

INSPECTION REPORT

WARGRAVE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104787

Headteacher: Mr C Davies

Lead inspector: Mr A Margerison

Dates of inspection: 7 – 9 February 2005

Inspection number: 268198

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:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	295
School address:	Bradlegh Road Newton-le-Willows Merseyside
Postcode:	WA12 8QL
Telephone number:	01744 678720
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Chisnall
Date of previous inspection:	19 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wargrave CE Primary School is situated near the centre of Newton-le-Willows, a suburban community between Warrington and St Helens. Although the area is of mixed housing, the school mainly serves a large estate of local authority housing. Pupils' backgrounds vary; overall their socio-economic circumstances are below average. The school is larger than most primary schools and currently has 295 pupils on roll aged between three and eleven years, including 29 children who attend the nursery part-time. Since the last inspection, the school has changed radically. Firstly, a considerable amount of housing close to the school has been demolished, although many families were re-housed locally. Secondly, due to local demographic trends, the number of pupils at the school has fallen by approximately a quarter. The number of children in the nursery has almost halved. This has resulted in year groups that require classes in reception and Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 to include pupils from more than one year group. There have also been significant changes in staff. Falling pupil numbers have reduced the number of teachers by a quarter and there has been additional staff turbulence due to staff absence, retirements and staff leaving the profession. This has included the headteacher and several senior staff. The present headteacher joined the school in September 2004. At the time of the inspection, three of the teachers were employed on a temporary basis, one covering for a maternity leave and two other staff employed on a temporary basis until pupil numbers and budgets for September 2005 were clear.

When children start school, although their attainment varies, baseline assessment shows that attainment is well below that expected. This is particularly so in their language and mathematical skills, with few children working at or above the expected levels for their age. Overall, the number of pupils who join and leave the school during the school year is above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties, varies significantly from year to year, but is broadly average overall. The majority of pupils are of White-British origin, but approximately five per cent of pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and a few are at an early stage of learning English. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Award (2004), Foundation Quality Mark (2002), School Achievement Award (2000) and Duchy of Lancaster Schools Award (2002).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21666	Mr A Margerison	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Special educational needs English Geography History
13462	Mrs R Mothersdale	Lay inspector	
22657	Mr M Madeley	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education
10611	Mr M James	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Music Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Wargrave CE Primary School is a satisfactory school giving sound value for money. From a very low start when they begin school, pupils achieve satisfactorily, although standards in Year 6 overall are below average. The recently appointed headteacher is a very good role model for pupils and staff and has taken decisive action in recent months to reverse the declining trend in standards.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher expects every child to achieve their full potential and has a very clear vision for the school.
- Children in nursery and reception achieve well due to consistently good teaching.
- Assessment information is not used rigorously enough in all subjects to enable teachers to set pupils clear targets for learning.
- Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) are not used well enough as a teaching and learning tool.
- Adults have very good relationships with pupils and consistently very high expectations of behaviour so that pupils develop a very clear understanding of right and wrong.
- Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in working with colleagues to monitor the progress pupils are making in their subjects.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good with the result that they achieve well.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education, which reflects the school's Christian ethos well.
- Across the school, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to consolidate and reinforce their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in tackling the issues identified for action. Assessment procedures in the nursery are effective and similar procedures are being extended into science and ICT. However, teachers' skills and confidence in using ICT resources in lessons have not kept pace with technology or the demands of the curriculum. The opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects are limited. However, the new headteacher has given the school clear direction and a good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Children achieve well in nursery and reception classes, although standards overall by the end of reception are below those expected in all the areas of learning except in their personal, social and emotional development. In this aspect, children achieve very well to reach standards that are typical for their age. The trend in the school's results in national tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 has been below the national pattern in recent years and the 2004 results reflected this. For pupils in Year 2, they were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to all schools and below average when compared to similar schools. However, inspection evidence shows that, currently, pupils in Year 2 are achieving satisfactorily and standards are slightly better than last year, although still below average overall. In ICT, standards and achievement are unsatisfactory due to the inconsistent opportunities pupils have

to use and extend their skills in lessons. Inspection evidence shows that current pupils in Year 6 are achieving satisfactorily and that standards are better than in 2004, although they are still below average in English, mathematics and science overall, partly due to the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this group. In English, pupils achieve well in speaking and listening and reading, but overall standards are affected by pupils' writing skills. In mathematics, pupils achieve well in their number skills. In ICT, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with those expected. However, in religious education throughout the school, pupils achieve well to reach standards in line with those expected.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils develop good attitudes to learning and behave well. Attendance is satisfactory; the effective procedures the school has introduced to encourage attendance have resulted in pupils' punctuality to school being good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the nursery and reception, teaching is consistently good. This is due to teachers' good subject knowledge and their very effective use of support staff to work with groups and individuals. As a result, children achieve well and, in particular, rapidly develop good levels of independence and learn to work with each other well. Effective assessment procedures enable adults to match activities well to the learning needs of each child. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is satisfactory, but there are variations across classes and subjects. In all classes, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and use questions well to involve pupils in lessons. Most lessons are brisk and pacy. However, teachers do not always plan activities that challenge pupils of all abilities in classes or provide them with enough opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in lessons. In addition, teachers rarely make best use of the ICT resources available to them. Assessment information is used well in English to monitor pupils' progress and to set them targets for learning. However, this is not the case in science or mathematics and teachers' marking rarely refers to these targets to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum overall is satisfactory but, within this, the provision for pupils with special educational needs and that for pupils' personal, social and health education are strengths reflected in the positive attitudes and behaviour seen around the school. The school's procedures for pupils' care, welfare, support and guidance are good and pupils are well involved in the work and development of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management, including the overall contribution of governors to the development of the school, are satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school well and in a short time has had a significant effect on the school. His very clear vision for the school has created an ethos of teamwork amongst staff and is focused on raising standards and improving the quality of education. Governors, who have a good understanding of the challenges the school faces in the future, and senior managers support him in this vision. The role of subject leaders was reviewed recently and they have clear roles, but most have not yet had the opportunity to work with colleagues to improve the quality of teaching.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school. They are particularly pleased with the way the school deals with any concerns they have. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Although they have no concerns about bullying or harassment, they are confident that if they have any problems, the very good relationships between them and adults mean that they will be listened to.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Enable teachers to make greater use of information gained from assessment in planning for what pupils need to learn next, especially potentially higher attaining pupils.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring pupils' progress and working with colleagues to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in lessons.
- Increase teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in using ICT as a teaching and learning tool.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

