their experiences.



29. Parents are very happy with the induction process into the reception class. There are very good procedures to help children settle quickly and to facilitate a two-way flow of information between parents and the school. The procedures for induction into the school at other times have proved to be very effective with children from the recently closed school. Extra social events were arranged for both children and adults, including a September barbecue. One local parent arranged walks around Mobberley to help Ashley parents get to know the area. Children's views are listened to in 'Circle Time' and 'Review Time', as well as through the day. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have resolution boards on which they can write any concerns or issues which they feel should be discussed by the school council. The school council not only gives pupil experience of democracy and citizenship, but gives an opportunity for all of them to have their views aired, valued and acted upon.

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

The school maintains very good links with parents. Links with other schools and colleges are very good and have improved since the last inspection. Links with the community are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents show a very high level of satisfaction with the school, because it consults and values their views very highly;
- Parents are enabled to make a significant contribution to learning, both at school and at home;
- Links with the local churches impact positively on learning;
- Very good links with other schools and colleges enrich the curriculum and enhance staff development opportunities.

### **Commentary**

30. Parents' questionnaires show a very high degree of satisfaction with the school, particularly with the leadership and management, approachability and the induction process. A range of well presented information is provided for parents on day-to-day matters, including newsletters and the school website. Topic information is provided and curriculum afternoons are held, where parents understand better how to help their children in activities such as reading. Many parents help out in the classroom and there is an active association through which parents can help the school. Very good use is made of the homework partnership, providing parents with more opportunities to help their children. Parents are regularly consulted and their ideas acted upon if appropriate. An example of this is the new staggered intake to reception, which was asked for by parents. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept very well involved in their children's learning. Annual reports on each child's progress contain very helpful next steps for learning, although they do not clearly indicate the degree of progress made in each subject.
31. The school is outward looking and regularly participates in local events, such as the 'Rose Queen' and the 'Clean up Mobberley' campaign. Good links exist to local businesses, particularly for fund raising events. Very good use is made of visits and visitors, such as the visit to Manchester airport or to St Wilfrid's Church. The church links have remained strong during the current interregnum, through governor and parent representation, and these impact well on school life and on learning.

32. The playgroup visit regularly and curriculum links are being established with reception, so that there is a very positive start to school life for the youngest children. There are very good links with the local cluster of schools for inter-school sports and regular transition visits to the high school. Each year pupils look forward to the residential visit held between the local primaries. These links also provide staff with enhanced opportunities for professional development. Additionally, the school has linked to a local cluster of schools to benefit from the developing 'gifted and talented' programme of events. The school is involved with a local University in the initial training of new teachers, through the graduate training programme.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good. Governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has excellent skills, which enable her to manage change skilfully, inspire staff and governors and create effective teams;
- Very good self-evaluation and strategic planning guide school improvement;
- There is a shared commitment to raising standards and clear vision for the future of the school among all stakeholders.

### **Commentary**

33. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced significant changes in its leadership and management, including the appointment of 3 permanent and a temporary headteacher, and changes in the governing body. The current headteacher has led and managed the school very well, both in a temporary capacity and since her permanent appointment. She gives a very good sense of direction to the school and is providing very good stability. Skilfully, she has created effective staff and governor teams who manage the school's development very well, with openness and honesty. In analysing the school priorities, there is a very strong and collective commitment to the development of the school's aims and objectives.
34. Over time, there has been significant improvement in the governance of the school to above average levels. All key recommendations of the previous report have been addressed very well. Governors are very loyal to the school and supportive of the headteacher. Through their committee structure, they monitor standards and analyse assessment data, in conjunction with the headteacher. At the end of each school year priorities are judged against agreed success criteria. The views of parents are sought to better inform governors' decisions. Governors are involved in the school's system for evaluating its performance and suitable suggestions for development are incorporated into the improvement plan. Financial planning is very good, strategically planned and matched carefully to perceived needs, as in the development of an outdoor learning environment for the youngest children.
35. Monitoring of the work of the school has improved over time, in response to recommendations in the previous report. All staff are involved in monitoring standards and identifying subject strengths and weaknesses. Each term, co-ordinators undertake a scrutiny of books and other evidence. Lesson observations

take place, including peer observations. Very good use is made of assessment data to track pupils' progress. Additional monitoring by the headteacher and key staff help to identify professional needs of teachers and support staff as part of a very effective process of performance management. Governors also participate in monitoring through discussions with co-ordinators about the curriculum. There is a keenness about 'Excellence and Enjoyment' all stakeholders wish to inculcate into the curriculum, especially through the 'study skills' approach. Rigorous monitoring by staff and governors is broadening the curriculum and is instrumental in helping to raise standards.

