

## **ERRATUM SLIP**

### **Weston Primary School**

**Unique Reference Number: 111114**

**Contract Number: 268238**

**Date of inspection: 11/04/05**

**Reporting inspector: Peter Mathias**

**INSPECTION REPORT - the following box should read as follows:-**

**WESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Runcorn, Cheshire

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111114

Headteacher: Mr P Sweeney

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

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Runcorn, Cheshire

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111114

Headteacher: Mr P Sweeney

Lead inspector: Mr Peter Mathias

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 April 2005

Inspection number: 268238

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	121
School address:	Lamsickle Lane Weston Village Runcorn Cheshire
Postcode:	WA7 4RA
Telephone number:	01928 574544
Fax number:	01928 568808
E-mail:	head@weston.halton-borough.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jane Ainsworth
Date of previous inspection:	1 <sup>st</sup> March 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Weston Primary School is smaller than most other primary schools. It is situated in the Weston Village of Runcorn, which is an industrial town in the borough of Halton. A large chemical complex is nearby.

There are 13 pupils in the reception who attend on a full time basis and share a class with some six year olds. In the school overall there are 121 pupils. This includes 11 pupils in Key Stage 1 who attend a unit to assess their special educational needs. A further 12 pupils attend the unit for Key Stage 2 pupils who have moderate learning difficulties.

The school holds the Active Mark (2004), the Arts Mark (2004), the Healthy Schools Award (2004) and a School Achievement Award (2003). The school caters for boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 11. Nearly all pupils come from the local area, where there is a variety of affluent and social backgrounds. About one third of pupils in Year 6 in 2004 joined the school at times other than normal. This is a high proportion.

Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly the same as for most children of this age. There are 41 pupils who are considered to have some degree of special educational needs, of whom two have help from outside agencies and a further 26 have statements of special educational needs. These are above average figures. The majority of pupils who have statements of special educational needs are considered to have moderate learning difficulties.

About 18 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is an average proportion of pupils. A small proportion of pupils have English as a second language. Nearly all pupils come from

white, British backgrounds. In the last two years, 3.5 teachers left and two teachers were appointed, both of whom had been in post for 10 weeks prior to the inspection.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21945	Mr Peter Mathias	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History English as an additional language
9224	Mr Michael Vineall	Lay inspector	
25074	Mrs Joyce Cox	Team inspector	Art and design Music Physical education Citizenship Foundation stage
27243	Mr Ian Tatchell	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates  
Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Weston Primary School has a satisfactory degree of effectiveness.** It gives sound value for money. Standards in pupils' work in subjects seen are generally average and currently pupils achieve in line with their abilities. The school is a caring and inclusive place where the quality of teaching is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There is good quality of provision for children in the foundation stage and for pupils in the Key Stage 1 unit.
- Links with parents and other schools and the local community are strong and mutually beneficial.
- Standards in religious education in Key Stage 2 are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.
- The role of the governing body is well developed and the school is well governed.
- The roles of most subject co-ordinators and the senior management team and headteacher are under-developed. They do not formally review the curriculum at first hand in order to raise standards further.
- Attendance levels are high and pupils behave well.
- Assessment procedures are over-complicated and are not used well to identify short-term achievable targets for individual pupils and small groups of pupils to work towards.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is considerably enhanced by a good range of out of school activities.
- The school has effective arrangements to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and to take a full part in the life of the school.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and the key issues of that inspection have nearly all been addressed. The provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties now meets statutory requirements and pupils have good access to it. Individual learning plans are now detailed and priorities within them are clear and appropriate. The educational provision for nearly all subjects where it was possible to make a judgement is satisfactory. However, standards in religious education at the end of Key Stage 2 are below those expected because the planned curriculum is not consistently and regularly taught. While assessment arrangements have improved since the last inspection, they are now over-complex and are not used well enough to identify shorter-term targets for pupils to aim to achieve.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Pupils in the main school achieve satisfactorily.** Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the units for special educational needs, achieve well. The results in 2004, which include pupils in the Key Stage 2 unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, show that standards have improved in English and science and have remained below average in mathematics. In the 2004 results in science for 11 year olds, results were above average for schools considered to be broadly similar. Children under six achieve well and are on course to reach the early learning goals for them. Nearly all are ready to begin the National Curriculum by the age of six. In Year 1

and Year 2, pupils in the main school make satisfactory progress and achieve in line with their abilities. They reach average standards in reading and writing, mathematics and science. This is not reflected in the end of Year 2 national assessments because these results include a significant proportion of pupils who attend the Key Stage 1 unit. When these pupils are omitted from the school's results, these results are average. In Year 3 to Year 6 pupils achieve satisfactorily in English, mathematics and science. Current standards in Year 6 are average. Standards are also average in information and communication technology. In religious education, standards are in line with the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2, but below those expected at the end of Year 6. In other subjects it was not possible to make firm judgements on standards because of a lack of direct evidence. These subjects were sampled.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is sound.** Particular strengths in the teaching are found in the reception class and in the assessment unit for Key Stage 1 pupils. Strengths in the teaching were the careful way groups of children were organised, good relationships between adults and pupils, the very strong subject knowledge of teachers and the setting of challenging and realistic objectives. Marking is not always helpful to pupils and the information available from marking and assessments is not consistently well used to set short-term targets. Assessment arrangements are over-complicated and time consuming.

The curriculum is wide and interesting except in religious education where in Key Stage 2 pupils have limited opportunities to be taught the intended curriculum. With this exception, it meets pupils' needs, including those of pupils with special educational needs. There are good arrangements for pupils to be involved in activities outside the school day. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school. The accommodation is adequate. It is well maintained. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum.

The care, welfare and health and safety of pupils are good. Provision for pupils' support and guidance is sound. Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are good. There are strong links with the local secondary school to which many pupils transfer and this enables pupils to move confidently on to the next phase of their education when they leave Year 6.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management is sound.** The school meets all its statutory requirements. The school is well governed and the chair of governors gives the school a purposeful and well informed lead. The headteacher and senior management team work very closely together and jointly ensure that there is a clear sense of purpose to their work. Arrangements to assess the progress pupils are making are over-complicated. The roles of headteacher, senior management team and co-ordinators are unclear in this process. The school lacks well defined systems and strategies to review systematically the planning and effective teaching of the curriculum at first hand and to raise standards further. Long-term strategic planning is based on careful deliberation and is of a sound quality. The governing body is fully involved in the life of the school and many governors are welcome and interested visitors. Their role as a critical friend of the school is well developed and ensures that their decisions achieve the best value possible.