From a very low start when they begin school, children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes. Thereafter, achievement is satisfactory with the result that standards in Year 6 are below those expected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery and reception achieve very well in their personal and social development.
- Pupils' achievement in religious education is good.
- Pupils do not achieve well enough in ICT in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils' achievement in writing and mathematical problem solving is not as good as in other aspects of English and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. The most consistent teaching is in nursery and reception and this is reflected in children's achievement. When children start in school, very few have extensive experience of education and the level of their skills is well below those typical for their age, particularly in speaking and basic language and mathematics skills. However, during their time in the nursery and reception, they achieve well although, by end of reception, few children reach the expected levels for their age in most of the areas of learning. The exception to this is in their personal, social and emotional development. In this area of their learning, children achieve very well so that most of them develop their skills to be in line with those typical for their age. In their language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, standards are below those expected.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.4 (15.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.1 (14.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.9 (15.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The school's results for pupils in Year 2 have been falling against the national trend in recent years. In 2004, they were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to all schools and below average compared to similar schools. However, falling rolls have resulted in year groups that vary significantly in the range of abilities and this group included nearly a third of pupils with special educational needs, which had a negative effect on the overall results. Although, pupils with special educational needs achieve well, few reach the expected levels for their age in writing and mathematics. Despite this factor, the basic results mask some important positive aspects. For example, in 2004, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level and the higher than expected level in writing was average when compared to similar schools. In addition, over time, pupils' performance in reading has been close to the national median and girls' performance in reading, writing and mathematics has been close to the national median for their age. In fact, school data shows that, over time, girls have attained better standards than boys. However, inspection evidence shows that there is currently no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Due to the

strong emphasis teachers place on developing pupils' basic literacy and number skills and with fewer pupils with special educational needs in the current group, standards are beginning to improve. In reading, pupils are achieving well so that most pupils are working at the expected levels for their age. In writing and mathematics, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, although standards are below those expected in Year 2, mainly due to the low numbers of pupils working at the higher than expected level. In religious education, due to good teaching, pupils are achieving well to reach standards broadly in line with those expected. However, achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory because teachers do not use the resources available to them sufficiently in lessons to develop pupils' skills, so that standards are below those expected in Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.6 (26.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.0 (24.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.2 (27.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The trend in the school's results in recent years for pupils in Year 6 has also been below the national pattern. In 2004, the school's results were well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics when compared to all schools. When compared to similar schools the results were also well below average in English and science. In mathematics, due to the good proportion of pupils who reached the expected level, the results were average. Although an above average proportion of pupils join and leave the school in Years 3 to 6, inspection evidence shows that this factor had little effect on the school's results. The main factor was the above average proportion of pupils (27 per cent) in the 2004 group with special educational needs. These pupils achieved well relative to their starting point, but few reached the expected levels for their age. In addition, although virtually all pupils who gained the slightly better than expected level in their tests in Year 2 gained the expected level in Year 6, few went on to attain in Year 6 the higher level in English, particularly in writing. The cumulative effect of these two factors was that as a group, these pupils did not make the expected progress in Year 3 to 6.
4. Current pupils in Year 6 were below average in their Year 2 national tests and in addition, the current Year 6 group includes nearly a quarter of pupils with special educational needs and two with statements of special educational needs. Although, these pupils are achieving well, few are working at the expected levels for their age. As a result, inspection evidence shows that, although, overall, pupils have achieved satisfactorily during Years 3 to 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. However, there are strengths in pupils' achievement within these overall judgements. In English, pupils are achieving well in their speaking, listening and reading skills and, in mathematics, in number skills. This includes the few pupils with English as an additional language. They achieve satisfactorily overall, but achieve well in their spoken English skills due to the very effective support they receive from teaching assistants. However, pupils' achievement in writing and in the other aspects of mathematics, particularly their problem-solving skills, is satisfactory, because pupils do not have consistent opportunities to practise them in other subjects. In ICT, pupils are achieving satisfactorily and standards are in line with those expected. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 showed that many have a good grasp of basic ICT skills such as using 'PowerPoint' presentations, but pupils' work in books shows that the opportunities they have to use these skills are very variable across classes and are heavily dependent upon their teacher's own skills and confidence in the subject. As a result, the progress they make over time is inconsistent. Pupils continue to achieve well in religious education to reach standards in line with those expected. Due to the timetable arrangements, there was insufficient evidence to make judgements on standards in any other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. They have positive attitudes to school and behave well. Pupils' punctuality is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and works very hard to achieve them. As a result, pupils develop a very clear understanding of right and wrong.
- Relationships among pupils are very good.
- The school has very effective procedures to deal with all forms of harassment.
- Provision to develop pupils' understanding of other cultures is underdeveloped.

Commentary

5. Pupils enjoy coming to school and enthusiastically take part in what is provided for them in lessons and after school. Since last September, the school has made a concerted effort to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. Slightly altering the start of the school day and introducing incentives and rewards for being in school on time have been effective. As a result, attendance has been maintained this year on last year's figures, but evidence from school documentation shows that pupils' punctuality has improved and during the inspection very few pupils were late to school.

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.

6. The headteacher has taken effective action to improve standards of behaviour. Teachers and support staff have had specific training in behaviour management and a series of rewards have been introduced to complement the clear code of conduct. As a result, as pupils move through the school, their moral values improve well. By Year 6, pupils have a very good understanding of what is right and wrong, and are mature and responsible members of the school community. The majority of parents agree with this and feel that behaviour in the school is good. Most of the pupils who were excluded last year have left the school, but the school still has a few pupils who find behaving well difficult and, on the few occasions when lessons lack pace and clear learning outcomes, a few pupils lose concentration and distract others. However, because adults are very consistent in their expectations, the vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and poor behaviour is very much the exception rather than the rule.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	258	8	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	41	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

- Pupils work and play together very well and share their ideas in discussions. This reflects the very strong emphasis placed by the school on promoting very good relationships between pupils through assemblies, class discussions and general reward systems. Pupils are taught to respect each other's views, opinions and feelings. As a result, although there are occasional incidents of disharmony between pupils, overall, parents and pupils have no concerns about bullying or harassment, and they are very confident that the school deals with any incidents very effectively and promptly.
- These good aspects of pupils' social development are complemented by the efforts the school makes for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. For example, in assemblies, pupils are frequently asked to think about what they have been experiencing or to reflect on how certain situations may affect others. Art lessons effectively help them develop a good appreciation of the beauty of the world around them and the music played in assemblies is used well to encourage pupils to reflect upon the emotions that the music stimulates. They are also taught through religious education the key principles that underpin the major world faiths so that they learn to respect the cultural differences between the followers of these religions. The school involves the few pupils from other ethnic groups where appropriate to share with their classmates their cultural beliefs. However, opportunities to learn about the daily lives of the diverse cultures that are part of modern British society tend to be linked to specific subjects and are not consistently threaded throughout the work of the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. The school places a strong emphasis on establishing positive links with parents and on ensuring that pupils are well cared for and have a significant role in the development of the school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers in the nursery and reception have good subject knowledge and use assessment information well to provide a good range of activities that match the learning needs of children.
- Teachers use questions well to involve pupils and to maintain a good pace to lessons.
- Teachers' planning in Years 1 to 6 does not consistently challenge pupils of all abilities or provide enough opportunities for them to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in lessons.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to set specific learning targets for pupils, particularly in mathematics and science, or as the basis for teachers' marking of pupils' work.
- Support staff make a good contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

9. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there are consistent strengths seen in all classes that provide the basis for the positive learning atmosphere that prevails in the school. First and foremost, teachers are very consistent in their expectations of pupils' behaviour and presentation of work. Pupils' work in most classes is generally very well presented, showing that the vast majority of pupils take a great pride in their work. Staff have recently had training in behaviour management techniques. A new school discipline policy and strategy have been introduced and teachers' approach reflects this well. Although a few pupils, particularly older ones, do not always respond as teachers would wish, teachers maintain their position and use the procedures consistently. As a result, these occasional uninvited interruptions do not disrupt the learning of other pupils and teachers are able to get on with teaching pupils rather than spending time dealing with difficult behaviour. A further important part of most lessons is the effective way that teachers use questions to challenge pupils' understanding and to involve all pupils in lessons. As a result, class discussions are brisk and generally stimulate pupils' interest well. Overall, these parts of lessons are the most consistently effective learning experiences for pupils particularly in Years 1 to 6.
10. In the nursery and reception, teaching is consistently good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan an interesting range of activities in lessons that are well matched to the learning needs of the children, whatever their ability. Underpinning this are the good assessment procedures that provide information for teachers to use in their planning. For example, in the nursery, teachers and support staff observe children throughout the day and make notes on what they do. These observations are then transferred to each child's learning record and used well to plan the next steps for learning. This very close working relationship and teamwork are also seen in reception where teachers and support staff plan together to provide children in the two classes with a good range of activities that develop their skills and understanding in all the areas of learning. They achieve a good balance between adult-led activities and those that children pursue on their own. As a result, they achieve well, particularly in their personal and social development, and quickly become able to work with others and on their own with little direct adult supervision.
11. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is satisfactory, but there are specific factors that hold back the pace of pupils' learning. The headteacher's detailed analysis of pupil assessment data has given teachers clear challenging targets to work towards over the year linked to the setting of learning expectations for each pupil. However, these are not transferred to set shorter-term learning targets for pupils, except in English, and teachers are not sufficiently rigorous in assessing what pupils can do, how much progress individuals are making and what they need to learn next. In addition, their marking of pupils' work does not consistently use targets as the basis for helping pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. As a result, in those parts of the lessons when pupils are working in groups, particularly in mathematics and science, activities do not consistently provide the right level of challenge for pupils of all abilities and do not consistently build on the good opening discussions.

12. In Years 1 and 2, teachers have to work hard to continue to build on pupils' basic literacy and number skills and they do this effectively. This continues in Years 3 to 6; however, this is to the detriment of consistently extending more able pupils because teachers do not plan enough activities in other lessons for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. As a result, pupils' ability to use their number skills to solve problems or to write and present their work in a broad range of styles in a stimulating and exciting way does not develop at the same rate. This particularly affects those pupils who are capable of working at a higher than expected level, but need very specific, focused teaching in order to achieve well. It is no coincidence that in the 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 6, few of these pupils attained the higher than expected level in English, mathematics or science.
13. In contrast, teachers' planning for pupils who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs, is good. Pupils' individual plans are use well and these pupils, and those with English as an additional language, benefit from good support from teaching assistants. Although on occasions during whole class discussions their role is not clear, when they are working with groups they use questions well to prompt pupils and maintain a good balance between helping pupils without completing tasks for them and spoon feeding them. As result, these pupils achieve well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4 (10%)	20 (49%)	16 (39%)	1 (2%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

The curriculum in the nursery and reception is good, but satisfactory in the school overall. The opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- The curriculum does not exploit the potential links between subjects sufficiently to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT.
- The resources for teaching and learning in the nursery and reception are good.

Commentary

14. Overall, the school provides pupils with a broad range of activities that meets statutory requirements satisfactorily and develops their skills and understanding in all subjects of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. All subjects have an overview that ensures that, despite the mixed-age classes caused by very variable pupil numbers in different year groups, pupils do not repeat topics. However, curriculum planning views subjects very much in isolation from each other. Schemes of work do not identify clear opportunities to guide teachers when they are planning lessons to link subjects together. As a result, this is left to individual teachers to use their own innovative ideas and imagination. There are good examples across the school. For example, pupils in Year 6 have been studying World War Two in history and the class teacher has used books set in the period, such as 'Carrie's War' and 'The Machine Gunners', as focus texts in English lessons. However, this is not seen frequently, with the result that opportunities are missed, particularly in Years 3 to 6, to provide relevant opportunities across different subjects for pupils to use

and apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. This has a negative effect on the achievement of those pupils with the potential to attain the higher than expected levels in these subjects.

15. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception is good. Detailed plans are in place, which most successfully incorporate all the areas of learning that should be taught to children before they enter Year 1. Lesson planning is comprehensive, and the children have access to a wide range of interesting activities and learning experiences, both in the classrooms and in the outdoor areas. The classrooms are well resourced and well used, and the children are well supported and encouraged by the teachers and teaching assistants. A rich, varied and often stimulating curriculum is the result and was recognised in 2002 when the school was awarded the Foundation Quality Mark.
16. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and that for pupils' personal social and health education are strong aspects of the curriculum. The individual plans for pupils with special educational needs are good and clearly identify what pupils need to learn. Teachers use these plans well in their planning of lessons and use of support staff. Frequently, these plans include targets for pupils' personal development, in addition to literacy and numeracy, in which most pupils have the most difficulty. The strong emphasis the school places on developing pupils' personal development through its personal, social and health education programme was recognised in 2004 when the school received the Healthy Schools Award. Sex, alcohol and drugs education are an integral part of the programme that is based on a whole-school scheme. The importance of leading a healthy lifestyle is promoted well through the provision of sports activities out of lessons and the 'Healthy Eating' scheme.
17. The emphasis that the school places on providing pupils with opportunities to experience success whatever their attributes is reflected in the activities provided out of lessons. The clubs, particularly in sport, provide both girls and boys with good opportunities to extend and develop their own interests and skills. The school involves outside specialists where it can, to support this. For example, during the inspection, a professional coach was in school to run a weekly girls' indoor cricket club. The number of pupils who take part in these activities is good. Although the range of activities is good for pupils in Years 3 to 6, there are fewer opportunities for younger pupils to take part and the range of visits and visitors to school is similar to what is normally seen.
18. Since the last inspection, the accommodation has improved well. The temporary classrooms have been removed and the ICT suite has improved the resources for the subject well although there are still problems with the reliability of the systems. The accommodation for children in the nursery and reception is spacious and they have access to well-resourced outside learning spaces. Classrooms are of a good size for the numbers of pupils in classes and are well maintained by the caretaking staff. Teachers make very good use of the display areas to celebrate pupils' work and to create a stimulating learning environment. Although the library area is small, the school has plans to create a larger library in a spare classroom that will accommodate whole classes of pupils and provide much improved opportunities for research and independent learning for older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Support and guidance for pupils are satisfactory. The school has good procedures to involve pupils in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils and adults are very good.
- Arrangements to settle children into school in the nursery and reception are good.
- Pupils are given good levels of personal support, but there are no whole-school procedures to support pupils in the reviewing of their learning.

- The school council represents pupils' views well.
- Procedures for child protection meet local guidelines, but not all staff have been trained recently.