36. The school development plan is a very good document. It is based on co-ordinator's action plans and whole school self-evaluation, and it has an honest interpretation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a strong focus on raising standards and also in developing pupils to be mature citizens. The plan's usefulness is under constant review, with appropriate changes made to the process as necessary. For example, timing of the annual review of priorities is to change to follow the publication and analysis of test results.
37. The co-ordination of special educational needs provision and the Foundation Stage is very good. It has improved considerably in both areas since the previous inspection. Both co-ordinators have good specialist expertise and are effective in their roles. The needs of pupils are carefully considered and monies are used efficiently to improve provision. Resources are now good and pupil achievements are rigorously monitored in the classroom, where teachers have a greater awareness, ensuring that pupils' specific needs are reflected in planning. For pupils with special learning needs outside support is sought as necessary, with parents fully involved in any decision making.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	196,539	Balance from previous year	15,272
Total expenditure	191,298	Balance carried forward to the next	20,183
Expenditure per pupil	2,333		

38. Financial management of the school is very good. Funds are used wisely according to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Best value decisions are assured through careful checks and monitoring of performance. Following the recent changes in pupil numbers, staffing and organisation of the school, the governors are mindful to preserve a budget surplus to ensure staffing levels are maintained at current levels. Further budget monies are likely in response to the significant increase in staffing and pupil numbers.

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

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

- The teacher has an excellent understanding of how young children learn;
- A vibrant learning environment provides many exciting opportunities for discovery and exploration by young children;
- Based on very good assessment information children are challenged rigorously in all lessons;
- There is very good teamwork among all staff with a strong commitment to engage all children in the learning process;
- Co-ordination of provision in the Foundation Stage is very good.

#### **Commentary**

39. Children enter reception in September, at the start of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. This school year, as a consequence of the increase in pupil numbers, there is a class dedicated to Foundation Stage children. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 Foundation Stage children in school. Previously, most children have had playgroup or nursery experiences and their attainment on entry is average.
40. The quality of teaching and learning are very good in all areas of learning and, as a result, children achieve very well. The teacher has very high expectations and she is excellent in challenging and engaging children in the learning process. In all lessons, learning takes place at a rapid rate. A very good use of teaching methods ensures children remain on task and are eager to please. Relationships are very good. Skilful questioning ensures all children are able to participate in class, group or individual activities. The teacher explains her expectations very clearly and manages children very effectively. There is a shared understanding of teaching methods among support staff and they are very effective in supporting the teacher and children.
41. Assessment procedures are very good. The children's achievements are closely monitored and the information gathered is used effectively to set the next steps in learning. Children have individual targets in handwriting and some in behaviour. These are displayed centrally, so that children are more aware of their responsibilities in managing their own development. Annual reports are satisfactory but are currently under review to find a more suitable style.
42. Accommodation and learning resources are good overall. The recently developed outdoor learning environment has enhanced provision greatly, especially in providing more opportunities for independent learning. Despite the best efforts of staff, the lack of wet play provision creates some difficulties in organisation.

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

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

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children attain well above average standards.

## Commentary

43. In all lessons, very good attention is given to promoting children's personal, social and emotional development. The teacher is very successful and, by the end of the reception year, all children have attained standards well above those expected for their age. The teacher is a very good role model and she is effective in encouraging in children an understanding of the needs of others. Children copy her example; they are polite and well mannered and collaborate well together. They are very well behaved, have positive relationships with others and very good attitudes to learning.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading and writing skills are systematically and effectively taught.

## Commentary

44. On entry to school, children have average standards for their age in speaking and listening, reading and writing. All adults ensure that there is a good emphasis on the development of language and communication skills among children and they are achieving very well. They are encouraged to communicate their ideas in speech, role play and in writing. The teacher has given good attention to developing children's listening skills and, currently, children have started on identifying the middle sounds in three letter words, an above average activity for their age. Children enjoy listening to sounds and playing games of 'I spy'. Equally, in writing activities there are good levels of enjoyment and concentration, both in direct teaching activities and independently at a writing table. All children can identify and write their name. They understand that writing conveys a message and now more able children are writing short sentences about their experiences in their own writing journals. Children are beginning to learn about the sequence of events in a story plot. Story reading and book making are given a very good prominence each day. Most children have a love of literature and are enthralled in the development of stories. Standards are above expected levels by Year 1.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematical skills are promoted in a wide and varied range of activities across all aspects of the curriculum.

