

INSPECTION REPORT

THE BERKELEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wistaston, Crewe

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111122

Headteacher: Mr M J Finnigan

Lead inspector: Mr G.R. Logan

Dates of inspection: 18 – 20 April 2005

Inspection number: 268041

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 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	403
School address:	Laidon Avenue Wistaston Crewe Cheshire
Postcode:	CW2 6RU
Telephone number:	01270 568313
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Christian
Date of previous inspection:	28/06/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Berkeley Primary School occupies a spacious site in a residential area, to the south-east of the centre of Crewe. Much of the housing in the immediate area is privately-owned, although an increasing proportion of pupils live further afield. With 403 pupils on roll, this is a larger primary school than many. Almost all pupils are from White European backgrounds, with a very small number of mixed-race or Asian heritage. One pupil is at an early stage of learning to speak English. A well below average proportion of pupils (seven per cent) have special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties. Five of these have statements of special educational need. The school experiences a low level of pupil mobility, with around seven per cent of pupils leaving or joining the school at other than the expected points. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, less than one per cent at present, is far below the national average (18 per cent). When they enter Reception, most children have social and language skills that are average or better. In 2003, the school gained both the Healthy Schools and the Basic Skills Quality Mark awards, together with Investors in People accreditation.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11810	Mr George Logan	Lead inspector	Mathematics
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29504	Mrs Shirley Herring	Team inspector	English Music Religious education English as an additional language
21910	Mr Gordon Longton	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Special educational needs
17767	Mrs Susan Power	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology The Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school. It has a very supportive, caring ethos and is highly successful at including all pupils. Pupils benefit from a very broad and imaginatively developed curriculum and achieve well in a wide range of activities, as a result of some very skilled specialist teaching. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is very good. Governors are very effective.
- Foundation Stage provision is very good. Teaching and learning in Reception are very good.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve well across the school.
- The curriculum has been carefully developed and is very good.
- Provision for the creative arts is a significant strength and standards are high.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well. Relationships are very good. Pupils are highly committed to school life. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
- Pupils are cared for very well. The attention given to health and safety matters is excellent.
- The quality of school meals is high and the service is managed with considerable flair.
- Links with the parents and the community are very good.
- Standards and provision in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly, but ICT could still be used more extensively across the curriculum.
- Pupils' work could be marked with greater rigour.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. All the key areas for development, and the minor issues, have been successfully tackled. Standards in English and mathematics have continued to rise, particularly at Year 6. In addition, the re-evaluation of the curriculum and the engagement of the specialist skills of the staff are enabling pupils to attain high standards in the creative arts. In spite of significant staff absence around the inspection period, the proportion of good or better teaching has increased.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

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

Although there has been some unevenness recently, as a result of staffing issues, pupils achieve **well** over time. Most children enter Reception with above average attainment, with particular strengths in their speaking and listening, mathematical and personal and social development. They achieve well and the majority of children exceed the standards expected at the end of the Reception year. Standards in Year 2 currently are above average in mathematics, well above average in reading and writing and average in science. Standards overall in Year 6 in 2004 were the highest yet recorded, with a well above average proportion of pupils achieving the higher than expected Level 5. Standards in Year 6 at present are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Pupils' literacy skills are used very well across the curriculum. Standards in ICT have improved, although ICT skills could be better used to support learning in other subjects. Standards in Year 6 in geography and music are above those normally found; in art and design, standards are well above those expected. The school supports higher attaining pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the very good support they receive. The very few pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. These factors contribute significantly to their learning. **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Relationships and behaviour are very good. Attendance is very good; punctuality is excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good in spite of recent absences as a result of ill health. These have contributed to some inconsistency in the quality of work seen between parallel classes in the upper school. Relationships with pupils are very good. Assessment is used effectively in planning pupils' work. Pupils are taught to evaluate the quality of their work and do so effectively. Across the school, they have a very mature approach and show a high level of commitment. Planning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, is effective. Learning support staff are effective, particularly in the lower part of the school. The curriculum has been creatively developed and is very good, with effective links made between subjects. This enables pupils to learn efficiently. They have a very good range of opportunities for learning, with a very good extra-curricular programme. There is a strong focus on the creative arts. Pupils receive very good care and support. Systems for monitoring pupils' development are good. Very good induction procedures help new children to settle quickly. Child protection procedures are very good. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The school has a very good partnership with parents, with the community and with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher, strongly supported by the senior management team, provides very good leadership. The school's monitoring systems are good. Subject co-ordinators are very competent, overall. The school's evaluation of its work is very good. The governing body provides very good support for the school. Financial management is good. Statutory requirements are met. School administration is efficient.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the school. They are happy with the high standards achieved. They feel that the school is well led. The level of parental involvement is very good. Pupils enjoy school. They work hard and participate eagerly in activities. They relate very well to their teachers; relationships are a significant strength.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

While there are no significant areas for development, the school should maintain its current focus on:

- Improving pupils' access to ICT and the use of their ICT skills across the curriculum;
- Improving the consistency and rigour of the marking of pupils' work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Provision for the creative arts is a significant strength and standards are high.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The few pupils for whom English is not their first language are supported well and make very good progress.
- Gifted and talented pupils are identified and achieve well.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is generally above average for their age. As a result of the very good teaching and the very good provision overall, all children make good progress and almost all achieve, and many exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year.
2. Following an average performance overall in 2002, standards in the national tests at Year 2 have risen steadily in subsequent years, showing a clear trend of improvement. In 2004, standards were well above average in reading and mathematics and high in writing in relation to all schools nationally. Standards were above average in mathematics and well above average in reading and writing in relation to similar schools. An above average proportion of pupils in mathematics and a well above average proportion in reading and writing achieved the higher Level 3 in 2004. Projections for the current Year 2 indicate that, because of the characteristics of the year group, overall performance may have fallen back slightly. However, the indications are that standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading and writing, above average in mathematics and average in science.
3. Standards at the end of Year 6 are a significant strength. For at least the last four years, standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 have seldom been lower than well above average. Performance in science has been more variable, although in 2004 it was well above average. Overall performance in 2004 was the strongest of the last five years. Standards were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science in relation to schools with a similar level of free school meals. The rate of improvement made between the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was well above average overall in 2004. Able pupils in Year 6 did particularly well, with a well above average proportion of the year group achieving the challenging Level 5 in English and mathematics. Standards at present are markedly better than those reported in 2000, the year of the previous inspection. The school's prediction, and inspection evidence supports the view, is that standards at present are very similar to those indicated in 2004, with well above average performance in English and mathematics and above average performance in science.