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

Parent and pupils expressed positive views of the school. Pupils spoke very constructively about the warm and friendly way they are treated by their teachers and helpers.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Clarify and simplify the processes the school has in place to judge the progress pupils are making and put in place arrangements to utilise this information and the information from teachers' marking to identify short-term achievable targets for individual pupils and small groups of pupils to work towards. \*

- Establish and follow through systems for the headteacher, senior management team and all coordinators to review systematically the planning and effective teaching of the curriculum in order to raise standards further. \*
- Improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education in Key Stage 2 so that standards are at least in line with the locally agreed syllabus.

\*The school has identified these as areas for improvement in its school development plan.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards are average in English, mathematics and science both in the main school and in the units for special educational need. Pupils achieve appropriately and make sound progress.

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

- Standards in religious education at the end of Key Stage 2 are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the units for pupils with special educational needs, achieve well.
- Pupils in the main school generally make at least the expected progress in the national assessments for 11 year olds, bearing in mind the standards these pupils reached when they were seven.
- Standards in English and science in the national tests for 11 year olds have improved since 2002. In science in 2004 standards are above schools considered to be broadly similar.

#### **Commentary**

1. Standards attained in English and science in the 2004 national tests for 11 year olds are average when compared to schools nationally. In mathematics in the national tests, standards are below average. When compared to schools considered broadly similar based on pupils' previous attainment, standards in English are in line with those similar schools. In science, the results are above most of these schools. These results also include pupils from the unit for pupils in Key Stage 2 who are considered to have moderate learning difficulties. Of the pupils who took these tests in 2004, nearly all made the expected progress based upon their previous results when aged seven. In science and English, results have improved since 2002 when they were below average. Overall, girls attain better than boys in these tests. This is a reflection of the large proportion of boys based in the Key Stage 2 unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties who took these tests.
2. Standards in the end of Year 2 assessments in 2004 are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results reflect the impact on the overall picture of those pupils in the Key Stage 1 unit whose special educational needs are being assessed. When these pupils are omitted from the school's results, these results are average. This is reflected in the current standards in Year 2 in these subjects.
3. The two special units provide very good support for the 22 pupils who have special needs. These pupils achieve well. They make good progress and overcome many of their difficulties through the specialist teaching and the support provided. Each pupil has an individual education plan, which often specifies sessions within the main school as well as time with other specialists such as the speech and language therapist who works closely with specialist staff.
4. Pupils with special needs in the main school often have average skills in reading, spelling and mathematics by the time they are ready to transfer to local schools. They enjoy listening to stories and taking part in reading sessions. They take discussion seriously and enjoy the challenge of asking questions and completing work alongside their mainstream friends. Most of the individual targets set are achieved with the support of teacher, support staff and therapists. This represents good achievement and progress. Inspectors were impressed by the successful integration of these pupils into mainstream classes and the way teachers and

support staff ensured that they received the support needed to succeed. They work as a class, in small groups and individual settings as appropriate. The pupils are very much a part of school life and are included in all its aspects, joining whole school assemblies, playtimes and lunchtimes.

5. In English by Year 2 and Year 6 in speaking and listening, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve in line with their abilities, reflecting the importance now given to these aspects of English. Standards in reading are average overall although some pupils have difficulty in recognising the sounds letters make, which the school is beginning to address. In writing, standards are average in Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils are responding well to new initiatives to provide greater opportunities for pupils to write for different reasons and in different styles. Standards in pupils' handwriting vary. Some pupils take insufficient care when presenting their work.
6. In mathematics and science, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve appropriately and reach average standards overall in their classes. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific facts are higher than their skills and confidence in carrying out investigational work in these subjects.
7. In information and communication technology, standards are in line with those expected and pupils achieve in line with their abilities. In religious education, standards in Year 2 are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. In Year 6, standards are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus, which is the result of limited opportunities provided in this subject for these pupils. Pupils in Year 2 achieve soundly. In Year 6 achievement is below expected.
8. In the other subjects of the National Curriculum and in pupils' personal, social and health education, it was not possible to make a firm judgement about standards.
9. In the reception class, children achieve well. Their personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development are very good. They make good progress in their communication language and literacy skills, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative and physical development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	13.0 (13.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	10.1 (12.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	12.6 (14.6)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (25.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.5 (26.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.0 (27.7)	28.6 (28.6)

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*There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Pupils' attendance and behaviour are both good. Pupils' attitudes and the way the school develops the individual pupils are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Recent initiatives to improve attendance have had a positive impact
- Good behaviour across the school, which results in an orderly community
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good
- There is good provision for moral and social development

### Commentary

10. Attendance: Attendance is well ahead of national norms and has been steadily rising for several years. This is the result of the school applying constant pressure and the implementation of good practices such as checking on all first day absences. The headteacher is at the forefront of this drive. Punctuality remains a problem with a minority of pupils but is satisfactory overall.
11. Exclusions One boy was totally excluded last year after being accepted from another school that had also been unable to cope with his problems. He is now in a more suitable special unit.
12. Behaviour in the school is good. There is an orderly feel to the school and children are polite, pleasantly open to strangers and are rarely seen in conflict. In class, they settle quickly and are capable of co-operation. Behaviour in the units is good. Despite the school having a relatively high proportion of children with problems, calm pervades. At playtimes and lunchtimes, play outside is vigorous, noisy and bustling, but rarely threatening. It is effectively supervised by well-trained supervisors and selected senior pupils. However, towards the end of lunchtime, when the whole school is outside supervision is inadequate.
13. Much of the order and harmony in the school's activities derives from the good relationships that exist between pupils themselves, but especially between all adults in school and the pupils. A mutual respect is evident and children readily approach staff with any needs. The inclusive atmosphere is a striking feature of school life to any visitor and the way children in the units are integrated into the school community is impressive. Whilst behaviour in class is generally good, attitudes to work are, at times, somewhat passive.
14. Personal development is satisfactory overall, with good work on social and moral development. Children understand their responsibilities in the community and to others and these are well reinforced in assemblies, in personal, social, health education and citizenship and in everyday teaching and class activity. Displays, incentive schemes and reward structures also support this work well. Spiritual development and cultural development are satisfactory. Pupils receive sound opportunities to reflect and to appreciate their own culture and those of others.
15. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to learning. When working individually or in a small group with the support of a teacher or learning assistant they show an improved level of confidence. They persevere with challenging tasks and enjoy the sessions. Most co-operate well with each other and the staff. They understand the system of rewards and sanctions and believe it to be fair and supportive.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	School data	0.3

National data	5.1
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National data	0.4
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*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

## 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	128	28	1
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Particular strengths are the enrichment of the curriculum through a good range of out of school activities, the way the curriculum meets pupils' needs, the good care, welfare, health and safety provided for pupils and the good links with parents, the community and other schools. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils generally learn satisfactorily. Assessment arrangements in the foundation stage and for pupils in the units in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are good. Assessment arrangements in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in the main school are unsatisfactory.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress and learn appropriately. Pupils with special educational needs learn well. Assessment is good in the foundation stage and in the units for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. It is unsatisfactory in the main school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment arrangements are over-complicated and do not assist teachers to make best use of the information they collect.
- Marking and assessment are not used effectively to set short-term achievable targets for individual pupils and small groups of pupils to work towards.
- Teachers ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and are given equal opportunities to take part in the life of the school.
- The quality of teaching in the foundation stage and in the unit for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 is well matched to the needs of these pupils.
- In the best lessons, teachers hold high expectations of their pupils and have positive relationships. They enthusiastically and knowledgeably help pupils to work willingly.