## Commentary

45. The mathematical development of children is very good and they achieve well to attain above average standards by the end of the reception year. The teacher is very skilful in using opportunities to extend mathematical understanding, both in planned activities and in incidental situations. At the start of the day, children

improve their understanding of 'one more' and 'one less' as collectively they make two towers to show the numbers of children having dinners and sandwiches. With skill, the teacher introduces the concept of fairness in measuring, as children look for the longest tower and, with the teacher's help, ensure that the starting point is the same. Knowledge of number bonds is good overall. One higher attaining child counted competently to 15 by matching one-to-one in counting the unifix blocks in the tower. Another less able pupil was successful and gained in confidence as he counted three blocks in the smaller tower. Most children can now match five objects to the number 5. In singing about 'Five little seeds', they were competent in taking one away and calculating the remainder. Almost all children can name simple two-dimensional shapes and many are learning to distinguish the difference between these shapes and others which are three-dimensional. Lesson planning shows a good link to the topic theme, as children are challenged to sort different types of tickets as part of activities relating to a steam train journey in the Churnet Valley.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are given time to explore in well planned activities, both in the classroom and through learning out of doors.

### **Commentary**

46. Children are curious to learn and confident in their explorations and investigations. From average attainment on entry they achieve well and, by the end of the reception year, their knowledge and understanding is above expectations for their age. In the lively and exciting classroom are a wide range of activities in which the teacher gives good attention to developing children's skills of observation, speech and communication. Around the classroom are exploratory tasks which are arranged with differing degrees of difficulty, but which include an interest level for all pupils. Children are encouraged to observe changes carefully, such as watching for some chickens to hatch in an incubator and watching how others feed as they grow and develop.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teacher has established a safe and challenging environment for physical development, while promoting independence and responsibility.

### **Commentary**

47. Opportunities for physical play are popular with children and they consistently attain well above average standards. One child expressed pleasure about using the outdoor activities. His best thing is 'digging in the sandpit all the way to the white bit (the liner).' In the daily timetable the teacher provides well planned activities which incorporate direct teaching of physical skills and also independent play. Good links are made between activities. For example, creating a dinosaur garden in the sandpit was linked with the question of the day about 'What may they see on a journey?' At

other times children enjoy playing with balls, climbing and sliding on large equipment or playing with wheeled toys. The teacher continuously promotes their personal, social and emotional skills, describing opportunities for more robust play as instrumental in their development. Children make good progress in developing their skills with equipment. Already almost all children can cut out accurately and when completing jigsaws they show good dexterity.



## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's creative development helps to promote spiritual and cultural understanding.

### **Commentary**

48. Children are achieving well and standards are above expectations for their age. There is a good emphasis on a 'study skills' approach to learning, engaging children in their creative development through a focused theme over a half term period. A topic on 'Bears' has involved sketching old and new bears, making a card teddy with movable arms and legs, designing a repetitive pattern and sewing a simple quilt for teddy. With adult help, their work is collated in study books and these are of an extremely high standard. There is good evidence of how children are learning to use tools and various materials. For example, in making and decorating Chinese lanterns they used pastels well for their age and, in a giant collage they worked with card, various papers and glue on canvas to complete work in the style of Joan Miro. When children used a magic paint program in ICT they used colour and shape effectively to make pictures. They are gaining quickly in confidence when developing their own ideas. Most children concentrate well for long periods of time, persevering in their use of tools and with an increasing understanding of how to improve their work. In role play, they co-operate well with others, such as in the 'Mobberley station'.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in reading and writing are well above expectation at the end of Year 2;
- Pupils throughout the school achieve very well;
- Teaching is very good overall;
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good;
- Planned opportunities for speaking and listening could be improved in some classes.

### **Commentary**

49. Decisive and energetic leadership in English has brought about improved standards. Since the previous inspection, the teaching of phonics has improved. Teachers have been trained in the use of new resources. There has been a restructuring of the timetable so that the basic reading and writing skills are taught at the beginning of each day. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and modelled good practice. The outcome of these measures is that well above expected standards in reading and writing are achieved in Year 2. Although standards in writing in Year 6 are likely to remain broadly average in the 2005 national tests, a higher proportion of pupils are well placed to achieve above the expected level. The full impact of the measures

taken to improve reading and writing standards has not yet worked through the whole school. Staffing difficulties, prior to the current headteacher's appointment, have exacerbated this. Test results have also been influenced by above average levels of pupil mobility and by a significant proportion of pupils who have additional learning needs. Nevertheless, the consistently good or better quality of teaching is having a very strong impact on pupils' achievement and the rising trend in standards is likely to continue.