4. Pupils in Year 6 in 2004 had achieved very well during their time in the school. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are currently achieving well over time. However, there are variations in the progress pupils are making in the juniors at present. This is seen in some disparities in performance between classes in the same year group and mainly relates to recent issues of staffing and staff absence. Overall, the consistency of achievement at present is best for pupils in Years 1 and 2, where the staffing has been most stable and effective in the current year. These pupils are well motivated by inspiring teaching, whereas the level of pace and challenge in Years 3 to 6, and consequently of pupils' motivation, is less consistent. There was no evidence during the inspection of any significant difference between the performance of girls and boys, although almost all of the highest performers in mathematics in Year 6 are boys.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Progress is measured as part of the school's assessment procedures for all pupils and against the targets set in pupils' individual education plans. Targets are clearly stated and measurable. Work for less able and more able pupils is adapted well to match their particular needs. There is a link between the targets in individual educational plans and lesson planning. Tasks are very closely matched to pupils' ages and abilities, particularly in the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills.
6. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve very well, overall. Pupils with English as an additional language are few in number and only in the lower part of the school. They also achieve very well. Attainment for these pupils is similar to their classmates.
7. The school identifies older pupils considered to be gifted or talented and supports them well. For example, particularly able mathematicians are identified in the upper school and are supported very well through provision of challenging activities within the setting arrangements. The diversity of opportunities in sport and in the creative arts also serves these pupils very well.

Foundation Stage

8. Foundation Stage provision is very good. Children benefit from very good induction procedures and settle well into school routines. Very good teaching, planning and assessment procedures ensure that children make good progress and achieve well. At the end of Foundation Stage attainment is above average, with almost all achieving the Early Learning Goals, and significant number having moved beyond them. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because planning is carefully focused on their needs and teachers' methods are very well adapted to meet those needs.

Years 1 and 2

9. Current standards in Year 2 are well above average in writing and reading, above average in mathematics and average in science. Underlying literacy skills are very good and are used regularly in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils have average skills in ICT by the end of Year 2. Standards are above those normally found in art and design, music and geography and similar to those expected in the remaining subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.7 (17.2)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	17.4 (16.8)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.6 (17.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Years 3 to 6

10. Current attainment in Year 6 is well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Standards are well above those normally found in art and design and above those normally found in music and geography. In the remaining subjects, standards are similar to those expected. ICT skills are average, but there is scope for greater use of these skills across the curriculum. The school exceeded its appropriately challenging target in English in 2004; it narrowly missed the target set in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.5 (28.9)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	29.9 (28.5)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.1 (29.2)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

11. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted very well across the curriculum. There are very good opportunities to record, write and communicate in subjects such as history and geography. Speaking skills are developed well and many pupils are articulate and confident in their speaking. The application of numeracy skills is satisfactory. There is a good emphasis on practical and investigative activities in science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**. Pupils' moral, social, cultural and spiritual development is also **very good**. Attendance is **very good** and punctuality is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good. Behaviour in most lessons is very good.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of their responsibilities within the school community.
- Pupils respond very well to the many good opportunities that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is very effective in promoting good attendance.

Commentary

12. The rate of attendance is well above that of similar schools and pupils attend school punctually. Most lessons start and finish on time. The school has very effective systems in place to monitor and promote good attendance. A number of parents continue to take family holidays during term time, despite the school's efforts to dissuade them. Unexplained absences are followed up very quickly and registers are kept in accordance with statutory requirements.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.7	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.

13. Pupils enjoy coming to school and develop good very relationships with others in their classes. Most pupils have very good attitudes to their work and their life in school. This is reflected in their excellent punctuality, enjoyment of lessons and participation in extra-curricular activities, particularly sport and drama. Pupils feel that they are expected to work hard and that they are taught well.
14. Pupils are very well behaved and co-operative in lessons. There have been no exclusions in the past year. A small number of pupils are identified as having specific behavioural needs. They are given very good support and make good progress in their behaviour over time. Praise and encouragement are used particularly effectively. This very good behaviour represents an improvement since the last inspection.
15. Pupils' attitudes, both to learning and to each other, are very good. Pupils are very clear that if there were any problems between pupils, the school would act quickly and effectively. Attitudes have improved since the last inspection.
16. Pupils listen to adults and follow instructions because staff set high expectations for their conduct. They are encouraged to take on responsibilities as they progress through the school, such as acting as play leaders and playground "Buddies". Older pupils are often seen helping the younger children, particularly at lunchtimes. The good focus on inclusion means that pupils feel valued and work well in harmony with each other.
17. Very good moral development is fostered through clear rules and reminders of why pupils should consider the needs of others. There are plenty of opportunities within and outside school for pupils to develop good social skills and display the willingness to be enterprising. For example, the raising of money for charities is a regular feature of school life. Cultural development is promoted by visits to theatres and museums and participation in music, art and drama events. There are regular opportunities for pupils to access periods of reflection, either in assemblies or lessons, or to explore religious beliefs through daily acts of collective worship. This is having a very positive effect on their spiritual development. Pupils' very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is another area in which the school has improved since the previous inspection.
18. A strength of the school, and a significant one, is the nurturing of a strong sense of community among the pupils. The school teaches respect for each other's feelings,

values and beliefs. Pupils feel confident in expressing their points of view without fear of ridicule. As a result, confidence, self-esteem and independence are raised. The vast majority of pupils are proud of their school and have a good understanding of how they can make it a better place for the whole community.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. The curriculum is **very good**, with very good extra-curricular provision. Pupils are cared for **very well**. The partnership with parents is **very good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** overall, with a significant amount of very good or excellent teaching. Pupils are challenged and learn well. Assessment procedures are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well.
- The effective deployment of staff with specialist subject skills has a significant effect on pupils' learning, particularly in the creative arts.
- Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and to be independent learners.
- Assessment procedures are thorough.

Commentary

- At the last inspection, teaching was good overall, with around one-quarter of the teaching being very good. Teaching was of a consistent quality across the school. Assessment was used well and the support for pupils with special educational needs was good, facilitating good progress.
- The school generally benefits from a good level of stability in staffing. However, at this inspection, it was experiencing a significant level of staff illness and absence. Four permanent members of staff were not in school. Three absences were covered by experienced staff, but new to the school, and one on longer-term cover. The majority of these changes were in Years 3 to 6. In that challenging context the school did very well to increase the proportion of good or better teaching seen.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 60 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (8%)	17 (29%)	31 (51%)	7 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.

- Children are very well taught and achieve very well in the Foundation Stage. All of the teaching is good or better, with almost three-quarters being very good or excellent. Teachers encourage children and engage their interest very well. Planning is imaginative and is firmly based on scrupulous assessment of children's achievements. Teachers and classroom assistants work very well together to provide

a high quality learning environment. Pupils are motivated very well by the interesting practical curriculum and, in consequence, learn successfully.