### Commentary

#### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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0	17%	49%	34%	0	0	0
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*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.*

16. Across the school the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in the reception class is good and fosters the early learning goals for children of this age well. Teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 and in Year 3 and Year 6 is satisfactory.
17. From Year 1 to Year 6 the teaching of English is sound and teachers have a secure understanding of how to teach literacy. Pupils are beginning to benefit from recent initiatives to improve further the teaching of reading and writing, which the school has identified as priorities.
18. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. The teachers carefully follow the national numeracy strategy. However, the school lacks effective and consistently followed arrangements to identify quickly what pupils need to do to improve in the shorter term.
19. The teaching of science is satisfactory. Pupils are successfully encouraged to build on their knowledge and understanding. However, insufficient attention is given to the importance of learning at first hand by giving greater emphasis to providing opportunities for pupils to experiment and to investigate for themselves.
20. Teaching in religious education is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2, where pupils have few opportunities to express their knowledge and understanding and to build on what they have learnt previously. In all other subjects it was not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching.
21. In the best lessons in the reception class, teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of their children. They plan carefully to provide exciting appropriate learning experiences. In the unit in Key Stage 1 for children whose learning needs are being assessed, the teacher works very closely with learning assistants and other helpers to support and encourage these pupils.
22. Within the special units the quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good, and is the most important factor in the good progress made by pupils. The pupils spend a significant amount of time integrated into the main school working alongside their peers. A key strength of the teaching is the commitment to ensuring that all the pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners who are helped to reach their full potential.
23. The standard of teaching of pupils with special educational needs in the main school is generally good. When pupils are given appropriate support within well-planned lessons much is achieved. In classes or ability groups pupils with special educational needs who receive additional support and work related to their ability make good progress. The teachers and support staff involved build up a good relationship with these pupils and by gentle encouragement they take every opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding.
24. Any pupil who is giving cause for concern is assessed and suitable action taken. All assessments and reviews are carried out accurately and regularly.
25. Across the school, relationships between pupils and their teachers are positive. Pupils nearly always wish to please their teachers. They respond positively and eagerly to the enthusiastic and knowledgeable way topics are taught. Teachers organise their lessons carefully and ensure that pupils know what is expected of them in the time available. Pupils are regularly reminded of these expectations and as a result they work hard.

26. Where teaching has some shortcomings, opportunities are missed to extent the learning of the more able and the tasks set are mundane.
27. Overall, pupils learn satisfactorily and make sound progress. In lessons seen there was no difference in the way boys and girls learn. Teachers are always keen to ensure that boys and girls in the main school and in the units are given equal opportunities to play a full part in their lessons. There are good arrangements for pupils in the units to work alongside pupils in the main school.
28. Teachers mark work regularly. In some classes marking recognises pupils' efforts warmly. It is used well to identify what pupils need to do to improve. In the best lessons this is closely linked to short-term targets which are shared with individual pupils in order to help them overcome their difficulties. However, this practice is not consistently followed across the school.
29. There are extensive arrangements to assess and evaluate standards in progress in pupils' work both through the national assessment and testing procedures and through the use of other reliable assessments. The school is in the process of rationalising the amount and purpose of these procedures. Currently insufficient use is made of this information to help individual pupils and groups of pupils with similar difficulties overcome them. Across the school not all pupils understand how they can improve.

## **The curriculum**

The school's provision for the curriculum is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources and provision for information and communication technology have improved considerably
- The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of exciting activities
- The curriculum for religious education set out in the locally agreed syllabus is not followed through in sufficient detail in Year 5 and Year 6
- The outdoor foundation stage accommodation requires improvement
- Good provision of wide ranging inputs to enhance and broaden the curriculum

## **Commentary**

30. There have been satisfactory improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection. For instance, provision for information and communication technology has improved with the installation of a good range of computers. In addition, staff use interactive whiteboards skilfully and successfully to interest and engage pupils. As a result standards in information and communication technology have risen.
31. The provision for children in the foundation stage is good. The curriculum encompasses all subjects of the National Curriculum. Planning has improved in that all subjects now have schemes of work. Sufficient time is allocated to each subject. The curriculum for religious education is in line with the locally agreed syllabus and is used well as a basis for planning in Years 1 to 4. However, in Year 5 and Year 6 insufficient attention is given to it in teachers' planning. While all statutory requirements are met, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education is not followed closely in Year 5 and Year 6 as it is elsewhere. The school is currently in the process of evaluating the curriculum to ensure more links are established between different subjects and that policies and planning are reviewed.

32. The school makes good use of its attractive outdoor locality to successfully enrich its curriculum, especially in physical education, science and geography. Visitors such as the local vicar extend pupils' understanding of history and religious education and bring lessons vividly to life. Older pupils appreciate the many visits they have enjoyed during their time at the school. These include visiting the Macclesfield Silk Museum, Northwich Salt Museum and Tatton Park. The school takes part in sporting and musical events in the community. In addition there are a wide range of after school clubs such as infant art club, chess, netball, ICT, badminton and football. These numerous activities give pupils good opportunities to celebrate their skills and talents thereby raise their achievement and their self-esteem and confidence.
33. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils in the two units who have a wide variety of special needs are completely integrated into the life of the whole school, in line with the school's good stance on educational inclusion and equal opportunities. The team of talented teaching assistants provide many diverse and interesting activities for pupils with special educational needs. The new Code of Practice is thoroughly embedded and the school's prospectus contains clear information for parents.
34. There are a good number of teachers and a very good number of support staff, who function as an effective team. The quantity and quality of the resources are satisfactory. The accommodation is clean and inviting. The school is in the process of planning and developing an outdoor area for foundation stage to enable children to work and play outdoors more frequently. This is intended to enhance the good provision for reception children even further.
35. The curricular needs of pupils in the units and main school as outlined in their statement and in annual review recommendations become part of the pupils' individual educational plans, which are discussed and agreed with pupils and parents to comply with the recommendations of the Code of Practice. Unit pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs in the main school are fully integrated and those who receive additional support generally make good progress. This works particularly well during literacy and numeracy hours and is a very efficient use of the learning support assistants. Pupils' individual education plans match the needs of individual pupils and targets set are generally sufficiently specific and easy to measure.
36. Much good work has been done to enhance and enrich the curriculum. Through good links to the secondary school and the other local networks, a wide range of extra-curricular activities and extra inputs, such as physical education, sports and modern foreign languages are available. Many sports skills are offered, many other activities (from chess to table tennis) may be sampled.