50. The very strong emphasis placed on basic vocabulary, punctuation and handwriting skills is evident in the work produced by pupils. Throughout the school, handwriting is neat and legible. Spelling is generally accurate and punctuation used correctly. There is a good range and clear purpose to pupils' writing. Formal and informal styles are used to write narrative, poetry, explanations, instructions and, at times, play scripts. In Year 2, for example, pupils learned how to link phrases which showed cause and effect in their writing about the Great Fire of London so they could write clear explanatory texts. Year 6 pupils wrote clear arguments for and against topical issues such as fox hunting, the use of replica firearms or animal welfare. Stories are well structured. Ideas are expressed clearly and logically in Year 2, with increasing attempts to use descriptive language. In Year 6, work is set out in paragraphs and ideas are sustained with some good choices of vocabulary and use of imagery to bring writing to life.
51. Pupils enjoy reading. A significant proportion of Year 2 pupils already read independently. Almost all read fluently and accurately. They retell stories in detail and know how to use contents and index to locate information in non-fiction books. Pupils in Year 6 make good progress. They read an increasing range of literature, both in literacy lessons and independently. Research skills are sound when using the library and the Internet to find relevant information. There is a good range of fiction and non-fiction available to promote reading skills. However, independent study is somewhat hindered by the present arrangement which requires the library to be situated in the main entrance corridor.
52. Pupils generally listen well and speak clearly when answering questions. When engaged informally in conversation, they are articulate and comments are thoughtfully expressed. Most are confident and self-assured when sharing ideas with the rest of the class. A few are more reticent about explaining their work and find it difficult to put their ideas into precise language.
53. The overall quality of teaching is very good, with some highly effective teaching and learning seen in Year 2. All teachers plan their lessons well and share the objectives with pupils, so they know what is expected of them. Relationships are consistently very good. This results in pupils' very good and sometimes exemplary behaviour, because they respect their teachers and try hard to please them. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, enabling them to challenge pupils. At the end of one lesson, for example, pupils in Year 3 explained how imperative verbs and time connectives might be used as a result of the teacher's clear demonstration. Teachers are beginning to make good use of the newly installed interactive whiteboards. These help them prepare visual material in advance, so little time is wasted in focusing pupils' attention. However, not all teachers are fully confident with the technology, so the pace of lessons is slowed down when teachers rely on handwritten assessment tests to model writing styles.

54. In the most effective lesson, the teacher linked the application of writing skills to pupils' knowledge of history, in order to write an explanation of the cause of the Great Fire of London. A good range of teaching methods was used to ensure pupils were well prepared to write. There was a recap of historical facts, time for pupils to discuss in pairs, opportunities for pupils to test ideas on each other by writing on individual whiteboards and carefully planned writing tasks to ensure all achieved very well according to their abilities. The teaching assistant supported pupils with special educational needs very well. Skilful questioning and use of resources motivated the group of pupils well enough to write coherent extended sentences. There was very good pace to the lesson and very effective use of the interactive whiteboards. This enabled pupils to take an active part in their learning by sorting statements into different groups. Pupils achieved very well in the lesson and the resulting written work was of a high standard. Teachers use their marking very effectively to set targets. These are written on 'post its' and placed at the end of a piece of work to serve as a reminder for pupils. New targets are set as the previous ones are achieved, so there is constant progress towards higher achievement.
55. The quality of teaching and standards are monitored rigorously and evaluated in order to build on improvements. The co-ordinator, a leading literacy teacher, provides an excellent role model for good practice, which is shared throughout the school. Non-statutory assessments provide ongoing information about pupils' progress. Data is analysed and used to set year-on-year targets, as well as to inform about potential development areas. The need for a stronger input into comprehension skills, for example, was identified as a result of analysis of assessment papers. The resulting guided reading and vocabulary work has seen standards in reading rise significantly in Year 2. A very strong sense of teamwork is evident in the whole school drive and commitment to higher achievement.