22. Teaching is good overall across the main school, though with some variations by phase, and reflecting, in part, instability in staffing around the inspection period. Teaching is never less than good in Years 1 and 2, with almost one third being very good. It was less consistent, though good overall, in Years 3 to 6, where one-third of the lessons seen were very good or excellent. This phase was the most affected by staff absence. That said, the detailed analysis of pupils' work indicates significant disparities in the quality of work in parallel classes in the juniors, predating current staff absences. This would endorse the view of some parents that there have been growing discrepancies in performance between some junior classes for much of the current year.
23. The high expectations of many staff have a very positive effect on pupils' learning. In Years 1 and 2 as a whole, staff are focused on supporting and extending pupils' basic skills and are working very effectively. Achievement in these aspects is good. In the best lessons, where pupils are challenged most effectively, achievement is very good. Pupils across the school are well motivated and show a good capacity to work independently or collaboratively. They are encouraged to be self-sufficient, independent learners.
24. The school makes very good use of staff specialist skills. This is the case in, for example, art and design, where the high level skills of several staff underpin the high standards seen. The specialist knowledge of a Leading Literacy Teacher is used well to ensure that colleagues are able to benefit from this expertise. Several staff have good practical skills in music and these are used well to secure the breadth and quality of musical opportunities to which pupils have access. Creative use of available expertise makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and high standards.
25. Planning is good overall and is well focused on individual needs. It is very good in Years 1 and 2. Clear objectives are set for learning and explicitly shared with pupils. There is a very good focus on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used very effectively to promote pupils' learning. Some use is made of ICT to support learning across subjects, although this is an area for further development. Teachers' methods are chosen well to enable pupils to gain knowledge and develop understanding. The use of homework to support pupils' achievement is good.
26. All teachers are familiar with the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs who are identified as soon as possible on entry to school. The special educational needs co-ordinator and teachers discuss pupils' individual education plans, which are shared with pupils. Each plan is based on small steps, which are essential to enable pupils to realise that progress is being made. Class teachers work hard to help pupils make progress and they receive good support from all support staff. The support teacher, who works well with groups of special educational needs pupils in Years 3 to 6, enables them to make good progress in their literacy skills.
27. The school currently has very few pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school gives good support to such pupils, when the need arises.

They make rapid gains with their English skills and their progress is monitored closely.

28. Assessment procedures are very good in the Foundation Stage and good in the main school. Progress in the key core areas is tracked carefully through the school. The systems are of good quality and the school has made good progress in this area. Data is accessible and is used well by staff, who have a good understanding of where their pupils are. Staff undertake analysis of pupils' work and do regular standardisation of pupils' writing. The school analyses data thoroughly and develops action plans to remedy any underperformance that emerges. Individual pupil targets are identified for each year. There is also a significant level of on-going informal assessment. Plenary sessions are often used well for this purpose. In addition, pupils are being trained to evaluate their own learning and this is a regular element in many lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good** and this encourages very good attitudes to school and so pupils achieve well. The **very good** range of activities outside lessons enhances learning very well. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum includes a very good range of opportunities for enrichment with excellent provision for participation in the arts.
- The very good links between subjects enhance learning.
- The curriculum for the children in Reception is very well suited to their needs and they get off to a very good start.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is strong.
- There are very well planned opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in other subjects.
- Opportunities for pupils to use and develop their ICT skills across the curriculum are limited.

Commentary

29. The school is successful in planning a very broad range of worthwhile activities that enhance learning very well. A strong aspect is the way the school links subjects together to streamline learning. This was seen in the *Britain since the 1930s* project in Year 6, which provided a good focus for extending learning in a range of subjects including English, history, art, and design and technology. The curriculum for children in Reception is very good. It is firmly based on the national recommendations for the age group; activities are suitably practical and meet the needs of young children well so they get off to a very good start. Lessons are very well planned to suit the needs of different groups of pupils so all achieve well.
30. There is a very strong focus on developing key literacy and numeracy skills so pupils attain standards that are well above average in these aspects. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of education. There has been a good improvement in planning to use writing and speaking and listening skills in other subjects; this has contributed to good achievement in these areas. However, the school recognises that the use of ICT in other subjects is limited.

31. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils have access to the curriculum and this is a good feature of the school. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported so they can work alongside their friends as much as possible to take advantage of the curriculum offered. Provision for pupils with statements is very good. Where necessary the curriculum is adapted to suit their needs so that their individual education programmes are met.
32. Provision for the very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. The strong levels of support in class, and the school's awareness of available expertise if needed, enable pupils to achieve well.
33. Provision for personal, social and health education is strong and permeates all aspects of the school. Health education takes a high priority and this is evident in the healthy snacks on offer and in the exceptional quality of school lunches. The school has received the Healthy Schools Award. The governors have taken the decision not to teach sex education, though the school nurse visits older classes to give information on puberty and adolescence. Similarly, the community policeman covers aspects of drugs awareness. The number and range of residential visits are far more than is usual in a primary school and these contribute very well to pupils' personal development.
34. Pupils and parents appreciate the school's provision of a very wide range of activities to support learning outside lessons. These extend to sporting activities, with participation in several tournaments, cookery, drama and French. All these clubs are well led, and are enthusiastically attended by pupils of all ages. An outstanding area however, is the wealth of opportunities for participation in the arts, particularly music. There is an exceptional number of talented staff who give freely of their time and enthusiasm to organise an extensive range of musical activities. The orchestra is very well attended by staff, parents, and pupils past and present, and they produce music of a high quality.
35. The accommodation, including two mobile classrooms, is bright, reasonably spacious and very well cared for. The display is rich with pupils' work, particularly art, and this enlivens the environment for learning. A computer suite has been installed since the last inspection to improve ICT provision. However, it is also used as a classroom and so access is restricted during large parts of the day. There have been recent improvements to the outdoor area for Reception children. Though it is fairly small, it is used very effectively to extend learning opportunities. Resources are good overall.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very good** levels of care and attention to the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Provision of support, advice and guidance is **good**. There is **good** involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to ensure pupils work in a healthy, safe environment are excellent. School catering is of high quality.
- The school provides a very warm, caring and purposeful learning environment where all pupils are highly and equally valued.

- Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with adults in the school.
- Pupils have access to well-informed support and guidance. Induction arrangements are very good.
- The school actively seeks the views of the pupils on school improvement.

Commentary

36. Pupils work in a clean, safe and healthy environment. Regular health and safety checks and a building maintenance programme identify and rectify any hazards quickly. A very well co-ordinated team of governors, teachers and the conscientious site manager ensure that health and safety is given a high priority. School meals are a significant factor in the healthy life style encouraged by the school. One parent said: *"The children have the benefit of excellent school meals which I haven't seen anywhere else"*. In addition, healthy snacks are readily available to all pupils during the morning and afternoon. The excellent provision for health and safety is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' academic and personal development.
37. This is a very caring school where staff treats pupils fairly and with respect. This ensures that pupils are comfortable about approaching individual teachers or support staff for help or guidance. Pupils say teachers always take time to listen to them and they can always have their say. Pupils are highly satisfied with the school and what it provides.
38. There are very good child protection procedures and these are well known to adults in the school. There are good links with outside agencies. Staff know the pupils and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs and are able therefore to provide good support and guidance. There are good practices for getting to know children before they start school. Parents say that induction procedures are very good and that the school is helping their child to become mature.
39. The good personal, social and health education programme and effective assessment procedures enable staff to provide targeted support for individuals, particularly those pupils with special educational needs, who contribute to their own annual reviews. This good support and guidance is helping to raise pupil achievement. All pupils are involved in setting personal and learning targets and assessing their own work.
40. The school actively encourages pupils to express their views both in formal and informal ways. There is a school council that considers matters as diverse as new playground games and formulating school and classroom rules. This opportunity to contribute to school improvement contributes well to pupils' personal development. The school has identified the need to include representatives from year groups other than Year 6 on the school council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents. Links with other schools and colleges are **very good**. It also has **very good** links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept very well informed about the school and their children's progress.
- Procedures for dealing with any parental concerns are very good.
- Very good links with other schools ensure a smooth transition for pupils to the next stage of education.
- The contribution made by most parents to their child's learning at home and in the school is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
- The formal consultation arrangements with parents are well developed.