Commentary

19. Parents are confident that the school takes good care of their children. The inspection team endorses their view that if there is a problem it will be dealt with swiftly and parents will be informed. The school meets all its statutory responsibilities well in this area, including the arrangements for child protection. Although, due to staff changes, not all staff have had recent training in child protection procedures, they all know what to do and who the main contact person is in school if they have any concerns. The headteacher is very vigilant in ensuring this aspect of the school's work is carried out effectively. Recently, he has introduced revised procedures for risk assessment that have resulted in a number of activities, such as the 'traditional' residential visits to the Isle of Man for pupils in Year 5, being cancelled this year, until they have fulfilled his strict requirements.
20. One of the key features of the school that contributes to its positive ethos is the very good relationships between adults and pupils. This starts in the nursery when children first join the school. Without exception, parents feel that these arrangements are good and this is reflected in the rapid way in which even the youngest children, several of whom had not been in school very long at the time of the inspection, confidently got on with their work and took a full part in activities. Visits are made to parents' homes and the children spend time in school, sometimes with their parents, before they start attending regularly. These very positive relationships are maintained throughout the school and are reflected in the good support provided in lessons for pupils who need specific support with their learning. They also create a climate of trust and confidence among pupils in the adults who work with them, which makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievement in their personal skills. In discussion with pupils, they all were confident that if they have a problem they will be listened to. However, the good procedures for the day-to-day support and guidance for pupils on a personal basis are tempered by the inconsistencies in the assessment and guidance given to pupils to support their academic achievement. There are currently no whole-school procedures for pupils to be involved in the setting and reviewing of their progress so, coupled with the inconsistencies in teachers' marking of pupils' work, they do not get sufficient guidance on how they can improve their work which affects the pace of learning and achievement.
21. The school council is an important aspect of this school's procedures to ensure that pupils have a voice and the opportunity to contribute to their school. It is made up of representatives from across the school. Currently, these representatives are not elected, which reduces the opportunities for pupils as a whole to learn about their responsibilities as 'citizens' of a community, but in discussions with the inspection team, they were clear about their role and hold regular discussions with the pupils they represent. Until this year, it met spasmodically, but there are now regular meetings and discussions are currently looking at developing the outside provision for playtimes.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established good links with parents and the community and sound links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to deal with any concerns from parents are very good.
- The school has good procedures to involve parents, particularly in the nursery and reception, in the work of the school and their children's learning.
- Pupils' annual reports do not clearly explain what pupils can do and what they need to learn next.

- Pupils take an active part in supporting their local community.
- The school is proactive in seeking to develop its links with other schools.

Commentary

22. Parents have positive views of the school and this reflects the care that the school takes in making sure that a member of staff is always available to speak to any parent who has a concern or worry. All parents were very confident that anything they raise with the school would be taken seriously, investigated and, if the concern was well-founded, dealt with very effectively. These good links begin in the nursery and reception classes, which sets the tone for the good relationships with parents seen throughout the school. Parents are given good information about the work of the school and what their children will be learning about. As a result, although few parents help in school on a regular basis, most make positive contributions to their children's learning by listening to them read at home and supporting the school when the children are given homework. The school has taken particularly effective steps to involve parents in pupils' personal, social and health education through the PRIDE project (parents' and carers' involvement in drug and safety education) and Family Learning sessions provided by the local authority's Family Wellbeing Team. The school was given an award from the Duchy of Lancaster in 2002 for promoting these projects. A good number of parents attend these meetings in school, which helps reinforce for pupils the importance of this aspect of their learning. However, although parents do not have any concerns, the inspection team judge that there are weaknesses in the annual reports given to parents about their children's progress. The school recently introduced a computer-based system for generating reports and, as a result, they are not sufficiently pupil-specific. Although they meet requirements, the comments about what pupils have learnt are too generic and the reports do not set clear targets about what pupils need to learn next, which also reflects the weaknesses in the assessment procedures.
23. The school's links with the community make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of their responsibilities to others and their social and moral development. Through fund-raising events such as sponsored activities, pupils have raised significant amounts of money for charity over recent years, some of which have been local charities, as well as the national campaigns such as 'Red Nose Day'. They also contribute to the local community in other ways. One of the most notable is the 'Dawn Patrol' run in conjunction with the Red Cross. Each morning specific pupils check that certain elderly people, whose homes they pass on the way to school, are up and about. If there is no sign, they ring the Red Cross contact, who will go around and check on the welfare of the elderly person. The school uses the community well in lessons and a few organisations use the school premises for their activities. There are strong links with the church, which contributes well to pupils' spiritual development and achievement in religious education.
24. The school has recently begun to extend its links with other schools. For example, during the inspection, the school council took part in a video link with another school council to discuss how they operated. There are well-established links with the secondary school that most pupils transfer to and with two City Learning Centres. Pupils in all years from Reception to Year 6 visit these regularly to work on ICT activities which are one of the main reasons why standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with those expected despite the limited use of ICT in lessons in school. However, the school has just had a bid for funding accepted, as part of the national Network Learning Initiative, to establish a partnership with a group of other schools, which aims to increase the opportunities for staff and pupils to share expertise.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is satisfactorily led and managed. Governance of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership of the school is good. He is well supported by senior staff but, overall, the role of subject leaders and the management of the school are satisfactory. Consequently, the school deals satisfactorily with the potential barriers to learning caused by the very variable number and abilities of different year groups and the financial pressures caused by falling rolls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school and a very clear vision for its future.
- The headteacher and members of the senior management team are very good role models for other staff and pupils.
- Subject leaders have clear roles, but they are not sufficiently involved in working with colleagues to improve the quality of teaching or to monitor pupils' progress in their subjects.
- The ethos of the school is very significantly enhanced by the close teamwork among all staff.
- Governors have good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but their role in evaluating the effect of initiatives on the quality of education is in the early stages of development.
- Resources for ICT in classrooms are not used well enough in lessons.

Commentary

25. The headteacher is the driving force at the heart of the school and its commitment to raise standards and improve the quality of education provided for its pupils. He was appointed at the start of the current school year and took immediate action to tackle the declining trend in the school's national test results. For example, he has observed teaching across the school and worked closely with the local education authority advisory team who spend two days in school undertaking a thorough review of teaching and learning. As a result of this and other detailed analysis of test papers and assessments given to most pupils at the start of the year, he has a very clear understanding of where the school is now and what it needs to do in the immediate future. The close correlation between the school's own self-evaluation documentation and the inspection findings reflect the accuracy of his analysis. This is encompassed in an action plan that complements the whole school improvement plan and clearly identifies targets and action to be completed within a short timescale. Inspection evidence shows that, although most of these initiatives have not had sufficient time to have a really strong effect on pupils' achievement, the school is improving and standards are set to rise slightly this year.
26. From discussions with staff, it is clear that they all share the commitment of the headteacher and his vision for the school, which is testimony to the very effective way that he has created a climate for improvement based on very strong teamwork. This is particularly reflected in the work of the senior managers. Although the current team have only been in place for a few months, they are fully committed to every pupil having the opportunities they need in order to succeed. Through their own work and teaching they are very good role models for colleagues and pupils and are gradually playing an increasingly prominent role in developing teaching and learning. To complement the detailed evaluation of the work of the school, and the creation of the senior management team, the headteacher has refined the role of governors and subject leaders and their capacity to contribute to the development of the school. To start with, a whole-school training day was dedicated to staff discussing their role in their subjects. As a result, they all have a clear understanding of what they want to achieve, have action plans in place and most have made a satisfactory start in tackling the priorities they have identified. However, as a result of the relatively recent re-organisation of subject leader roles they have not had sufficient opportunities to work with colleagues to improve learning or to monitor the progress pupils are making in their subjects. As a result, apart from in English, mathematics and science, few have a very clear understanding of the quality of teaching and standards in their subjects.

27. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the challenges it faces in the future, particularly from falling rolls. This is partly due to their monitoring of lessons and partly from the information they have received from the headteacher. They fulfil their statutory duties satisfactorily, including monitoring the effectiveness of the school's race equality policy. They keep a close eye on school finances and are fully aware of the importance, in the light of falling rolls, of getting 'best value' from school spending which, for capital investments and the services the school purchases, they do well. However, the procedures to involve them in long term development planning are underdeveloped so they are not fully clear how they will evaluate the effectiveness or the value for money of the initiatives the school puts into place in the future. The headteacher inherited reserves above the five per cent national guidance. However, during the current financial year the school has spent considerable sums on further enhancing resources, particularly for ICT and has plans to further extend these and improve the library facilities and the accommodation for children in nursery and reception.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	867,265	Balance from previous year	30,076
Total expenditure	847,213	Balance carried forward to the next	50,128
Expenditure per pupil	2,499		

This figures in this table refer to the last financial year when pupil numbers were higher than present.

28. On a day-to-day basis the management of the school is effective. The administrative staff play an important role in this, which releases the headteacher to be a constant presence around the school. Parents hold him in high regard and at the meeting for parents held prior to the inspection several noted that he was always available to talk to. Staff resources are used well and the school is developing plans to introduce the reforms in working practices by September. However, in specific subjects, management has not succeeded in making sure that the quality of provision has been maintained since the last inspection. In particular, in ICT, management has not ensured that teachers' skills and understanding in the subject have kept pace with the recent dramatic changes in technology and the demands of the subject. As a result, teachers' use of ICT resources is not satisfactory, standards in Years 1 and 2 have fallen and insufficient use is made of the resources to help pupils' learning in all subjects. In lessons, teachers make insufficient use of the resources available to them as an effective teaching and learning tool and not enough use is made of the computer suites to develop pupils' skills, particularly in the lower end of the school. However, the newly appointed subject leader is fully aware that many staff lack confidence in using these resources and has plans in place to address this.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

The induction procedures for children are good, and the curriculum provided for them is also good. The leadership and management are good, as is the children's behaviour. There is good teaching overall, and as a result children achieve well. Provision, especially that in the nursery, has improved well since the time of the previous inspection.

Children enter the school with a wide range of abilities, but overall their knowledge and understanding are well below that expected. By the end of the reception year the majority of the children are still working at below the expected levels in most areas of learning, but they have made good progress. In their personal, social and emotional development, the children achieve very well, with the majority reaching the expected standard by the time they enter Year 1.

The children receive consistently good teaching, with teachers and teaching assistants complementing each other well in providing for them. The teamwork of the staff is a particular strength, with the good leadership that is provided by the co-ordinator ensuring that everyone knows when to contribute. Teachers provide a rich and varied range of learning experiences for the children, and they are given both careful direction and independence in their work. Assessment is much improved, and all adults keep careful and detailed records of the children's accomplishments. Children with special needs and English as an additional language are fully involved throughout, and adults ensure that they take part in all activities.

The classrooms are large, spacious and well equipped. They are well organised and well used, and colourful displays of the children's work enhance their appearance. They provide a warm, welcoming learning environment and the children clearly enjoy being there. Their attitudes in turn are good, they are happy and this helps them to learn well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are on course to achieve the expected level by the end of reception. Their progress is very good.
- Children are polite and well behaved.
- They take turns and share the resources provided.
- Children show some independence in their work.
- Adults support the children throughout, and provide them with many opportunities to develop their social skills.

Commentary

29. Due to very good teaching characterised by very good teamwork between adults, children achieve very well and learn how to behave in school, and be part of a social grouping. In both the nursery and reception, children learn to eat their snack and drink their milk in a very polite manner. They readily share items, take turns and play together. Children are eager to explore new learning, and most are able to concentrate on the work being undertaken. They learn to move confidently around the classrooms and the school, and they develop the confidence to ask for assistance where necessary. The teachers and the teaching assistants know the children well, and respond very appropriately to their individual needs. They provide

children with a most appropriate mix of directed activities and independence, and they have high expectations of their behaviour and social skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good; in particular, most suitable opportunities are provided to help develop children's speaking.
- Children have limited speaking skills.
- They enjoy handling books and developing their early reading skills.
- Children readily use pencils to produce simple writing, although few are yet able to produce more than a short phrase of text.

Commentary

30. Children's spoken language is one of the weakest aspects of their development when they start school. In the nursery and reception, teachers and support staff encourage children to develop these skills by talking to them regularly and make good use of questioning to encourage them to discuss what they are doing. However, despite achieving well, by the end of the reception, children's speaking skills are below those expected for their age. A small number speak clearly, whilst others speak in single words, not possessing the vocabulary or the confidence to make longer contributions. In the nursery, children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories and teachers make good use of large story books to encourage this. As a result, children achieve well so that children in reception are starting to recognise a number of words that they read to others. Teachers provide children with suitable opportunities to write and, whilst those in the nursery develop their emergent writing skills, those in the reception write their names and other simple words. However, only a few more able children are able to write a simple sentence without help or to use basic punctuation such as capital letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are likely to be below the expected level by the time they leave reception. However, they achieve well.
- Many older children know a suitable range of simple mathematical vocabulary.
- Regular opportunities are provided for the children to count, and handle different shapes and measures.

Commentary

31. Due to good teaching that focuses well upon developing children's basic number skills, children achieve well. Teachers and support staff co-operate well to make sure that all children have the opportunity to work with an adult on a very regular basis. In both classes, teachers use assessment information well to plan activities that are well matched to the learning needs of each child. They also seize any opportunities for children to count and use counting rhymes. For example, in the nursery, children count snack items and drinks, numbers of children and animals. Children also attempt to identify the correct number of items to match a numeral, but a significant proportion find this difficult. In the reception, most pupils build on the good start they get in the nursery to count confidently together in a group and a few pupils are beginning to understand the concept of 'one more'. However, they are

less confident with 'one less'. In lessons and around the classroom, teachers provide children with a wide variety of mathematical tasks and games, and they give children the opportunities to develop their understanding through talking about their work. As a result, many children in the reception have an appropriate vocabulary that allows them to talk about various concepts such as 'long' and 'short', and 'empty' and 'full', as well as to name basic two- and three-dimensional shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are likely to be below the expected level when they enter Year 1, although their achievement is good.
- Children are beginning to develop their understanding of people, animals and plants, although some have difficulties explaining their understanding.
- Children successfully carry out practical activities, such as making food items.
- Teachers provide a rich and varied curriculum, which allows the children to develop their understanding through a range of interesting activities and learning experiences.

Commentary

32. Teachers give children a good range of activities and experiences that enable them to learn about the world around them. Children in the nursery learn about the parts of the body and the different senses. Children in the reception learn about plants and animals, and the ways in which things can change, such as ice turning into water. Children also learn about different places, and they know about houses, roads and the shops in the local area. Children in both classes have heard a variety of Bible stories, as well as learning about the Chinese New Year. A number of children are able to explain their knowledge with some confidence, whilst others, with more limited language skills, often find understanding and explaining more difficult. Practical activities, such as preparing food, are a regular feature in both the nursery and reception. For example, children in the nursery enjoyed making pancakes, whilst those in the reception similarly enjoyed making gingerbread men.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are on course to be below the expected level by the time they leave reception, but they achieve well.
- Teaching is good, with adults providing clear demonstrations of the work being tackled.
- Children use a range of large equipment with increasing dexterity and confidence.
- Some children are less competent in controlling smaller items.