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

56. The new approaches to planning which the school has adopted create opportunities to apply literacy skills across a good range of subjects. Purposeful writing is to be seen in history, science and geography. There are some thoughtfully written evaluations in art sketchbooks about pupils' own work and that of other artists.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- Teachers' confidence and enthusiasm is infectious, creating enjoyment and enthusiasm among pupils;
- Skilful questioning by teachers encourages pupils to think logically and answer precisely;
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to improve, based on a clear knowledge of their current standards.

#### **Commentary**

57. Following the last inspection, standards by Year 6 dipped significantly but have shown a consistent improvement in the last two years. They are now at average levels. Moreover, pupils' improvement on their prior attainment has been significant. This was shown in 2004, when average points scored by Year 6 pupils were in the

top 5 per cent of schools nationally and the second highest in the local county. Standards for Year 2 pupils have been erratic overtime, alternating from above to below average in chronological years. An analysis of the 2004 test results showed a weakness in problem solving for Year 2 pupils, with fewer pupils than nationally attaining the higher levels. As a result, more real life situations have been included in the curriculum and the current Year 2 are predicted to attain above average standards. Nevertheless, the number of pupils taking tests each year is small and the performance of pupils new to the school is uncertain. These factors could influence the overall picture.

58. Pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics. In an excellent lesson in a Year 5 and 6 class, cheers greeted the outcome of a 'secret number game', in which pupils identified a number through recognising its properties. In all classes, pupils concentrate very well. They are eager to learn and enjoy the challenge of activities using their mental skills.
59. The very high quality of the teaching is effective in promoting mathematics in specialist lessons and in other activities throughout the day. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, enabling them to challenge pupils of all abilities. Teachers question pupils skillfully as they learn to manipulate numbers, asking 'How do you know?' and 'Why?', so that pupils will recall their prior learning and make reasoned judgements based on perceived evidence. Lessons move forward at a rapid pace and all pupils remain actively involved in the learning tasks. Teachers know pupils very well and they challenge them appropriately through the use of very good assessment data. Each year pupils have annual targets of improvement to attain and smaller more immediate improvement targets, recorded on 'post its' and stored for reference in their exercise books. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of how to improve. Those pupils with special educational needs have opportunities for additional support, which extends to several levels according to need. Higher attaining pupils are further challenged in class tasks and also with other similar pupils in partnership with the local cluster of schools.
60. The co-ordinator uses assessment information very well to track the progress of pupils annually, and also to identify the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Although acting as a temporary subject manager, she has very good subject knowledge and provides an excellent role model to all staff. The co-ordinator is using her considerable skills to encourage a consistency of approach among the newer staff, with an emphasis on practical and relevant experiences, which excites all pupils in their learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. Pupils use their mathematical skills very well across the curriculum. They measure results and record in tabulated charts and graphs in science. Designs are improved with accurate measurement in art and design and design and technology. The youngest pupils in the reception class and Year 1 improve their knowledge of symmetry. For example, they make pizzas with symmetrical designs. Older pupils will include mathematical terminology as they evaluate the extent of their learning, accurately using fractions and percentages.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Experiments and investigations are key to learning in science;
- There are good links and transfer of skills between subjects;
- Health and safety issues are well embedded into scientific procedures;
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to set targets and evaluate them.

## **Commentary**

62. Currently, standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. There is an improving picture in standards overtime. All pupils achieve well. Those pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good planning and focused support from staff. Most of Year 6 are predicted to achieve average levels (Level 4) in the national tests in 2005, with a small number achieving the higher level (Level 5). This is because of the recent changing profile of the class, the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and some lack of independent challenge. Nearly all pupils in Year 2 are on course to reach the higher level (Level 3) because of the thrust for independent and extended learning they receive.
63. Teaching is good overall, and especially in the delivery of practical investigative work, which is the key to understanding science. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 class the pupils were encouraged to predict outcomes and evaluate each other's ideas in a lesson on mixing materials. This was prior to progressing with the experiment and it ensured that pupils were using prior knowledge and logic effectively. In discussion with Year 6 pupils, all children understood the need for correct procedure in experiments and could explain how they went about 'fair testing'. Year 2 pupils explained that they 'loved experiments' and had been taught about safety. 'The teacher did the heating of the oven as it was too dangerous for us.' Pupils' books had lots of examples of well presented and marked investigative work.