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

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety, support, advice and involvement of pupils in their education is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is very careful attention to all matters involving the children's health, welfare and safety
- There is good involvement of pupils in the running of the school
- Much guidance relies upon the good knowledge of and relationships with pupils, since despite much work now done on assessment, its results do not adequately direct planning and teaching

### **Commentary**

37. Led by the headteacher, all issues impacting upon the health, welfare and safety of the children are well handled. Meticulous care is taken to involve the governing body and appropriate staff and to ensure necessary checks, drills and records are maintained. Thus, for instance, child protection issues receive good priority with not only the headteacher being the Nominated Person but also having the special educational needs co-ordinator trained for such responsibility. Staff are regularly updated on the procedures and importance of this issue. Health and safety issues are handled soundly.
38. Equally good work takes place to involve the pupils in the day to day running of the school and includes their viewpoint. An impressive School Council is now well established and was seen, during the inspection, addressing such issues as the topical one of healthier lunches and more attractive meals. The Council had involved not only local educational authority advisors but also the school cook. In Years 5 and 6 many pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility and be involved with younger children.
39. The good relationship between teachers and pupils and the good, individual, knowledge of pupils' needs is very evident. In the case of personal development these are crucial as the driving force in the absence of more formal factors and as the method of guidance and support for academic development of pupils. This was an issue for development in the previous inspection. Much has been done to increase the efforts made in formal assessment and to record much more data - much of it through information and communication technology. However, there remains much to be done in using this information so that it can inform and direct day-to-day planning of teaching and the curriculum.
40. There are good arrangements to help children settle into school when they begin. Pupils with special educational needs generally receive good support within the school from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils. Systems are in place to enable pupils to cope with difficult situations. The national Code of Practice is met in the identification and assessment of pupils' special educational needs and continuing assessment is good. Pupils' progress is monitored and specialist support from a variety of external agencies is sought when needed and is used effectively. Pupils also participate in the annual reviews of progress with their parents or carers.

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

The school has established good and useful links with parents, other schools and colleges and with the local community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good relationships between staff and parents which permit easy communication.
- There is a good flow of information to parents about the school and their children
- There are good initiatives to encourage closer engagement of parents with the school and its work
- Good links into other local schools and colleges are very beneficial.
- Good links with the local community that show the school as a responsible citizen and which aid teaching and learning

### **Commentary**

41. Much good work has taken place to build good and helpful relationships between the school and the parents. Staff and parents are close. Parents and staff confirmed this to inspectors, and the easy link between them can be seen at the beginning and end of each school day. A few parents help regularly in school whilst many more readily volunteer when more help is needed for a visit or similar event. The 'Friends' offer another good vehicle for staff and

parents to mingle and to benefit the school financially.

42. On top of these informal and helpful personal contacts the school ensures parents are well informed through good communications home via monthly newsletters, notice boards and ad hoc letters. Parents' evenings each term are especially well attended and two of them include a very good system of discussing targets for the pupil and creating a note of these. Reports to parents are full, individual and give a good picture of the child's progress. Reading records are used well to share information. Parents' views are regularly considered. Their concerns and complaints are taken seriously.
43. But the school has not rested here and has worked better to engage parents (and other members of the community) with elements of adult education. The most successful of these is the information and communication technology training made available, which regularly attracts some 20 or so people. Parenting classes have also been tried, but with rather less success.

44. Very good links have been established and maintained with the Heath Secondary School that not only greatly benefit induction to that school (which takes the vast majority of Year 6 pupils), but also provides substantial broadening and enriching of the curriculum (notably in sport). By the time they leave Year 6, all pupils will have got to know many of the Heath staff (and pupils) and been there many times. Other local networks of schools – such as the Small Schools Arts Group and the Heath Cluster – provide invaluable inputs and benefits. It is a close and mutually supporting area of schools.
45. Links with the local community are also well established and greatly benefit the school. Links with the Church are becoming increasingly close (the new vicar has joined the governing body), and local elderly people are both visited by children and invited to school events. The District Business Partnership and the Community Forum are other bodies where the school gets very involved and sometimes benefits financially; for example on a planned, outside nature area. Links even penetrate local industry, including Ineos (industrial visits etc), the Power Station (teaching links) and the local ASDA store (fruit). The school certainly has an outwardly looking stance.
46. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved and informed at all stages of a pupil's assessment and review; contact is maintained at other times on an informal basis. Parents have access to the class teachers, who have good links with the special educational needs co-ordinator. Parents are involved at all stages and receive regular reports on their child's progress.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The management of the school is sound. The quality of leadership is satisfactory. The governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governing body is well led and plays an influential part in the life of the school. The governors are well informed and fulfil their statutory duties in full.
- Systems to track pupils' progress and to raise standards further are over-complicated and inefficient.
- The leadership of the foundation stage and of the units in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is strong.
- The overall financial management of the school is effective.
- Arrangements for co-ordinators, the senior management team and the headteacher to review teaching and learning at first hand are under-developed.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team are very supportive of each other and work closely together.
- The leadership in the school ensures that all pupils are treated equally and their individual needs are well met.

### **Commentary**

47. The quality of leadership shown by the headteacher is sound. The headteacher works closely with the deputy headteacher and senior management team in a collaborative way to agree priorities and to plan the way forward. They ensure that teachers work willingly together and share agreed objectives. A particular strength is the way in which pupils in the units are very successfully encouraged to work and play together with pupils in the main school. However, due to recent and significant staff changes, the procedures have lapsed for co-ordinators, the senior management team and the headteacher to visit classes on a planned and formal basis to review the quality of teaching and learning and the progress of initiatives. Co-ordinators, for example in mathematics and English, have worked hard to put new ways of planning and teaching into place, but have not had opportunities to follow these up and to judge their impact on standards. Because the headteacher has had other priorities, formal visits to

classrooms have not taken place recently. As a result the good practices, for example in the use of short-term target setting, are not found consistently across the school. Provision for the foundation stage is strong and this area is purposefully led.