Commentary

41. Parents are highly satisfied with the work of the school and what it provides. They say their children enjoy coming to school, that the school is led and managed well and that the teaching is good. A small number of parents say that they are not kept well informed about their child. The school has identified the need to consult further with parents on how this can be improved.
42. The headteacher and staff are readily available to deal with any concerns that parents may have. This informal contact ensures high levels of parental satisfaction and that any problems are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
43. Parents are well informed about the school through the prospectus, regular newsletters and school notice boards. They appreciate the opportunities to discuss their child's progress at both formal and informal meetings with teachers. A helpful end-of-year academic report, containing targets for improvement, accompanies these meetings. The vast majority of parents say they are involved regularly with regard to matters of school improvement.
44. The majority of parents contribute to their child's learning at home and a good number help in school. Parent workshops encourage parents to learn more about the way in which literacy and numeracy are taught. This support is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement. The Friends of Berkeley School Association, through fund raising events, makes a significant contribution to the resourcing of the school.
45. The school links well with local schools to ensure best practice is shared and to take part in joint initiatives. There is a strong link with the local secondary school, providing opportunities for staff professional development, the sharing of pupil information and discussion of areas of concern to ensure a smooth transition for Year 6 pupils to the secondary phase. Residential visits for Year 6 include pupils from other local primary schools and staff from the secondary school. This helps forge strong partnerships before pupils move on to the next stage of their education.
46. The very good links with the community include a close liaison with local businesses, the local professional football club and the church. These connections have a positive effect on pupils' personal development. A number of groups use the school facilities. Regular outside visits contribute very well to pupils' learning. The school actively seeks out local skills and resources to strengthen governance, decision-making and pupils' learning.
47. These very good links and partnerships with parents, other schools and the community, reflect a significant improvement since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The school is very well managed. The headteacher and key staff are **very effective** in their work. Governance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very good leadership has enabled the school to improve very well since the previous inspection.

- Subject management is very good and has resulted in improved standards.
- Adults working in the school set a very good example to pupils.
- Effective procedures for the management of the school ensure a calm and purposeful learning environment in which pupils flourish personally and achieve well.
- Despite the fact that a few governors are new to their role, the governing body continues to be very effective.
- Finances are managed well and the principles of best value are applied very effectively.

Commentary

48. The headteacher is providing very good leadership and, as a result, the school has improved significantly since it was last inspected. He believes that everyone in the school should be valued for what they can offer. As a result, all feel secure and there is an excellent unity of purpose throughout the school. The school has a very effective ethos in which adults and children work together to enable all pupils to reach their potential. There is a very clear commitment to continual school improvement and a willingness to innovate. For example, the headteacher is closely involved in several local initiatives such as the Cheshire Headteachers' Initiative in Leadership and Learning (CHILL) and the Local Network for Learning.
49. A major thrust of the headteacher's leadership has been in the development of other staff. He rightly regards teachers and support staff as a major resource, and has been careful to give them full opportunities to build on their strengths. As a result, subjects are managed very effectively, with particular strengths in English, mathematics, art and design, geography and music. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are also very good. Teachers are now given a clear direction in meeting these pupils' individual needs.
50. The headteacher works in a very effective partnership with his deputy, who shares in the day to day running of the school. Together, they are very successful in promoting an environment where staff and pupils work very hard and enjoy very good relationships. All staff and governors are committed to the school's aims, which include a strong emphasis on personal as well as academic development.
51. There is a positive and productive relationship between the governing body and the school. Governors are well informed about attainment and receive regular reports. They have great confidence in the headteacher but expect him to be accountable and ask some searching questions. Through their named governor system, they keep abreast of developments and play an active part in school improvement. They are actively involved in evaluating how well the school is performing and check that spending decisions lead to improvements in provision. For example, a considerable amount of money was spent on the redevelopment of accommodation for the Year 6 classes, which has brought their classrooms up to a high standard. Long term strategic planning at the school is very good and allows the governors and headteacher to think ahead about potential issues, such as the falling birth rate. The headteacher seeks out grants at every opportunity for additional funding to improve facilities.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	905,460	Balance from previous year	5,944

Total expenditure	893,523
Expenditure per pupil	2,195

Balance carried forward to the next	11,937
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52. Systems of self-evaluation at the school are very good. Their overall effectiveness is borne out by the fact that the inspection found no evidence of significant weaknesses. The school's open door philosophy is effective and parents said they felt confident in approaching the class teachers or headteacher with any problems. They expressed confidence in the way issues are dealt with.
53. The effectiveness of the school is very good because of the high quality of teaching, pupils' good achievement, their very good attainment, the high standards of personal and social education and the very strong leadership and management. The cost per pupil is relatively low; consequently, the school provides very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

When children start school in the Reception year, their attainment levels are generally above what is usual for their age. The consistently high quality of teaching in both Reception classes enables all children to make good progress in relation to their capabilities and almost all achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning, with a significant proportion exceeding those standards, by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching is of consistently high quality and is characterised by imaginative planning, high expectations of what children can achieve and scrupulous assessment procedures that detail children's progress in all areas of learning from the time they enter school. A good balance is achieved between teacher led activity and carefully planned opportunities for children to choose their own learning focus. Teachers and classroom assistants work very well together to provide a high quality environment for learning in which children thrive and enjoy their learning. Children with special educational needs are very well integrated and make very good progress due to carefully focused planning and support to meet their needs.

The accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage has undergone some improvement since the last inspection and provides well for both indoor and outdoor activity. The recent creation of a secure and attractive outdoor play area, with direct access from both Reception areas, has done much to improve the quality of learning outside the classrooms. In both classes in the Foundation Stage, learning resources are of good quality and used well in an imaginative range of activities that engage the interest of children and are effective in meeting their needs in all areas of learning.

The Foundation Stage is led and managed very well. Although the co-ordinator was absent at the time of the inspection, the impact of her leadership and management is very apparent in the high quality provision and good achievement of children in both classes. Teachers and other adults in the Foundation Stage work together very effectively as a team and their commitment to providing a high quality introduction to school is highly successful in promoting children's learning and achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangements for settling children into the Reception year are very good.
- Opportunities for children to develop independence and self-reliance are very good.
- Teachers and other adults provide very good role models for promoting harmonious relationships.
- Children's confidence and self-esteem are promoted very well.