64. Teaching has involved carefully planned, cross-curricular links, which has meant skills learnt in one subject were applied very well to others. For example, some older pupils were using their knowledge of electric circuitry in science to design working models in design and technology. There was lots of evidence of ICT being used for both recording results of experiments and analysing data. Digital photography as a recording tool was well established. For example, older pupils used it to good effect for the observation of flower petals. The pupils have covered a broad range of topics from the National Curriculum. Year 2 had been learning about life process in the frog life cycle and about food pyramids and healthy eating. 'Sweets are at the tiny bit at the top of the triangle because they are bad for you' explained one Year 2 pupil, showing a good understanding of the relationships of shape as a recording tool as he identified good and bad foods.
65. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She works with the staff as a team and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. For example, she has already planned to extend the older and higher achieving pupil's knowledge by working to extend their skills and independence in experimental procedures. Her assessment and tracking procedures are well established, giving rise to focused forward planning. She is developing a system of staff peer monitoring to share expertise. The resources for science are adequate. The co-ordinator is already looking for new programmes to enhance ICT usage and links.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well;
- Skills are applied very well across the curriculum;
- Overall provision has improved greatly since the previous inspection;
- Further training is required to bring about better consistency in teachers' skills when using interactive whiteboards.

### **Commentary**

66. Very good improvements have taken place since the previous inspection. All required aspects of ICT learning are now taught as part of a well planned and very effective curriculum. Teachers' skills have also improved as resources have been updated and increased. The school has worked hard to ensure pupils acquire the necessary basic skills. The school's philosophy now is that skills should be put to use across the curriculum. Consequently, a good bank of laptop computers has been purchased, which can easily be transported between classrooms. Interactive whiteboards have recently been installed in all classrooms. These are now having a very good impact on pupils' learning, because they help to increase the pace and clarity of teaching. The school recognises that further training to enhance teachers' skills will help them to gain maximum benefit from the new technology.
67. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' skills and understanding of ICT are in line with national expectations. They achieve very well because of their increasing application of skills using a wider range of equipment. Digital cameras and a digital video camera are in regular use. Pupils in Year 1, for example, took digital photos of their church visit and created a

PowerPoint slide show on their return. Laptop computers are used effectively in lessons. A good example was in Year 2, where some pupils used them to create a flow chart of events during the Great Fire of London. Further examples of how ICT has become embedded in the curriculum are seen in science, religious education, art and literacy. A very rewarding venture is the school's annual residential visit to Winmarleigh Hall, where pupils learn about aspects of control technology, such as data logging.

68. Although no direct teaching was seen during the inspection, there is ample evidence to show that pupils gain knowledge and skills at a very good rate. The use of ICT is very well planned and rigorously assessed. Pupils develop very good attitudes. They are confident and eager to improve.
69. The very clear vision and leadership provided by the headteacher can account for the improvements seen, which have been most rapid over the past year. The school's performance in ICT has been carefully evaluated and a clear plan for development established.

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

70. Pupils apply their skills across the curriculum very well. The school's re-evaluation of the subjects other than literacy and numeracy and provision of resources has opened up many ICT opportunities.

### **HUMANITIES**

71. No judgement was made on standards, teaching and learning or provision in **geography** due to insufficient inspection evidence.
72. Planning indicates that all aspects of the geography curriculum are taught in specialist lessons and through a topic approach links are made between subjects. For example in Year 6, the theme of 'Ancient Greece' produced links for research into the physical features of Greece and in map making on 'Ancient Greece'. One lesson was seen during the inspection, when Year 1 pupils were studying their local area. The teacher provided good resources in the form of safety posters, so that pupils could model their own posters, 'Safety in the School Car Park'. This created a good deal of interest and enthusiasm for a relevant topic. The teacher used the pupils' prior knowledge well to key into technical terms in their discussions. The pupils were quickly engaged in 'partner' discussion about safety in the car park.
73. The geography co-ordinator has ensured good coverage of the National Curriculum. There are adequate resources and she has made good use of the local lending service to enhance provision. There are visits and residential courses to provide enrichment and extend the challenge for pupils. The local area and school grounds are well used to make geography come alive. For example, Year 1 had some good work on a 'Journey around school' which involved digital photos, writing and map work.

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good planning with effective links between subjects;
- Good use is made of research skills as a tool to understanding history;
- Enrichment opportunities, such as visits, are used to give relevance and enjoyment.