Commentary

33. Children benefit from the range of activities provided daily. Pencils, crayons, scissors, play dough and a variety of construction toys and large apparatus are readily available, and children use them with enthusiasm. In the nursery and reception, most children cut and stick items, and thread shapes onto a string. However, a significant number of children need help to carry out these procedures, because they lack precision and control in their manipulative skills. Children use outdoor equipment well, for instance using wheeled vehicles confidently and skilfully. Older children further develop their physical skills during lessons in the hall. Teachers, and teaching assistants, support them well, providing clear demonstrations and

much encouragement. They are also very aware of the importance of ensuring the children's safety at all times.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good teaching, with a wide variety of activities provided, allows children to achieve well.
- Children are presented with a variety of activities in music, painting and model making, to which they respond well.

Commentary

34. In both the nursery and reception, a wide range of activities is provided, which the children undertake with enthusiasm. They play instruments, sing songs and produce a range of paintings and models. They show developing skills in all activities, although a significant number still have some difficulty controlling pencils and brushes accurately. Children are happy to take part in role-play activities, in both the 'Train' and 'House' in nursery, and the 'Office' in reception. However, some children lack imagination when carrying out these activities. Teachers and teaching assistants complement each other well in supporting, encouraging and attempting to stimulate the children, and they routinely join in the activities with the children.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in reading and listening skills.
- The subject leaders have a clear vision for the subject, intended to raise standards.
- Teachers use questions well in lessons so that the opening parts of lessons are brisk and pacy.
- Other subjects are not used well enough to develop pupils' writing skills.
- Support staff are used well to support pupils who need help with their learning so that they achieve well.
- Teachers do not use pupils' targets well enough as the basis for their marking to help pupils know what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

35. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English overall are better than the performance of pupils in recent national tests in Years 2 and 6, when the trend has been below the national pattern for both year groups. From a low starting point, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily. Although standards overall are below those expected, there are distinct differences across the different strands of the subject. Teachers place a very strong emphasis on building up pupils' basic literacy skills. As a result, in reading, pupils achieve well. In writing and speaking, achievement is satisfactory and standards are below those expected. However, pupils' listening skills develop well to be broadly in line with those expected. The good achievement in reading is due to teachers' very systematic approach to teaching basic reading skills, particularly in Year 1. The teacher uses group reading sessions well, but also ensures that each pupil is heard to read on an individual basis at least twice a week. Parents also make a good contribution by listening to their children at home. As a result, by Year 2, although few pupils are reading at the higher than expected levels, most are

steady readers with a secure vocabulary and are beginning to use punctuation to put expression into their reading.

36. As pupils move through Years 3 to 6, overall, they continue to achieve satisfactorily. However, due to the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this group, standards are below average. Pupils continue to develop their listening skills, with the result that standards in this strand are broadly in line with those expected. In reading, pupils achieve well, so, despite the number of special educational needs pupils, most pupils reach standards that are close to those expected. However, in speaking and writing, standards are below those expected and achievement is satisfactory. There was no evidence that boys and girls achieve at a different rate and test data suggesting this is the case purely reflect the fact that most of the pupils with special educational needs are boys. Although these pupils achieve well due to the careful use by teachers of their individual plans and the good support provided by classroom support staff, few reach the expected levels for their age in national tests. The very few pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates, but make good progress in spoken English also, due to the good support they receive from support staff.
37. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there are distinct strengths within the teaching. Across the school, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour, so lessons are well organised and positive learning experiences for pupils. Although there are a few pupils who find behaving well difficult, teachers are very consistent in their use of the school's behaviour policy and strategies to deal with any incidents so the learning of other pupils is not disrupted. The most effective parts of lessons are the whole-class discussions at the beginning. Teachers use questions effectively to involve pupils in the lessons, to check their understanding and to extend the thinking of more able pupils by asking incisive follow-up questions. As a result, pupils' listening skills develop well and they develop a respect for each other's views and opinions. Their confidence in speaking also improves as they move through the school, although, even in Year 6, many pupils tend to answer questions directly and only a few more articulate and able pupils expand upon their ideas without prompting by the class teacher. However, the follow-up activities are not as consistently challenging, in particular in extending pupils' writing skills. Too many activities are similar for pupils of all abilities so higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged. In addition, not enough use is made of the potential links with other subjects as the focus for lessons. As a result, most pupils' creative writing lacks real imagination and the use of powerful language to grasp the reader. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' presentations and teach handwriting well. They also continue to place a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills of grammar, spelling and punctuation. As a result, by Year 6, most pupils write in fluent, joined style, their work is presented very well and there are few errors in basic skills. Their narrative and report writing is good.
38. The provision in English has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. Following the appointment of the headteacher, the role of subject leaders was clarified and the new subject leader is giving good leadership to the subject. The school recognised that standards were not high enough and she has developed a clear understanding of how she wants to develop the subject and improve standards. However, these measures have not had sufficient time to have significant effect on the provision. As a starting point she recently introduced an effective process for setting targets for pupils and using assessment information to outline clearly for pupils and teachers what pupils are expected to learn. However, these targets are not yet used consistently by staff in their marking to help pupils understand how they can improve or to inform their planning. Too many of the tasks set for pupils are very similar, rather than being clearly varied to match the learning needs of pupils. As a result, although

pupils make steady progress, only the most able develop the richness of vocabulary and ability to extend and develop their ideas in different ways to bring their writing, particularly their creative work, alive.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. Other subjects are used satisfactorily to promote literacy skills, but there are missed opportunities to make the most of the topics. The Years 3 – 6 subject leader for English is a good role model for staff through her teaching. A key feature of this is the effective way in which she links subjects to develop pupils' literacy skills. For example, using whole books such as 'Carrie's War' in English lessons, rather than extracts that are about the current topic on World War Two. As a result, pupils develop a better understanding of the topic and have produced good examples of perceptive, imaginative writing in history. However, this is the exception rather than the rule. Much of the writing in other subjects is factual and does not give pupils enough opportunities to extend their imaginative writing or vocabulary. Reading is promoted satisfactorily through opportunities to research topics in geography and science, although the library is small and cannot currently accommodate a whole class. However, the subject leader has prepared plans with the headteacher to extend the library resources by moving it to a spare classroom.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is improving and their achievement is satisfactory.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and presentation of their work.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use their skills in other subjects.
- Assessment information has only recently begun to be used well to set challenging targets.
- Staff and pupils rarely make use of computers in mathematics.