Commentary

54. This area of learning is central to all activities in the Foundation Stage and enables children to achieve very well in developing high levels of confidence, self-esteem and a desire to learn and co-operate with adults and each other. Teaching is very good. Teachers make the most of every opportunity to further children's personal, social and emotional development; for example, in registration time or while changing after a dance lesson. The prominent emphasis placed on this area enables all children to reach the recommended goals by the time they enter Year 1 and many exceed the expected level. Through the very good example set by adults, children learn rapidly to treat each other with courtesy and respect. Good manners and behaviour are central to teachers' expectations so children learn very effectively how to behave well and this helps to create a harmonious learning environment. Children show a very good capacity to maintain attention, on tasks or when listening to adults and this is a strong contributing factor in their good achievement.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's skills in speaking and listening are very good.
- Early reading skills are taught well.
- Good opportunities are provided for developing writing skills.

Commentary

55. High quality teaching enables children to achieve well in communication, language and literacy. As a result, most children reach the expected goals, with a significant number exceeding those levels, by the time they enter Year 1. The speaking and listening skills of many children are well above average as a result of the many good opportunities provided for them to take part in discussions, express articulate opinions and ask and answer questions. They do this with increasing confidence and achieve very well in developing their spoken communication skills.
56. Good emphasis on the systematic teaching of letter sounds is very effective in helping children to develop their reading skills. Good strategies such as the 'phonics box', when each child takes an object from the box and says the initial and final sound of the object, help to make learning relevant and interesting. Most children are confident with initial sounds and can identify other words with the same sound. Many can recognise final sounds accurately and are beginning to recognise rhyming

sounds. They are becoming increasingly familiar with books and enjoy stories and rhymes. As a result, children achieve well in developing their reading skills.

57. Writing skills are developed well in a range of different contexts, with a firm emphasis on writing for a purpose. For example, children are engaged in writing labels, comments in a diary, clues for identifying minibeasts and a description of a garden. Almost all can write their names correctly and are able to link sounds with letters in attempting recognisable spellings in their writing. They are becoming confident in expressing themselves in writing and learn effectively how to be writers.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Counting skills and number recognition are developed well.
- Teachers provide good planned and incidental opportunities to develop mathematical awareness.

Commentary

58. High quality teaching in well-planned contexts enables children to achieve well in mathematical development. Most children have reached the expected goals for this area by the time they enter Year 1 and some exceed expectations. Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce learning by encouraging children to apply their mathematical knowledge in situations such as calculating how many children are present if two are away or how many children have ordered school dinners. The good emphasis on mathematical application helps children to learn associated mathematical language, such as 'more than' and 'less than', and promotes very good learning of the function of numbers in the world around them. This was apparent in a lesson about telling the time when children were able to write and arrange numbers on clock faces in the correct order and learned very effectively how to recognise 'o'clock'.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop good environmental awareness.
- Computing skills are well developed.
- Children learn effectively about their own cultural heritage and that of others.

Commentary

59. Teaching is very good. Teachers provide a rich and exciting range of learning contexts that enable children to learn very effectively about the world around them. They achieve very well in this area and are on course to reach the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. A significant number expected the expected level. Many opportunities to use computers within the context of other learning promote good

learning of computer skills. Children without access to computers at home benefit particularly through this approach; for example, in a lesson about time when children used individual laptop computers to learn about the layout of a clock face. Activities such as designing and making cards for Chinese New Year, welcoming a new baby into the classroom, playing with magnets and studying minibeasts in the environment provide interesting and relevant contexts in which children are able to learn about the world in which they live.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop very good physical skills and control of large and small movements.
- Planning and teaching in physical development are very good.

Commentary

60. Teaching is very good in this area and children achieve very well in developing physical skills. At the time of the inspection, many children had already exceeded the expected goals for physical development due to the many well-planned opportunities for practising their skills. The great majority hold pencils correctly and manipulate simple tools, such as scissors and glue, with precision and confidence. The new outdoor area is having a significant effect on children's physical development, with good opportunities for propelling and controlling wheeled toys, balancing and manoeuvring in play contexts. The hall is well equipped to provide moving, climbing and balancing practice within a larger space. In a dance lesson in the hall, children showed very good co-ordination as they developed a dance to music and learned rapidly to use space well and to control and vary their movements expressively in time to the music.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to use a good range of creative techniques and materials.
- Very good opportunities are provided for creative expression.
- There is insufficient adult intervention in the imaginative activities provided for the pupils.

Commentary

61. Children benefit from a wide range of creative activity and achieve well in reaching or exceeding the recommended goals by the time they enter Year 1. Their creativity is promoted very effectively by very good teaching in the areas of dance, music, art and imaginative play. Children use paint, collage, print and different drawing media in creative activity such as making Mother's Day cards and portraying 'God's Garden'. In a very good dance lesson, children used their bodies very imaginatively to create a dance portraying the movements of caterpillars and butterflies at 'The Ugly Bug Ball'. A very good music lesson gave children good opportunities to play a

wide range of instruments to accompany a story. They learned effectively how to play the instruments correctly and put great effort into their performances. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to engage in imaginative play, for example in a garden centre context. However, there is sometimes scope for greater involvement and intervention from adults in order for children to get the best out of these experiences.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are extensive opportunities for pupils to develop and use their writing, speaking and listening skills in other subjects.
- There are inconsistencies in teaching in parallel classes in Years 5 and 6.
- Leadership is very good.
- Work is well planned to match the needs of all pupils.
- The use of ICT is limited.

Commentary

62. Standards are well above average for pupils aged seven and eleven in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Writing was identified as a comparative area of weakness in the last inspection. The school's clear focus on planning opportunities to develop writing, and latterly speaking and listening skills, in other subjects has resulted in a good improvement in standards in these aspects.
63. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because of consistently good teaching and the good level of support in all classes. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve very well because of the school's awareness of their needs and access to clear specialist guidance if needed.
64. Achievement is good overall for pupils in Years 3 to 6, though the rate of progress varies considerably between classes. Achievement is very good in one class in Year 3 because of the considerable skills of the subject leader and in one class in Year 5 and one in Year 6 because of the strong teaching in these two classes.
65. In Years 1 and 2, all pupils learn at a consistent rate. Lessons are generally lively and so pupils are keen to participate. This was seen in a very good lesson in Year 2. The teacher's expressive delivery and very interesting activity, developing a newsroom report about the inspectors' arrival, promoted a high level of involvement and very good learning. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that they have completed a good amount of work. This regular practice in a good range of writing in English and other subjects and the detailed and constructive marking has contributed significantly to a good improvement in pupils' work.