### **Commentary**

74. Standards are above average by Years 2 and 6. The quality of teaching is good, because of good teacher planning and enthusiasm for the subject. In a lesson in Year 6, the teacher sparked the pupils' interest about 'Ancient Greece' through her questioning and vivid descriptions of changes over time. The teacher carefully probed the pupils' prior knowledge before she embarked on any new work. The pupils were very enthusiastic to predict which of the Greek scholars matched the list of occupations and were given only 'Two minutes and I need your answers' as a target, which raised expectations and pace. In a good link with ICT, pupils in Year 2 displayed their above average knowledge about the Great Fire of London, as they created a flow diagram of events. They discussed the cause and effect in great detail, developing their technical vocabulary and giving a good link to literacy. Pupils' work shows a vast range of recording methods. For example, there are timelines, word processed accounts, digital copies of photos, brain-storming diagrams and in depth comparisons in the form of charts, all of which created interest for the pupils. Teachers mark books well and give pupils good advice on how to improve. Use of the local area and visits to museums all added to the enjoyment and relevance of the learning.
75. The co-ordinator has good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and is very enthusiastic to drive the subject forward. Resources are adequate.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

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

- There is a good variety of teaching methods to engage pupils in their learning;
- Good cross-curricular links enhance learning;
- A good range of first-hand learning experiences enhance the study of Christianity.

### **Commentary**

76. By Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as at the time of the last inspection. In lessons, pupils achieve well because there is a good variety of teaching styles, which engage them effectively. A scrutiny of work indicates that pupils present work of good quality with thoughtful consideration of the issues involved, which they record using a good variety of methods. There is evidence of thorough knowledge of the similarities and differences between various faiths.
77. Pupils have mature attitudes to their work, valuing the customs and beliefs of others. They work well co-operatively, sharing their ideas and assisting each other well in



group activities. Older pupils are confident when undertaking independent research, using a variety of sources to extend their knowledge. Supported by their teacher they are developing balanced opinions. Following some recent homework on the Sacraments, pupils in Years 5 and 6 shared their work from a good range of sources, which included books, the Internet and interviewing local residents. Together they amassed a good collection of information for use in their PowerPoint presentations on the Sacraments.

78. There is a good balance in the curriculum between a study of Christianity and other major world religions. Teachers skilfully link work to other subjects, such as art and design, design and technology or ICT. In Year 2, for example, pupils are currently designing and making a multicoloured coat for Joseph, in a link between religious education and design and technology. Their appliqué designs show that they have good knowledge of the Old Testament story. In other lessons, there are good links which extend pupils' literacy skills, for example in writing lists, diary accounts or reports, and adding labels and captions to completed work. Some good first-hand experiences enhance the study of Christianity, for instance the current study of the local church by Year 1. Festivals of the Christian calendar often incorporate acts of worship in church. An annual visit to Chester cathedral benefits the pupils in Year 5 very well, as they learn about the workings of a cathedral, study its features and take part in an act of worship. However, there are limited opportunities for first-hand experiences in other major world faiths.
79. Teachers have appropriate knowledge for the teaching of religious education and they are creative in the variety of recording techniques with which they engage pupils. Co-ordination is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has done some monitoring of pupils' work in books and on visits. She has identified the need to extend the training on major world faiths.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

80. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards, teaching and learning or provision in **art and design, design and technology** and **physical education**.
81. No teaching was observed in art and design, but observation of pupils' work displayed and discussions with pupils indicates that standards are broadly in line with expectations and that pupils have good opportunities to develop creative skills. The curriculum is enriched by visitors to school, such as a local artist who led a very successful workshop in willow sculpture. Some impressive pieces of work are displayed around the school. Indian and African art inspired some good use of colour and design, particularly in Year 1, where pupils chose colour with good sensitivity to depict the heat of the African landscape. Basic drawing and painting skills are taught well, so pupils work confidently, applying what they know to mixed media and collage work. Increasing use of ICT opens up more challenges for pupils' creative skills. Overall, standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
82. 'Design and technology is fun' is the opinion of pupils in Year 2, as they undertake a project to design and make a colourful and amazing coat for Joseph in the Old Testament story. Over a number of weeks, they have undertaken tests to determine the best methods of joining materials and currently they are adding an appliqué design made in felt. This is decorated with pictures of the Old Testament story. In

this project, standards of work seen are above average for Year 2 pupils. The subject is taught in blocks of time in conjunction with other subjects, such as religious education or history. It is included in the school's 'study skills' approach to learning, as it helps to consolidate skills through real life and relevant experiences. For example, Year 6 pupils designed and made roundabout models and lighthouses last term as part of a design and technology project, adding electrical circuits to boost their scientific knowledge. Photographic evidence indicates that standards were above average and that there were good opportunities for co-operative learning. There is a new and experienced co-ordinator who is improving the subject's leadership and management. She is increasing the popularity of the subject through exciting projects and strengthening the subject's effectiveness by introducing some good initiatives. A new assessment system is prepared and ready to be introduced shortly. These assessments will ensure that pupils' skills are taught progressively and progress is measured regularly and effectively.