48. Since the arrival in post of the current special educational needs co-ordinator at the beginning of this year, progress made in the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs has been very good. There are still areas which need further development but the special educational needs co-ordinator has identified these already in her development plan. The special educational needs co-ordinator administers the day-to-day organisation of pupils, with the involvement of the headteacher and class teachers. They check that targets set in pupils' individual education plans are clearly linked to pupils' needs and part of lesson planning. The governing body carefully supports and monitors the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and reports the school's provision for these pupils in its annual report to parents.
49. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to rectify the concerns raised including the unsatisfactory curriculum for Year 3 to Year 4 pupils in the unit. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the headteacher have worked hard to achieve these improvements.
50. The key issues relating to pupils with special educational needs and nearly all of the other key issues have been appropriately addressed. Some progress has been made in improving shortcomings in the planning and teaching of design and technology. However, this is not always reflected in the standards and range seen in pupils' work. There has been good progress in addressing the key issue relating to geography and to some aspects of the key issue relating to curriculum planning and assessment. However, while the school collects and collates a large amount of assessment information, this activity is over-complicated and time consuming. The school does not make best use of this information to identify areas for individuals and groups of pupils to improve.
51. The governing body is well led and is active in the overall life of the school. It meets its statutory duties in full. Governors visit the school regularly and many work closely with co-ordinators and the senior management team to identify the long-term needs of the school and to plan carefully to meet them. The school development plan is central to this process. It is detailed and accurately focused on the needs of the school. It is closely linked to the school's long-term financial management. Arrangements to monitor and control the school's finances are rigorous. Governors carefully challenge, compare, consult and find the best value when making spending decisions. The school has identified the need to maintain a significant reserve in order to maintain advantageous pupil teacher ratios. Overall, governors use their time and personal interests well to support, challenge and guide the school forward. They are active participants in planning for school improvement and judging the progress being made and the success of their spending decisions. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

## **Financial Information**

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	487,361	Balance from previous year	94,437
Total expenditure	436,691	Balance carried forward to the next	581,798
Expenditure per pupil	4,323.67		

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

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

Provision for children in the foundation stage is good.

Children start school at the beginning of the year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection, there were 13 reception children in a class with ten Year 1 pupils. There are good arrangements to ease their transition from the onsite pre-school to the reception class. The foundation stage is well led and managed by the class teacher who is passionate about providing imaginative experiences entirely suited to children of this age. There is very close liaison between the staff. Consequently, there is a distinctly happy and caring atmosphere where all children, including those with special educational needs, are encouraged to do their very best. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although some children are heavily dependent on adult support at this early stage. Assessment procedures are good and used well so that children's needs are met as closely as possible, resulting in good progress and achievement. The majority of children are on course to at least reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the beginning of Year 1. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in all six areas of learning. There are often very strong features in teaching, such as devising enticing activities to engage children's interest and the very effective deployment of support staff. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. There are plans to develop the outside play area as the present accommodation is not easily available. Improvement since the last inspection is good because the provision has improved considerably and assessment systems are good and used well.

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

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

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

- Relationships are very good between adults and children and there is a happy, caring ethos.
- Children behave very well and they have positive attitudes to learning.

#### **Commentary**

52. Children have many good opportunities to improve their personal, social and emotional development during the course of the school day. They make very good progress and achieve very well because the quality of teaching and support is very good. Staff are infinitely patient and by providing a caring and friendly atmosphere, ensure that children feel valued and cared for. They help children to understand right from wrong and encourage them to behave sensitively and with tolerance. Consequently, children happily work and play together, behaving very well. They have very good attitudes towards each other, show respect towards adults and handle resources carefully. They have positive attitudes towards their work and play, rapidly developing personal qualities of perseverance and concentration. They are on course to begin the national curriculum by the age of six.

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

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

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

- The teacher and the teaching assistant provide a learning environment that is rich in language.



- Children achieve very well in learning to write simple sentences.

### **Commentary**

53. Children make good progress and achieve well in developing their communication, language and literacy skills because of good teaching and good assessment systems that ensure children's needs are met as closely as possible. Staff seize every opportunity to encourage children to communicate and virtually all the children speak in full sentences and are happy and confident to converse with school visitors.
54. They enjoy handling books and listening to stories and all are learning to recognise individual letters and their own names. They are being introduced to the sounds of letters through games that are both engaging and fun. Higher attaining children recognise many words when sharing books in small groups or with an adult. From looking at the children's work, it is clear that they make rapid progress in writing, including the correct use of capital letters and full stops. They are on course to begin the national curriculum by the age of six.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy mathematics because their activities are fun.
- Exciting and interesting resources such as number worms are used which accelerates children's mathematical learning.
- This area is particularly well planned by the teacher who is a mathematics specialist.

### **Commentary**

55. Very good teaching by both the teacher and the teaching assistant result in very good progress and achievement in children's mathematical development. The teacher has considerable mathematical expertise, which she skilfully uses to plan stimulating, and interesting practical activities, which engage the children so that they work hard and achieve very well. Children count accurately up to 10 and beyond and are beginning to add on to and take away from a given number. There are very few worksheets so children are becoming adept at setting out their own work. For instance, they make good use of their writing skills when labelling objects 'heavier than' or 'lighter than'. Higher attaining children neatly record their findings in writing when counting accurately when playing number games. All children have exciting opportunities to explore many aspects of mathematics, including shape and measure, through practical activities using a good range of resources such as measuring worms. They record their work in their own way, using diagrams and drawings as well as numerals and mathematical symbols. They are on course to begin the national curriculum by the age of six.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good links with other areas of learning that enliven the work that children do.
- A good range of visits and visitors enhance this area of learning.

## Commentary

56. Children have a good range of enticing opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They make good progress and achieve well because the quality of teaching and support is good. Visits to local places of interest such as Norton Priory, and visitors to school, enrich children's knowledge of the world beyond school and home. Children enjoy using computers and are quickly acquiring the skills of clicking and dragging, using the mouse with increasing accuracy. Children observe bean seeds sprouting and learn the names of various fruits when making fruit 'smoothies' using a blender. There are good links with writing, mathematics and art and the children are enthusiastic learners who show good levels of interest in all activities. They are on course to begin the national curriculum by the age of six.
57. No complete sessions were observed outside or in the hall and so no judgements can be made about teaching or the overall provision in **physical development**. However detailed assessments show that many children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in their physical development and so are achieving well. Their skills in handling pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools are at expected levels because of the high focus on developing these skills well. Plans are at an early stage to develop the outdoor play area for physical development and other areas of learning. At the moment the quality of the outdoor accommodation and resources overall are satisfactory because the children have regular access to the pre-school outdoor facilities where they enjoy climbing, jumping and balancing activities as well as time in the hall to practise their throwing and catching skills.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's benefit from weekly music lessons from a music specialist.
- Good quality role-play areas successfully promote children's creative development.