66. Teaching is good overall in Year 3 to Year 6 but there are considerable variations between classes. Consequently the rate of learning for pupils is inconsistent. A common feature in the one excellent lesson observed in Year 5 and the very good lessons observed in Year 3 and Year 6 is the way in which teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan lessons that are very interesting and inspire a high level of participation from the pupils. This was seen in the very good drama lesson in Year 3, based on a reading of 'Stig of The Dump', in which children acted as the conscience of the main character. This developed pupils' speaking and listening skills very well and also provided a very good basis for their own writing. In Year 5, the teacher showed exceptional skill in targeting questions to interest and involve pupils of all abilities, so all achieved as well as they could. A strong aspect in these classes is the way in which a series of lessons is planned on a theme, with very helpful marking after each session, so that pupils' understanding and writing are improved systematically. This resulted in some very mature use of language in formal letters of complaint to a hotel. Analysis of pupils' books in Year 5 and Year 6 shows considerable differences in the rate of progress in similar age classes. This is particularly striking in Year 5 where the quality of marking and assessment procedures in one class are outstanding and lead to very good progress. In the other class, where there has been considerable disruption to teaching, marking is more informal, expectations of the quality of work are less rigorous and so progress is less marked.
67. The subject is led very well by a skilled co-ordinator who leads by example. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and standards. Management of the subject is good overall. A particular strength is the way in which the school has analysed standards and successfully targeted writing and then speaking and listening for areas of improvement. A less effective aspect of management is the disparity of provision between some parallel classes.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. All aspects of literacy are used and developed very well in other subjects and this makes a very good contribution to improving standards. Writing about the Second World War in history, feelings in religious education or conclusions in science helps to build pupils' expertise at a good rate. One area of comparative weakness is the limited use of ICT to enhance learning in literacy.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2, well above average in Year 6 and pupils achieve well. Higher attainers are well supported.
- Teaching and learning are very good. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented very effectively, with very good use of practical activities.
- The leadership of mathematics is very good. Performance is rigorously evaluated.
- Assessment is used well to support the planning of future work.

Commentary

69. The school is particularly effective at teaching mathematics. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Standards in the national tests at Year 6 have been consistently well above average for the last five years at least. Over half the pupils in 2004 achieved the challenging Level 5 in those tests. This is a very high proportion. Support for higher attaining pupils is particularly effective, with setting by prior attainment in Years 3 to 6 and specific identification in the upper school for pupils identified as gifted mathematically. This has underpinned the significant proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels in recent years. Although performance in 2005 may not be quite as strong as in 2004, around one-third of the pupils in Year 2 are working confidently at the demanding Level 3, while two-fifths of the pupils in Year 6 are likely to achieve the above-average Level 5 in the national tests. Standards have tended to be slightly more variable in Year 2, with attainment above, rather than well above, average in most years.
70. Given that pupils tend to enter school with above average aptitude for the subject, their achievement is, overall, good at present. The current Year 6 group has achieved well. However, achievement is uneven in the juniors at present, as a result of staff absences, some recent and some long-standing, which have to some extent disrupted the learning of a proportion of pupils in three of the four year groups. In general, however, pupils of all abilities do well. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, and of the very few pupils at an early stage of learning English, is similar to the others', particularly when they receive good support. This was evident in the lower set lessons where support staff were working very effectively with groups of pupils.
71. There is a very good focus throughout the school on teaching basic numeracy skills and the effectiveness with which the school follows not only the structure but the spirit of the National Numeracy Strategy underpins the very secure mathematical skills acquired by many of these pupils. Pupils experience a broad range of work. A high proportion of work is oral and practical, as intended in the Strategy. Although opportunities for independent recording are good in Years 1 and 2, they are less central to the school's approach in the juniors. Nonetheless, standards are high by the end of Year 6, largely because the overall quality of teaching over time is so rigorous and effective. However, expectations of the quality of presentation in the work which is recorded in the juniors are not particularly high. The school needs to consider whether this leaves pupils as well placed as they might be for organising and taking responsibility for their written work at secondary level. There were several good examples of the introduction of practical tasks to reinforce understanding of basic principles. Year 2 pupils, for example, were devising new methods for measuring the passing of time, based on water timers which they had calibrated themselves. Year 5 and 6 pupils were making use of data relating to their main cross-curricular topic to extend their knowledge of pie-charts and their construction. Pupils make good use of practical resources, such as whiteboards. Year 1 pupils used giant Lego pieces to demonstrate simple number bonds.
72. Teaching and learning are very good overall, but particularly so in Years 1 and 2, where staffing has been most stable recently. In the best lessons, teachers place an emphasis on thinking skills and the development of strategies to enable pupils to deconstruct mathematical problems. Lessons are brisk and stimulating. Teachers question pupils carefully and constantly to ensure that

their learning is secure. There is constant on-going assessment to test pupils' understanding. There is some use of computers to support learning in mathematics, although the school has recognised that this remains patchy. A key factor, however, which underpins the quality of pupils' learning is the very positive attitude which they bring to their work.

73. Teachers use assessment well to guide their planning of future work. Pupils are expected to evaluate their own success in mathematics, although this is not an overt feature in all lessons. Discussion sessions at the beginning and end of lessons are used well by teachers to evaluate pupils' understanding. Marking is of a satisfactory quality across the school, with occasional guidance as to how pupils can improve their performance. Homework arrangements are effective and well managed, and extend pupils' understanding well.
74. Leadership is very good. The co-ordinator is a particularly effective teacher and provides a very good role model for others. He has a clear understanding of standards and teaching quality across the school and there is no sense of complacency in the school's approach. The school undertook a rigorous evaluation of the use of ICT in mathematics two terms ago. This was a very thorough process which led to a number of recommendations which are now being acted upon. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

75. Pupils use mathematics satisfactorily to support their work in other subjects, primarily in geography and, on the limited evidence available, in design and technology. However, more use of mathematics could be made in the recording of experimental findings in science. There are improving links with ICT, with a growing range of software available to extend pupils' understanding of mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in the national tests at age 11 in 2004 was well above the national average.
- Pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities throughout the school.
- Teaching in science is predominantly good with particular strengths in Years 1 and 2.
- Good behaviour in practical lessons makes a significant contribution to pupils' good achievement.
- There are shortcomings in the way investigative science is taught to the older age groups.
- The quality of marking is insufficiently effective in letting pupils know how well they are doing.

Commentary

76. By the end of Year 2, attainment is broadly average, with a substantial proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above the national average, with the great majority of pupils on course to reach or exceed the expected Level 4 by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in

relation to their capabilities due to good teaching that is set firmly within National Curriculum requirements, particularly in relation to the development of scientific enquiry skills. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is more variable, particularly in some Year 5 and 6 classes, but is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capabilities due to the good support they receive in lessons. The very few pupils with English as an additional language are supported well.