83. In physical education, all aspects of the National Curriculum indoor and outdoor are covered. Pupils are given a broad and interesting choice of both activities. By the age of 11, all pupils attain national expectations in swimming. Lessons observed in the inspection covered dance and outdoor games. Year 6 pupils linked their dance to the history theme of Greece in Year 6, while Year 2 were engaged in a very active lesson in attack and defence skills in outdoor games. In both lessons, teaching was good, being well planned and resourced. Year 6 pupils were thoroughly captivated, because the teacher showed great enthusiasm and demonstrated movement very well. She challenged pupils to improve and extended their learning by collaborative evaluation. The Year 2 pupils were asked to find various ways to defend 'goals' of all kinds (using hoops, ropes, skittles etc). With skill, pupils discussed their tasks, showing that they understand how to improve their work. One boy was heard to say 'Stop, that's not a defence tactic.' to one of his friends showing he fully understood their respective roles in the group task. There are very good opportunities for out of school tournaments, such as football and rugby. Gifted and talented pupils are given additional opportunities. For example, a talented footballer shares his expertise in games by modelling ball skills for other pupils. This enables him to practise his own skill development while helping others. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator shows a keen understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and is very enthusiastic about its development.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities for enrichment, which extends pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding.

### **Commentary**

84. Pupils in both Years 2 and 6 are attaining standards overall which are typical for their age and they achieve well both during lessons and over time. This is mainly due to the employment of a specialist music teacher, which means there is continuity in both planning and delivery of lessons. Pupils with special educational

needs also achieve satisfactorily, as work is planned to cater for all ability levels and staff support is good.

85. The teaching is enthusiastic and there are plenty of relevant and interesting tasks for pupils to join in. A specialist teacher teaches music throughout school. In most lessons seen, the emphasis was on performance. Lessons were well planned to link with the topic theme. For example, Year 6 pupils were learning a song about the Greeks. This encouraged pupils to understand the relevance of their work and engender enthusiasm for their performance. Year 2 pupils found their lesson exciting. They were involved in circle games to learn about the dynamics of long and short sounds. This work was well pitched for their age and ability and the pupils achieved well, being able to pass sounds around the circle with control of volume and speed.
86. There are many opportunities for the pupils to enhance their learning both in and out of school. For example, pupils are given the opportunity to play both the recorder and the piano, which helps to develop and challenge pupils' understanding of traditional notation. Visitors and visits are used to broaden pupils' musical experiences. For example, pupils have visited the Halle Orchestra in Manchester and have performed themselves at Manchester airport. Gifted and talented pupils are given ample opportunities to develop their skills. For example, a Year 6 pianist plays during assemblies.
87. The co-ordinator works with the specialist teacher to ensure that pupils are receiving the experiences they require to meet the National Curriculum. There are adequate resources and time for all pupils to benefit and perform well. National Guidelines are used to assess the pupil's progress.

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

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above those expected by Years 2 and 6;
- A wide range of enrichment activities extend pupils' experiences and understanding.

## Commentary

88. Pupils' personal development is an important aspect of the school's overall provision. In the reception class, children make very good progress and are encouraged to consider the needs of others. By the start of Year 1, they have attained standards well above expectations for their age in their personal, social and emotional development. This strong emphasis on the development of the individual is maintained throughout school and pupils develop very mature attitudes by Year 6. Teachers know pupils very well and give them very good support, yet always challenging, so that they become independent. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong. They are willing to take on responsibilities in a number of ways. On the playground, older pupils take good care of younger pupils. The school council has plans to purchase a 'friendship bench' so that no pupil feels lonely and isolated. During the inspection, there were lovely examples of older pupils acting as good role model examples for younger pupils, for example showing them how to behave as they came to and from daily assembly.
89. There is a very good curriculum programme, which includes a clear framework to PSHCE development in all year groups. Plans show that topics are incorporated into subjects such as science, religious education and English. There is good inclusion of sex, drugs and relationships education for older pupils. Assembly themes incorporate relevant and topical issues to promote consideration of the wider world. Regular links with other local schools are valuable ways of widening pupils' lives.

## 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	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
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	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
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).*