## Commentary

58. There were no opportunities during the inspection to observe any direct teaching and learning in art and music. However, looking at the teacher's planning and photographic evidence shows that the good provision for children's creative development includes regular lessons in observational drawing as children sketch mature self-portraits complete with eyelashes and fingers. Staff plan a wide range of stimulating activities and with good teaching and high levels of support the children achieve well with many attaining the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The children need a lot of help to learn important skills when they first start school and therefore the direct teaching of specific skills is the focus of many activities along with very good opportunities for play. There is a wealth of opportunities for imaginative play in the role-play area, which has been attractively converted into 'The Light House Keeper's home, and he receives regular letters from the children via an effective pulley system. The children regularly take part in planned music making sessions with adults and are slowly building up a good repertoire of favourite songs and rhymes. Children benefit from a weekly lesson with the visiting music specialist. She is building up their skills in music successfully as well as helping them to enjoy the subject.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards are improving and are now in line with national averages in Year 6.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to speak and listen.
- Literacy skills are developing well in other subjects.
- Marking does not often inform pupils how to improve their work.
- Assessment information is not always used to inform lesson planning.

#### **Commentary**

59. Work seen from Year 2 pupils in main school classes, shows pupils achieve in line with their abilities, make satisfactory progress and are reaching average standards. Standards are improving and in line with national averages in Year 6 and pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve in line with their abilities because of the satisfactory teaching and the additional support given to some pupils. These judgements are confirmed in the national assessments for seven and 11 year olds when the results of pupils in the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 units for pupils with learning difficulties are discounted. Standards are the same as at the time of the last inspection.
60. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' writing and speaking and listening skills, which are often below average on entry. Regular sessions for speaking and listening are having a positive impact on pupils' progress in this area. All teachers use good questioning techniques in these sessions. Guest speakers enhance the school's provision. For example, during the inspection the local vicar came in to speak to all the infants. Increased use of social communication is an area used to develop and enhance pupils' skills further. There are good opportunities for pupils to work in pairs, often with a 'talking partner' or groups and this gives them the opportunities to listen to each other's points of view and test out new ideas. As a result pupils are given good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills.
61. Standards in reading are average through the school. A proportion of younger pupils find reading difficult and do not have the appropriate skills to decode unfamiliar words. Progress is also hindered by some of these pupils having poor knowledge of initial sounds or letter blends. The school has recognised this fact and is paying greater attention to the sounds that letters make work. The school is working hard in a number of ways to improve pupils' reading skills. Teachers set clear expectations that reading books are taken home and read regularly. However, opportunities for reading at home with parents or carers are not always taken and individual progress in reading is, as a result, not always as good as it could be. A significant proportion of pupils who were interviewed in the older classes felt frustrated at the lack of time they have for personal reading. There is good use of teaching assistants listening to pupils read.
62. Standards in writing are in line with the national average in both Years 2 and 6. However, lower attaining pupils do not have the necessary basic skills needed to move forward. As a result, writing has been correctly identified by the school as a key area for development. It correctly recognises that some opportunities have been missed to develop pupils' writing in other subjects and this is impacting on pupils' achievement. For example, there has been a positive impact in report writing in science but opportunities in religious education in Years 5 and 6 have been limited. However writing skills are encouraged by the use of computer

programs, enabling pupils to present their news, poems and special topics in a variety of ways.

63. A number of pupils throughout the school have significant gaps in their knowledge of basic punctuation, grammar and spelling. Teaching assistants give good support to these pupils in their carefully planned work, which enables them to achieve well. However, more able pupils are not always satisfactorily challenged. The school's computer suite provides further opportunities for developing skills using relevant programs. Pupils' progress in English is assessed and recorded using a range of suitable tests and some computer based systems. However, teachers do not always use their pupil assessment results to set individual learning targets for pupils and allow them to think about their future learning and pupils are not always sure of their individual targets or how they can move towards them.
64. The quality of marking, whilst conscientiously carried out, does not consistently inform pupils how they can improve their work. Scrutiny of work in all classes did not always clearly reflect the different year groups or differing ability of pupils. The quality of presentation of some pupils' work is also untidy, with pupils showing little regard for the school's handwriting scheme. Homework is set regularly, but not all pupils complete the tasks and opportunities to consolidate some pupils' learning are lost.
65. The subject leader understands what the current issues are within the school, and what is needed to bring about further improvement. She offers clear leadership and effective management of the subject area although time to monitor English lessons across the school has yet to be provided. The subject development plan correctly identifies areas to improve, including a review and development of pupil assessment to improve standards.

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

66. Opportunities to develop pupils' basic literacy skills across the curriculum are being developed and are satisfactory. There are good opportunities for group work and speaking and listening in subjects such as science and mathematics. Opportunities for using computers to support the pupils' work in English are developing in areas such as report writing, stories and poetry.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory** and standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan very carefully to build systematically on what pupils know and can do.
- The quality of marking varies and is not consistently linked to assessment in order to set short-term, meaningful targets for pupils to achieve and to raise standards further.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically and maintain concentration well.
- Standards in the national tests for 11 year olds have improved since 2002.

### **Commentary**

67. Since 2001, standards in the national tests for seven year olds have been very low when compared to schools nationally and to schools considered to have broadly similar proportions of pupils who are considered entitled to receive free school meals. When the results of pupils in the Key Stage 1 unit are discounted from the overall results in Key Stage 1, these results are more in line with national averages. This reflects the careful way the curriculum for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 is organised and taught. The results of the national tests in mathematics for 11 year olds have improved from a low point in 2002. Standards in these tests were below average in 2004 when compared to schools nationally and to schools which contained a

similar proportion of pupils considered eligible to free school meals. When the performance of pupils in the unit for Key Stage 2 is discounted many of the remaining small group of pupils in the mainstream attained at least the expected level (Level 4) and made the progress expected of them bearing in mind the standards they reached at the age seven. The school met its targets set for mathematics in last year's national tests for 11 year olds. Evidence from this inspection showed that standards of work of the current group of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in the main school are average and pupils achieve appropriately for their abilities. In the units and in the main school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 2004, girls out-performed boys. This is in large part related to the high proportion of boys in the unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Standards are the same as at the time of the last inspection.

68. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Teachers have a secure understanding of how to teach numeracy. In Year 1 and Year 2, lessons begin purposefully and are well organised so that the pace of learning is brisk. Heavy emphasis is given to the use of correct mathematical vocabulary, for example when drawing graphs of favourite fruits using different formats. In the best lessons, the teacher continues to question vigorously to ensure that all pupils know what has been taught. Within Year 3 to Year 6, in the best lessons the teachers set the objectives for the lessons very clearly and question carefully to ensure that pupils understand what has been taught previously. Pupils are cleverly encouraged to look for the deliberate mistake in a presentation using an interactive whiteboard. They take part in the lessons enthusiastically and maintain concentration well. Pupils use specific vocabulary accurately, responding well to the way technical terms are explained; for example, in learning about the mean, mode and median in averages. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and play a full part in their lessons. In the best lessons, marking is detailed and helpful, however this is not found consistently across the school. Some marking does not identify areas for improvement and the support which pupils need to overcome their difficulties. Insufficient attention is given to analysing assessment information in general to assist in this process. As a result there is no agreed approach in getting pupils to recognise the small, short-term steps they should take to overcome any difficulties.
69. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership and has worked successfully to introduce a new scheme of work and to help teachers plan and teach numeracy. Initiatives are well planned through a carefully organised subject development plan. This is accurately focused on the needs of the subject. However, the co-ordinator has had limited opportunities to visit classes to judge the success of these initiatives at first hand.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

70. Pupils use their skills of mathematics well in other subjects; for example in analysing information collected from surveys in geography and science.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Year 6 in Key Stage 2 national assessment tests for 2004 attained above average standards for similar schools and achieved well bearing in mind their previous performances.
- Pupils in both key stages know about the importance of being healthy and how their bodies work.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific facts is stronger than their abilities to conduct investigations and observations for themselves.

## Commentary

71. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average and pupils generally achieve at least in line with their abilities. Pupils with special educational needs often achieve well for them. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 attained above average standards in the 2004 national tests for 11 year olds when compared to similar schools. When these results are compared to the performance previously, these results appear to be above what it was reasonable to expect of them. However, this picture is unreliable not only because of the small group of pupils involved but also because a significant group of pupils in the units for Key Stage 1 did not remain at the school. However, when the results for 11 year olds not in the unit for Key Stage 2 are analysed, it is evident that many of these pupils reached the expected level (Level 4) and nearly all achieved at least as well as could be reasonably expected of them. These results are the product of the very effective and well-organised teaching in Year 5 and Year 6 of the knowledge and understanding of science.
72. The quality of teaching and learning in science is satisfactory across the school. In the best lessons, teachers question well to establish similarities and differences; for example between humans and dogs. This approach is then extended naturally to include comparisons with birds and plants. Pupils are encouraged well to think rationally and to organise information according to set criteria. Teachers utilise information and communication technology well to demonstrate principles. They extend pupils' learning well; for example when studying the rotation of the earth and moon around the sun. They are able to calculate the speed at which the earth rotates because the teacher encourages them successfully to think through and apply the mathematical knowledge they have about circumference and time. Teachers emphasise clearly what pupils are likely to need to know in the national assessments they will be sitting.
73. Where teaching has some weaknesses, insufficient attention is given to providing pupils with first hand opportunities to carry out experiments for themselves and to gain an understanding of the principles of fair testing from an early age. In some classes, for example in Year 5 and Year 6, pupils use a hypothesis and plan carefully how to organise data when testing the effect of exercise on their bodies or when studying friction. However, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 and in Year 3 and Year 4 have limited opportunities to build on their knowledge and understanding of the world through practical experiences. Teachers generally mark pupils' work supportively but they do not always give good guidance as to how pupils could improve their work nor do the pupils consistently have individual targets to meet.
74. Pupils are interested in their science lessons and are eager to learn. They have a good understanding in Year 1 and Year 2 about health and unhealthy food. They know how their bodies change as they grow up. In Year 3 to Year 6 pupils know about the functions of the main organs of the body and how to stay fit and healthy. They understand the circulatory system of humans and animals thoroughly. They know how to measure pulse and breathing rates.
75. The co-ordinator has held responsibility for this subject for only a short time and is providing a satisfactory lead, particularly in determining strengths and areas for development and what is taught. The co-ordinator has for example correctly identified the need to give more emphasis to the teaching of the skills of observation and investigation. However, there are no arrangements for the co-ordinator to look at the quality of teaching at first hand, or to analyse carefully the information the school collects from its assessments in science.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been a good improvement in staff expertise to keep pace with the rapid developments in the subject.
- Pupils achieve well and enjoy the subject.
- Information and communication technology is used well in other subjects.
- Procedures for assessing progress in the subject have not yet been established.

## **Commentary**

76. The last inspection found that standards in information and communication technology by Years 2 and 6 were in line with national expectations. This inspection also found attainment to be at least in line with national expectations in each key stage, and some aspects are above average. This represents satisfactory progress in improving the subject and in keeping pace with national and worldwide developments. Pupils of all ages achieve well for their capabilities, including the many with special educational needs.
77. A broad programme of study is in place, which is having a positive impact on learning across the school. A projector has been installed in the information and communication technology suite and this is being used effectively. It allows full classes to be taught more easily because teachers' demonstrations can be easily seen on the large screen. There are computers and interactive whiteboards in all classrooms as well as in the computer suite. These enable pupils to practise skills between lessons and also to use them effectively to support their learning other subjects. However, teachers when teaching other subjects do not always use the computer suite.
78. During the inspection only one information and communication technology lesson was timetabled and none were observed. However, teachers' use of information and communication technology to support across the curriculum was observed by inspectors. In most lessons using information and communication technology, teaching is good and children learn well because the good teaching ensures that they progress as fast as they can. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, know the programs they are teaching and use good teaching strategies. In weaker lessons, the pace is slower and the pupils are not as well engaged in their activities. Pupils' with special educational needs in the special units and mainstream classes achieve well when they given appropriate tasks and are supported by adults.
79. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The subject leader offers clear leadership and sound management of the subject area although time to monitor information and communication technology lessons across the school has yet to be provided. A school website is being developed, which when complete is intended to celebrate pupils' achievements and keep parents informed of curriculum developments. A technician helps to manage the equipment. A formal assessment system for the subject is being developed as part of the subject leader's action plan. The headteacher has monitored some lessons and there are samples of work on computer disks and in pupils' portfolios, but few show pupils' levels of attainment. Teachers have had access to up-to-date training in the subject and this has helped to raise confidence levels and skills. The subject leader gives advice and support to colleagues and helps to keep the school abreast of new developments. The school is adequately resourced in this area and has enough software to deliver the curriculum.

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

80. Teachers use information and communication technology across the curriculum well. It is used to support lessons such as literacy, numeracy, history, geography and science. Pupils particularly use computers to display their finished work and to handle data. They search the Internet to find information for use in a range of subjects. Older pupils communicate with friends using e-mails and text messages.

## **HUMANITIES**

81. It was only possible to sample work in geography and history and no overall judgements on provision can be made. In **geography** only two lessons were observed and a sample of pupils' work analysed. The available pupils' work and planning documentation indicate that



the planned curriculum is adequate. There was not enough evidence to judge teaching and learning.

82. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils used photographs and simple maps to help them plan a visit to Blackpool. The lesson was well prepared so that a good range of resources was readily to hand. There were good opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in composing a postcard to send home and also to increase their scientific knowledge through studying the life cycle of a sea urchin. Pupils know that beaches can be dangerous places and are aware of the importance of following signs warning people not to bathe in certain sea conditions. They know that weather forecasts give important information to holiday makers. In a satisfactory Year 5 lesson, pupils, including those from a unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, showed a lively interest in how mountain terrain and changing climate place physical demands on climbers and their equipment. This is because the teacher cleverly encourages a pupil to put on the necessary extra equipment as he 'climbs' the imaginary mountain. Other pupils in Year 6 know how to read the contour lines of a map, interpreting these lines accurately to produce a three dimensional model of a hill. They use their numerical skills well to achieve this.
83. In **history** only one lesson was observed and samples of pupils' work were analysed. Pupils were also given good opportunities to discuss their previous studies. The evidence available indicates that the curriculum is appropriate. There was not enough evidence to judge teaching and learning.
84. In the one good lesson seen, pupils in Year 4 made good progress in their study of Henry VIII. They remembered accurately the reasons why Henry VIII married six times and what were the fates of his wives. In Year 5 and Year 6, pupils know the main achievements in science, industry and the arts which occurred during the Victorian periods. They know of the contribution to improvements in workers' living conditions made by some philanthropists, such as John Cadbury. They are able to recall from previous work, facts relating to their study of Ancient Greece and the Roman occupation of Britain. However, their knowledge of the skills of historical interpretation is under-developed.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not build progressively on their knowledge and understanding because the locally agreed syllabus is not given sufficient curriculum time.
- There are too few opportunities for independent learning, especially for higher attaining pupils.

### **Commentary**

85. Attainment is below that expected by the locally agreed syllabus for pupils in Year 6, although it is in line with expectations by Year 2. This is a decline from the position at the last inspection, when attainment was judged satisfactory at the end of both key stages. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory by Year 2, but unsatisfactory in Year 6 because the time allocated to teach religious education was insufficient to cover the planned programmes.
86. In Year 2, pupils display knowledge of Bible stories. They know Jesus is thought to be a special person and display knowledge of some of the events in his life, including Christmas or Easter. They understand some of the purposes of places of worship through visits to the local church and synagogue, or of the fact that certain festivals and beliefs are special to different people for different reasons. This is because the curriculum is taught in enough depth and with sufficient coherence for pupils to build progressively on their knowledge and

understanding. During the lesson on 'religious leaders' most pupils knew the Pope had recently died, and one higher attaining pupil described how we would know when the next Pope had been selected. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 display gaps in knowledge and understanding. While they learn about the lives of such figures as Mohammed they know little of the beliefs that inspired him. Their knowledge of Bible stories and other religious beliefs and practices is equally limited. Pupils rarely work independently, and there is little difference in the work seen of the least capable and most capable pupils.

87. An analysis of work reveals that tasks are often too heavily directed by the teacher; pupils have too few opportunities to express the knowledge and understanding they have acquired, and higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged to explore stories and beliefs in greater depth. Across the school, two lessons were observed in the course of the inspection; one good and one satisfactory. In the good lesson, pupils discussed ideas in groups and were given sufficient time to express and record their views. The result was perceptive, sensitive work that pupils were encouraged to share with others.
88. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory and oversight of the subject by the headteacher as interim co-ordinator has failed to ensure the time allocated to teach religious education is adequate and is being used effectively. There are no formal procedures in place to help identify and address these issues. While pupils occasionally celebrate festivals in the local church and receive visits from the vicar to enhance their understanding of Christianity, there are few contacts with representatives of other religions or places of worship.

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

89. It was possible to observe only a small number of lessons in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education.
90. During the inspection no lessons were observed in **art and design**. Evidence gathered from looking at displays around the school, pupils' sketchbooks, photographs and artwork in other subject areas indicates that standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 4 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Information and communication technology is used effectively to enhance pupils' artwork.
91. **Design and technology** was sampled through an examination of pupils' work and discussions with the subject leader.
92. In design and technology there is some indication that standards at the end of Year 2 are average but barely satisfactory at the end of Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make sketches of what they plan to make, choosing suitable materials to make moving pictures and a clock face, which they decorate and finally evaluate. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 make good pneumatic monsters from junk materials using a design template. Years 5 and 6 pupils design and make musical instruments from a variety of materials. However, designs are insufficiently detailed and the evidence available showed no product evaluation. The small amount of work completed by these older pupils did not reflect what was planned. Weaknesses described in the previous inspection have not all been addressed although a new scheme of work and subject development plan have been produced.
93. The school has identified the need to improve its assessment procedures which are weak. Pupils' attainment and achievement in **music** has improved since the last inspection as the school has received valuable support and guidance from the music advisor and has enlisted the services of a music specialist teacher to teach all classes once a week. Teachers' confidence in teaching music and in following a commercial scheme has also improved. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one complete lesson in music, which was satisfactory. Year 1 and 2 pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use untuned

percussion instruments and are beginning to gain a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how to follow a pictorial musical score. Singing in assemblies is lively and tuneful, especially when the music specialist teacher accompanies them. There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their listening skills and their appreciation of the music of other times and cultures because music is not always played in assemblies or on other occasions to create an atmosphere or stimulate interest.

94. Only one **physical education** lesson was observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make secure judgements about provision. In this satisfactory lesson Year 3 and 4 pupils made satisfactory progress in devising movement sequences.
95. From looking at planning and discussions with staff and pupils it is evident that all elements of the curriculum strands are taught during the school year. Good improvements have been made to the physical education curriculum in recent times due to good input and support from the PE advisor. This has resulted in the school achieving an Active Mark. Standards in swimming are good and all pupils learn to swim at least the expected 25 metres. The school sets a high priority on teaching all pupils to swim. Pupils in the special junior unit receive additional swimming sessions to encourage their skills and confidence.
96. There are good opportunities for pupils to enrich their experience through a wide selection of extra-curricular activities, ranging from football to netball. The school is developing a successful profile in local competitive sports tournaments. Physical education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social education. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the role but he is very enthusiastic and highly committed to enhancing the PE curriculum even further.

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

97. Provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship is good. The programme for personal, social and health education is good. In the reception class, personal, social and emotional development is promoted very successfully. The good skills gained by younger children are maintained throughout the school. The school organises a number of talks and demonstrations which inform and extend pupils' learning in this area. For example, the school is involved in achieving the Halton Healthy Schools Standard which involves discussions about drug awareness, healthy eating, keeping safe and other issues designed to protect vulnerable young people.
98. Specialist input provided by the local community police officer, community liaison officers and the local education authority supports the school's work on drugs awareness and health education very effectively. A commitment to healthy eating and more fresh fruit and vegetables in pupils' diets has led the school to achieve a Healthy Schools Award in 2003.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
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
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
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	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
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).*