77. In Years 1 and 2 the quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers are confident in teaching science to this age group and have high expectations of what pupils can do, leading to effective learning in all subject areas and particularly in scientific enquiry. Planning is very effective in providing for individual needs and sets the learning in contexts that are well chosen to appeal to pupils. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching is more variable, with some weaker aspects, but is good overall. Good relationships between teachers and pupils are a particular strength and are central to the very good behaviour and positive attitudes of older pupils that enhance their scientific learning in most lessons. Lesson planning is generally of good quality and enables most pupils to make good progress in developing their scientific knowledge and understanding.
78. Since the last inspection, provision for investigative science has improved but there are still some shortcomings in teaching the essential scientific enquiry skills. In Years 3 to 6, many lessons are set in practical, investigative contexts but there is often insufficient focus on data collection and the interpretation of evidence in relation to the scientific question under investigation. As a result, many pupils do not achieve as well as they could do in this important area of science. In some less effective lessons, the learning objectives are not sufficiently specific in defining the knowledge, skills and vocabulary to be taught and pupils do not make enough progress in their learning because they do not understand the purpose of the tasks they are given. Although pupils' work is marked on a regular basis, there is considerable variation in the quality of feedback given to pupils. In the best examples, marking identifies incorrect vocabulary and scientific misconceptions but in some classes, particularly in Years 3 to 6, pupils do not get enough feedback about how well they are doing or what they must do to improve.
79. The absence of the subject co-ordinator has delayed current initiatives for improving standards but leadership and management in science is satisfactory overall. A recent evaluation exercise correctly identified investigative science as an area for improvement. Subsequent development work has already begun to improve the frequency and quality of teaching in scientific enquiry but the initiative has not yet had a significant effect on pupils' attainment in this area. There is scope for further development of the co-ordinator's role to include opportunities for gaining a broader overview of standards and teaching quality in order to drive forward improvement that will bring the subject more in line with the other key areas of the curriculum. Resources for teaching science are plentiful and of good quality but there is room for greater use of ICT to enhance learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is much better than it was at the previous inspection.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work. This has a positive effect on their progress.
- The ICT suite is used well to promote pupils' basic skills in the subject.
- Teachers are now much more confident in the areas of ICT they need to teach.
- Because resources are so much better, the school is now able to teach a full curriculum.
- There are not yet enough opportunities to make use of ICT skills to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

80. Standards in ICT are average at Years 2 and 6. The school has made a very significant improvement in ICT provision since the previous inspection and standards have improved. The full curriculum is taught and resources are now good.
81. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Good teaching makes a strong impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers make good use of the computer suite for whole class teaching of basic skills in the subject. However, the fact that the suite is also used as a classroom prevents staff and pupils from using it to develop ICT to its full potential. Since the previous inspection teachers have received training to develop their expertise and confidence in teaching ICT. As a result, they are able to explain and demonstrate new ideas and techniques precisely so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn and what is expected of them. For example, in a lesson taught by the ICT co-ordinator, pupils in a Year 4 class used a new program to add characters, backgrounds and speech bubbles to their work. By the end of the lesson all pupils could confidently carry out the process and the more able could change the position, size, rotation and pose of their characters. This represented good achievement.
82. Pupils achieve well across a very broad range of work in ICT. This includes higher attaining pupils, many of whom work at a level above that expected for their age. For example, Year 2 pupils create their own excellent versions of the famous picture *The Scream* by Munch and Year 6 pupils use their laptops confidently to produce multimedia presentations. ICT is often used to help pupils with special educational needs make good progress. For example, in one lesson, pupils with special educational needs used a program to help them improve their speed in completing their mathematical calculations.
83. Pupils have great enthusiasm for work with computers. Tasks are well matched to their prior attainment and teachers and class assistants provide good support. Most pupils have access to high quality computers and software at home and are able to practise their new skills there. They often use their own computers to carry out research. For example, the research work in history in Year 6 based on the Second World War was very impressive. Many pupils reached a high standard of which they were justly proud.
84. Good leadership has contributed well to the development of provision in ICT by ensuring good training and good provision of resources to complement the broad and balanced curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. There is growing, effective and meaningful use of ICT in a wide range of contexts across the curriculum. Computers are well used to support learning in history and geography, with a particular strength in their use in art and design. However, the school is aware of the need to continue to improve the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects, although many teachers are now including these opportunities in their lesson plans on a regular basis.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic and achieve well due to good teaching.
- Pupils benefit from a good curriculum that makes effective use of the locality and visits to places further afield.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Cross-curricular links, especially with English and mathematics are good.

Commentary

86. Observation of several lessons, an analysis of pupils' work and display and discussion with pupils indicates that they achieve well because of good teaching and a well-organised curriculum.
87. Pupils enjoy their geography lessons and reach standards above those normally found. Year 1 and 2 pupils were keen to talk about the travels of Barnaby Bear. They could find places he had visited on maps of the British Isles and the world. Pupils in Year 1 had walked round the local area linking their geography studies with history as they looked at different buildings. By the end of Year 6, pupils' mapping skills are well developed. In one lesson observed they could recognise simple topographical features from contour maps. Many opportunities are provided for discussions which help develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in literacy. A Year 4 class developed their skills in mathematics and ICT as they compared climate data from England and Spain. Pupils had watched a video about life in Spain and could draw contrasts between the different climates experienced in Spain and England.
88. Teaching in the lessons observed was good. Teachers make lessons very interesting and their attention to display in the classroom captures pupils' interest in the subject and promotes pupils' learning effectively. They ensure that pupils with special educational needs are supported well, enabling them to make steady progress.
89. Leadership and management are very good. The subject manager has made significant changes to the curriculum which now incorporates the latest national guidance, concentrating more on geographical skills and involving other subjects well. Resources are satisfactory. The school has invested wisely in providing a good selection of books to engage pupils' interest.
90. **History** was not a focus of the inspection. No overall judgement on provision is possible, as only one lesson was observed. No judgement for teaching and learning is offered. However, a good volume of work was seen on display and in pupils' work books, though in Years 5 and 6 there appeared to be a considerable difference between the amounts of work produced in the two classes in each age group. However, the work seen in one Year 5 class, linked to the class's imminent visit to York, was of a very high standard. A growing use of ICT supports learning in history.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.

Commentary

91. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, maintaining the standards identified in the last inspection.

92. Achievement is satisfactory overall for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the few pupils for whom English is an additional language, across the school.
93. No lessons were observed in Year 1 and Year 2, but the sound learning evident in pupils' work in books and on display, and their contributions in assembly, would suggest that teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and so pupils' learning is steady. A good aspect is the way teachers use religious stories, such as Noah and the dove of peace, to help pupils develop a better understanding of issues relevant to themselves, such as friendship. Learning is enriched through visits to a local church in the study of Christianity, though it has not yet been possible to visit places of worship of other world religions to reinforce pupils' study of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism.
94. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development through looking at the similarities between faiths, as when Year 6 considered a wide variety of stories about The Creation, and in learning to appreciate the personal qualities of themselves and others.
95. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Assessment has been identified as an area for development. The school has good links with parents who choose to withdraw their children from religious education, to negotiate a sensitive and effective way of working. There are good opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills through activities such as writing their personal prayers and discussing and writing about ideas of God from different viewpoints.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No **design and technology** lessons took place during the inspection and it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. The subject has had a low priority in this school year due to the prolonged absence of the subject co-ordinator but interim arrangements provide a basic programme of work that meets minimum requirements of the National Curriculum. The limited evidence available indicates that pupils take part in relevant activities that enable them to learn the required technological skills within the design process. Work on biscuit and slipper manufacture in Years 5 and 6 indicate that pupils achieve satisfactory standards in the subject by the end of their time in school. The present lack of dynamic leadership and management is having a detrimental effect on the status of the subject within the curriculum, given the significant strength of some other subjects. The manageability of the school's programme of work in design and technology is in need of review in order to ensure quality in teaching and learning the required elements.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Leadership and management are of very high quality.
- Some of the teaching in Year 5 and 6 is inspirational.
- Opportunities for curriculum enrichment in art are very good.