Commentary

40. Over recent years the results of both year groups show a steady downward trend. In the 2004 national tests, pupils in Year 2 scored well below average when compared to all schools and below average against similar schools. Pupils in Year 6 scored below average when compared with all schools but average when compared to similar schools. The school's Year 6 targets were missed by quite a wide margin. When compared with their scores in the Year 2 tests, in 2000, Year 6 pupils as a group had not made enough progress. However, inspection evidence shows that the school has 'turned the corner' and pupils' attainment is improving because of recent improvements in the school's use of test data.
41. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory and, although Year 2 pupils' attainment is below national expectations, they achieve satisfactorily from their low starting points. In lessons, teachers place a great emphasis on developing pupils' basic number skills and, as a result, by Year 2 most pupils have secure numeracy skills, although the least able pupils struggle to accurately recall number facts within ten. However, this is at the expense of providing extended tasks for more able pupils. The work in these pupils' books does not show enough challenge for most of them to achieve the higher than expected level. The large difference between boys' and girls' test scores in Year 2 was not identified during the inspection. It is likely to be associated with differences in the make up of the different year groups, particularly the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, most of whom are boys.
42. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is below national expectations, but pupils have made steady progress since Year 2 and, overall, their achievement, from a low starting point, is satisfactory. More able pupils are capable mathematicians with quick recall of number facts and the ability to select an appropriate operation for a problem. Lower attaining pupils have very weak recall of their multiplication tables and do not consistently know how to apply this knowledge to solve a problem. There is a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group, which also contributes to standards being below average overall.

However, they make good progress against their targets because grouping pupils by ability and the use of support staff in lessons enables staff to set work which meets their needs well.

43. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory. All staff use lots of praise to ensure that pupils behave well in lessons and, particularly in Year 6, pupils are constantly reminded that 'they can do it'. Pupils are attentive and contribute well to mental mathematics sessions. The presentation of virtually all pupils' work is also of high quality. However, in some classes, teachers do not explain how to tackle the problem well enough, partly because they do not use many resources, and this means that pupils do not always fully understand what to do. In addition, the new interactive whiteboards and other ICT-based activities are rarely used effectively as a teaching tool which means that potentially valuable opportunities to develop pupils' understanding are missed. The headteacher and the subject leader have recently used test data well to set challenging long-term attainment targets for pupils and class teachers and they are responding positively. However a though this has helped focus teachers' attention on what they are aiming for over the year, these have not yet been translated into clear short-term targets to help individual pupils improve an aspect of their mathematics. In addition, although pupils' work is marked and praise is given by all staff, comments rarely refer to the targets or give pupils points for improvement.
44. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. The school has yet to conduct an audit of the mathematical skills pupils require to succeed in other subjects. As a result, teachers do not make enough use of the opportunities presented by other subjects for pupils to use their numeracy skills, which has a significant effect on their achievement in mathematics overall. There are occasions when this is not the case. For example, pupils use graphs to interpret results in science and do some measuring of materials in design and technology but too often teachers miss opportunities to present pupils with problems. For instance, a Year 6 geography lesson on land usage could have involved significant and challenging number and problem-solving work that would have thoroughly tested all pupils if it had been more thoroughly thought out.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are making inadequate use of assessment to provide pupils with work that is suited to their varying needs.
- Practical activities are now a regular feature of many lessons, and this is contributing towards improved standards.
- Pupils show good attitudes towards the subject, and they enjoy undertaking experiments in particular.
- The co-ordinator has contributed well to the improvements now evident.

Commentary

46. In the national teacher assessments at Year 2 and in the national tests at Year 6, in 2004, the standards achieved by the school were well below those expected. The subject leader identified particular weaknesses in pupils' performance, for example, in practical work, and has been working with staff to address the issue this year. Inspection evidence shows that this initiative is being successful in helping to raise standards.
47. At Year 2, pupils overall show an understanding of the subject that is below that expected. Most pupils gain a sound knowledge of different aspects of the subject, but few pupils are confident with the basic idea of making predictions, recording their investigations and describing what makes a fair test. At Year 6, where standards this year are below average, partly due to the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the group, pupils carry out a range of experiments, using suitable equipment, with most making appropriate observations and recording their findings. Many readily explain various life-processes of humans, as well as discussing, for example, the importance and function of some of the major organs. Many show reasonable understanding of aspects of materials, although a good number are less sure in relation to dissolving and evaporation. They understand the idea of forces, and most can identify the direction of different forces. However, whilst many pupils successfully explain their work, and provide appropriate answers, using the correct scientific terminology, a significant number find this difficult, and this is having an important overall negative effect on standards.
48. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are suitably planned, with teachers throughout the school now making good provision of practical activities. However, planning makes more limited provision for the use of ICT. In the lively class discussions, teachers use questions well and are particularly careful to use, and emphasise, the correct scientific terminology, which has a beneficial effect on the pupils' overall learning. However, planning for the practical parts of lessons rarely makes appropriate allowance for the provision of work for the needs of different pupils. Pupils are usually presented with the same activities, with the result that, on occasions, some pupils find the work too difficult, whilst others find it undemanding. This weakness in planning was noted at the last inspection, and it has not adequately been addressed. The teachers have sound subject knowledge, and provide clear instructions and helpful demonstrations of the work that is to be undertaken. Teachers and teaching assistants support all pupils in turn, and this helps them all, including those with special needs, to make satisfactory progress.
49. Most pupils show great interest in the subject, displaying good attitudes and enjoying the practical work in particular. Most work hard, concentrate well and are keen to find answers to the problems set, even when they find the language difficult. The pupils' behaviour is good overall they work well with other pupils in carrying out activities are aware of safety procedures and usually produce their work neatly and carefully. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and most now add useful comments of support and advice to help the pupils develop their work further.
50. The role of the subject leader has developed significantly recently and she supports her colleagues well; she is giving good leadership to the subject, although her proactive approach has only just begun to have an effect on standards and achievement. In particular, she has successfully supported colleagues in addressing the issue of lower standards being achieved. Although she has not had the opportunity to observe work in other classes, she is fully aware of the standards being achieved in the school. She is also aware that, to improve standards further, teachers need to ensure that they provide pupils with work that suits their differing needs, and also to provide them with more demanding work as the need arises. As a result, she is currently examining ways of developing both assessment procedures and the use of assessment, especially in relation to providing pupils with targets for improving their work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils benefit from using the Rainhill and Haydock City Learning Centres.
- Some teachers lack confidence in their ability to use computers.
- Problems with machines not working restrict pupils' learning.
- Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

51. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is below national expectations and pupils' achievement through Years 1, 2 and 3 is unsatisfactory because some teachers lack the confidence to teach the subject well and the computers are unreliable. Pupils open programs confidently and know how to correct and improve their writing and change the fonts. They do not know how to save and retrieve because systems are not organised well enough to help them.
52. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is in line with national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. They confidently select and open the program they want to use. They create lively PowerPoint pages and recall designing bookmarks. They are quickly learning how to use a digital camera and import pictures into their work. They benefit substantially from visits to the local computer centres, where the more complex topics are taught. Some children also benefit from continuing their studies at home; for example, a Year 6 girl prepared a good PowerPoint presentation, using skills which exceeded those she had been taught at school.
53. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 4 to 6 but unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 3. Pupils are generally well behaved in the computer suites, especially as in some classes they share one computer between three.
54. All pupils are quick to produce their work and keen to experiment with the program's capabilities. Older pupils make more rapid progress because they have more time using the computers than younger ones, who often have to share. Many staff lack the confidence to demonstrate how to use a number of the programs and so pupils do not always clearly know how to begin the task. In some mixed-age classes, pupils all do the same task and this does not challenge the most able pupils. The use of the local education authority's self-assessment booklets is good. Pupils evaluate their progress against intended learning objectives and do so very openly.
55. Leadership is satisfactory. The new subject leader has reviewed provision and put staff training high on her list of priorities. Management of the subject is unsatisfactory. Staff have been given too little support so far to overcome their difficulties with teaching the subject. The subject leader has very little time to work alongside colleagues to help them. The suites have too few working machines for the younger pupils to have much time using them and storing pupils' work is not organised well enough for pupils to retrieve it again easily. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Pupils' attainment and achievement in Year 2 have fallen and steps have not been taken to improve the confidence of staff to make full use of the resources available.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. Pupils' use of their skills in other subjects is unsatisfactory. They make some use of a word processing package but there is little evidence, or recall by pupils, of using all the tools to write, review and revise their written work. It is more common that they will type out a completed piece of work using different fonts, letter sizes and colours to create a pleasing

effect, which can then be displayed. Computers and other technology equipment are rarely used in lessons to help pupils learn.

HUMANITIES

57. Due to the timetable arrangements there were not enough lessons being taught to allow secure judgements to be made on the quality of provision in either **history** or **geography**. However, pupils' work, teachers' planning and those lessons seen indicate that pupils study a broad range of topics that provide them with opportunities to develop the full range of skills, knowledge and understanding required. Pupils' work is well presented and they enjoy the subjects. However, pupils' work and the few lessons seen show that, although there are a few good examples, insufficient use is made of these subjects to reinforce pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Both subject leaders have clear ideas on what they want to do to develop their subjects, but have not yet had the opportunity to visit other classes or to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in standards so are not yet in a position to give clear guidance to staff on how to improve their teaching.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected. Pupils' achievement is good. Overall provision has improved since the previous inspection.
- Teachers provide a wide variety of learning experiences for pupils.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the need to be tolerant of others.
- The attitudes of pupils towards the subject are good, and they particularly enjoy drama activities.
- The leadership role played by the subject leader is good, and she has contributed well to the improvement in provision.

Commentary

58. By Year 2, pupils are familiar with two major world faiths, Christianity and Judaism. They are able to relate some of the stories of famous religious figures, such as those of Jesus and Moses. Pupils explain clearly that religions have different religious books, and they readily name and describe the Bible and the Torah. Pupils understand that religions have various ceremonies and special occasions and days, and they describe in detail why Sunday is so important to Christians and Shabbat to Jews. Pupils understand the importance of friends, and they readily describe what makes a 'good friend'.
59. By Year 6, pupils are suitably informed about a number of world religions, successfully explaining many aspects of the Christian, Islamic and Jewish faiths. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils know that all religions have distinctive traditions and lifestyles; for example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 compare the marriage ceremony of Christians with that of Jews. Pupils in Year 6 are aware of the need for rules and laws in our lives, and they explain the importance of the Ten Commandments. Pupils in Year 6 are also increasingly aware of the various texts that are important to different peoples, and they recognise the importance of the Qur'an to Moslems. Pupils are aware of the need for love and understanding in their dealings with others, and they recognise in particular the importance of their own families. Pupils, throughout the school, clearly understand the need to be tolerant of other people's dress, lifestyle and ritual; for example, pupils in Year 6 identify ways in which prejudice may arise, and they explain the need for this to be avoided.

60. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons throughout the school are well planned, and interesting ideas and information are presented to pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, through a good range of appropriate activities, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers ensure the pupils' interest through a most thoughtful variety of learning experiences, such as asking thought-provoking questions, making good use of religious artefacts and visits to religious buildings, and the opportunity to express their thoughts at length both through writing and discussion. A particularly successful strategy was used in Years 2/3, where pupils celebrated the Shabbat meal, readily acting out the roles of different family members.
61. Pupils are generally very keen to provide a variety of thoughtful answers and observations. They enjoy the range of activities and experiences provided, especially handling religious artefacts and joining in drama activities. They work well with other pupils when necessary, and are keen to complete the tasks set. Discussions with pupils show a considerable interest in the subject, and their attitudes are clearly good. Pupils usually take care with the presentation of their work, and in their marking teachers regularly add comments of praise or advice.
62. The subject leader is enthusiastic and well-informed, and her leadership of the subject is good. She has no opportunity at present to observe lessons in other classes, but she has a clear understanding of the standards being achieved and provision being made. She has supported her colleagues well whenever possible, and she has contributed much to the improved provision since the last inspection through developing the planning for the subject. She is currently looking at ways of improving the assessment procedures.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

63. In **art and design**, only one lesson was seen during the inspection, and so no overall judgement is made. However, in the lesson seen, in Years 4/5, the overall quality of teaching was good, and the pupils' behaviour was also good. Standards of work in producing painting in the style of Seurat were broadly as expected, and a study of other examples of work confirms this to be the case throughout the school. In particular, a study of pieces of observational drawing shows sound standards. Pupils in Year 2 have produced closely observed pictures of Emmanuel Church, whilst those in Years 4/5 have produced similarly detailed pictures of such things as chairs and Aztec artefacts. Pupils throughout the school readily produce detailed work in the style of famous artists, such as Mondrian, Levy-Dhurmer and Lowry. Pupils also use computers to produce various pictures and illustrations. Evidence suggests that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
64. **Design and technology** was not a focus for the inspection and so no secure judgements can be made about pupils' attainment and provision. One lesson was observed, discussions were held with pupils and their work was looked at. From the available evidence it is clear that the curriculum meets the National Curriculum requirements because it draws heavily from the topics in the national guidelines. The pupils enjoy the subject and follow topics that use a range of media, from textiles via cookery ingredients to cardboard. This range helps pupils think through and develop their joining skills. Most pupils have a reasonable understanding of the 'design, make and evaluate' process and Year 6 pupils are familiar with making a prototype of a model. The self-assessment exercise, completed after each topic, is a good example of this type of assessment and a worthwhile task that allows pupils to reflect on the success of their project.
65. During the inspection no lessons were seen in **music** and no overall judgement is made. However, in the acts of worship, pupils sang with enthusiasm and suitable skill, showing appropriate control of rhythm and pitch. The standard of their singing was similar to that expected from pupils of this age. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were good, and they clearly enjoy 'making music'. A study of teachers' planning shows that appropriate coverage is made for all aspects of the subject during the year. The subject leader is currently

looking at ways to improve assessment, to ensure that pupils' skills are suitably developed as they move through the school.

66. No secure judgements about pupils' attainment and provision in **physical education** can be made because only one lesson was observed during the inspection, as the subject was not a focus. From the evidence available, the curriculum meets the National Curriculum requirements. Discussions with pupils indicate that they enjoy the subject. They know about the effects of exercise on their bodies and why they need to exercise. Sports clubs, several led by qualified coaches, are well attended and help improve pupils' skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

67. There were very few lessons in this aspect of the school's curriculum being taught during the inspection period. However, discussions with pupils and staff show that the school places a good emphasis on developing pupils' personal skills and has a comprehensive programme in place to develop this aspect of pupils' learning. The recent award of the Healthy Schools' Award was national recognition of the school's work in promoting a healthy lifestyle. All classes have weekly lessons, much of which is discussion based which helps pupils develop their speaking skills. Sex and drugs education is included in the programme and external agencies are involved where appropriate to help class teachers tackle difficult or personal issues. As a result, as pupils move through the school, develop their personal skills and learn their responsibilities to each other, the school and their local community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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

poor (6); very poor (7).