Commentary

96. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above that normally found and by the end of Year 6 it is well above the nationally expected levels. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and the very few with English as an additional language, make good progress in learning about art and artists and achieve well in all areas of art and design. The quality of teaching is good overall and in two classes in Years 5 and 6 it is outstanding. The high level of subject knowledge in these classes inspires and motivates pupils who become absorbed in their work and believe in themselves as artists.
97. In a particularly good Year 5 lesson, pupils' interest was initially captured by a video about the design of costumes for *Lord of the Rings*. They were then taught very skilfully how to transfer the same skills and considerations to their own designs for Viking costumes, prior to visiting the Jorvik Viking Centre in York. The work produced was of high quality and showed clearly that pupils had applied their new learning to the task with impressive results. In Year 6, pupils were taught how to create depth and perspective in landscape drawing. They were encouraged to evaluate an existing landscape drawing and were skilfully guided into recognising some of the ways in which the drawing could be improved. Their own efforts clearly reflected the new knowledge they had gained and they applied themselves with great concentration to creating sensitive and very effective landscape studies. In this class, the belief of pupils in themselves as artists was central to their excellent achievement.
98. Leadership and management of the subject are of very high quality and are significant factors in the very high profile of the subject in school. The co-ordinator leads by example and has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the subject. She has been instrumental in establishing the highly regarded residential art visits to Tattenhall and is the driving force behind new initiatives, such as the display of pupils' work in local galleries and the employment of a visiting artist to work with pupils on withy weaving, with very successful results. Although the subject is already a considerable strength of the school, the co-ordinator is not complacent and is seeking ways to improve still further by applying for Artsmark recognition of the school's achievements.

Music

Provision for music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of musical activities outside the school day is excellent.
- The quality of singing in Years 1 and 2 is very good.
- Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

Commentary

99. Pupils are working at levels that are above average for their age in Year 2 and Year 6. The quality of singing of pupils aged seven is well above the expected level for their age. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

100. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the very few pupils for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well because of the high level of participation in a very wide range of musical activities which gives all pupils a chance to develop their musical skills whatever their capabilities.
101. Teaching is consistently good through the school. A strong factor is the high level of instrumental expertise of many staff, which enhances learning well. This was evident in good lessons in Year 1 where the teacher guided the pupils to create music to illustrate a story, in Year 2 where conducting expertise enabled pupils to follow increasingly complex rhythms and in Year 6 where the teacher played the guitar skilfully to illustrate the relationship between pitch and the length of the string very well. The teachers' enjoyment of music is evident and their very good relationships added to pupils' joy in singing in the assembly for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. This resulted in singing of a high, spiritual quality.
102. The exceptional strength of the provision is the excellent range of musical activities on offer in which many talented staff give freely of their time to enrich pupils' learning. Notable is the school orchestra in which staff, parents, and pupils, past and present, enjoy making music together to an impressive standard. In addition, pupils are offered the opportunity to receive individual tuition on a good range of instruments. This enhances their own expertise but also enriches the quality of music making of all pupils in class. There are many opportunities for pupils to perform to an audience. In school they take part in the annual Nativity or the summer production, and the choir and orchestra sing and play in the local theatre. These varied experiences make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
103. The subject is led and managed very well. The enthusiasm and expertise of the subject leader has been an important factor in encouraging a strong team of teachers to enrich the musical life of the school.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic and achieve well because of good teaching.
- There is good enrichment with good provision for swimming and a wide variety of sports clubs.
- Leadership for the subject is good; there is a strong focus on excellence.
- The good resources are very well organised and managed.
- Further development of assessment is possible.

Commentary

104. Overall, standards are similar to those normally found and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well across a varied range of activities. The curriculum is good and pupils develop skills effectively in dance, games, and gymnastics. Swimming is now arranged for pupils in Year 4 classes. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The majority of pupils can swim the expected distance (25 metres unaided) by the time they leave the school, with many reaching higher standards.

105. During the inspection, pupils of all ages were observed in gymnastics, dance, games and several after-school activities involving physical education. These were very well supported by pupils and organised well. The school is particularly strong in dance. By the end of an excellent dance lesson, a Year 1 class reached above average standards and, in an after-school club, a group of pupils prepared to take part with many other schools in a dance festival at a local theatre. A Year 5 class developed a dance sequence based on The Vikings, which formed a very good link with their history project in readiness for their visit to York.
106. Pupils achieve well due to their enthusiasm and the good teaching and coaching available. In some year groups teachers share their expertise well. For example, in the Year 2 classes, while one teacher taught the classes for music, the other taught games. All pupils enjoyed their games lessons immensely, taking part in a variety of activities. This resulted in good progress being made in improving their throwing skills.
107. Most effective teaching results in good learning. Qualities that characterise the best teaching are:
- Careful planning that ensure skills are introduced progressively and practised seriously.
 - A very brisk pace and high expectations that result in considerable challenge.
 - Effective use of praise and demonstration to reinforce learning and boost pupils' self-esteem.
 - Very good management of pupils and resources.
108. The school places a strong emphasis on developing physical ability, healthy lifestyles and positive attitudes. The school catering supervisor plays a very important part in stressing the value of healthy eating. School teams take part in friendly and local competitions and, through this, good community links are formed with other schools.
109. Although the subject manager was absent during the inspection, it was clear that physical education is well led and managed. She is very well supported by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable team of teachers who willingly devote additional time generously to after-school and lunchtime practices. Assessment is in the early stages of development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only one PSCH session was observed. However, discussions with staff and pupils, and observation of relationships and attitudes in lessons and in assemblies indicate that this is a strong aspect of the school's work. Pupils develop a very good understanding of responsibility and the qualities that make a good citizen in discussions in lessons about *Superheroes*, in considering how to take care of the environment and in evaluating the qualities necessary for membership of the school council. Health education takes a high priority and this is evident in the healthy snacks on offer and in the exceptional quality of school lunches. The school has received the Healthy Schools award. The governors have taken the decision not to teach sex education, though the school nurse visits older classes to give information on puberty and adolescence. Similarly, the community policeman covers aspects of drugs awareness.

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	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
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).