

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLOW TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104772

Headteacher: Mrs. M Huyton

Lead inspector: John Brennan

Dates of inspection: 16 -18 May 2005

Inspection number: 268269

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:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	363
School address:	Willow Tree Avenue Leach Lane Sutton Leach St Helens Merseyside
Postcode:	WA9 4LZ
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. J. Lowe
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Willow Tree Community Primary School is a larger than average primary school. Most of the adjacent boroughs, from which the vast majority of the pupils come, have socio-economic indicators that are well below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The skills, knowledge and understanding that children start the Nursery with are well below average and are particularly low in language. The school has undergone considerable change since the last inspection. Most notably, it amalgamated with a nearby local primary school. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs has risen considerably since the last inspection. The number of pupils entering the school with complex needs, especially social and emotional needs, has increased markedly, so that although the overall proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is above average the proportion of pupils who have a statement for their needs is well above average. In addition, there are a significant number of pupils with moderate learning needs and a significant number of individuals' needs cover a wide range of issues. Pupil mobility has also increased since the last inspection and, although affecting each year group, is particularly high in the junior classes, where it can reach fifty per cent. However, because fewer children now join the Nursery than in the past numbers have gone down but are relatively stable. Almost all pupils come from a white British background; in addition, there is a small number of Irish pupils and one from a Chinese family. None are at the early stages of learning English. The school received an Achievement Award in 2000 and was awarded Investors in People Status in 2004. It is involved in Excellence in Cities and the Primary Leadership Programme. It has recently become part of a Learning Network.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21094	John Brennan	Lead inspector	Design and technology Information and communications technology English as an additional language
32678	Kathryn Dodd	Lay inspector	
31012	Diane Mackie	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Personal, social and health education Religious education Science
15372	Patricia Walker	Team inspector	English History Geography Special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school gives a satisfactory quality of education. Although standards are well below average, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, as are leadership and management. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children's education gets off to a good start in the Nursery.
- Good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs.
- Attendance rates are too low.
- Pupils achieve well in science.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning has not been rigorous or widespread enough.
- A significant proportion of teaching is not aspiring enough, does not involve pupils well enough in lessons or give them a clear enough idea of how to improve their work.
- Determined and ambitious leadership by the headteacher, aided by the deputy headteacher, has given the school a clear sense of direction, renewed vigour, and fostered good team spirit.
- Good provision is made for pupils' social and moral development.
- The caring attitude of staff ensures that pupils have easy access to support and guidance.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. There have been some improvements to major weaknesses identified then in information and communication technology and in writing in Years 3 to 6. It is only recently that the school has helped improve provision for speaking and listening and it still has some way to go. In the main, standards are lower and achievement in Years 1 and 2 is not strong as was. However, pupils now achieve well in science and pupils who have special educational needs also achieve well. Attendance rates have declined and partnerships with parents are not as strong. Until of late too little has been done to ensure that school leaders do enough to monitor the work of the school. The overall quality of teaching and learning is not as strong as it was.

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

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

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. From a starting point that is well below average children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily but despite this begin Year 1 with well below average attainment. They achieve well in their personal and social development and in their physical development. In language and literacy, mathematical and creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world children do better in the Nursery, where achievement is good, than in the Reception classes. Achievement overall in these areas of learning is therefore satisfactory overall. Achievement through Years 1 to 6 is also satisfactory. Results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2004 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics and below average when compared to similar schools. Results in the national tests of 2004 in Year 6 were well below average in English, mathematics and science but were average when compared to similar schools. The trend of results has been below the national trend but much of this is due to an increase in the number of pupils who have special educational needs and in the number who enter or leave the school other than at the usual time. Inspection findings show that although standards are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Standards are also well below average in speaking and listening.

Though this represents satisfactory achievement for these pupils, weaknesses in speaking and listening create barriers to further achievement which are difficult to overcome. As a result of an interesting curriculum pupils achieve well throughout the school in science; standards are below expected levels. Pupils acquire ICT skills at a reasonable rate but because they are not encouraged to put them to good enough use standards in Year 2 and 6 are below expected levels. Pupils achieve satisfactorily to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Standards in physical education meet expectations in Year 2 and Year 6 but achievement is stronger in the infants than the juniors. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well largely because of effective partnership between teachers and teaching assistants. Girls do better than boys in English. This is because more boys have special educational needs than girls and, on occasion, their behaviour is not as good. It was not possible to judge achievement in other subjects.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance rates are poor and punctuality satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour and attitude to school are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching in the Nursery is good because of the good understanding staff have of how young children learn and because of the challenge of activities. Some group activities in the Reception classes are not as challenging and pupils do not learn as well here. Where teaching is good, teachers make good use of the clear guidelines that now govern behaviour, they employ a good range of techniques to encourage pupils to explain and deepen their thinking and to listen well and they then set pupils interesting tasks to do. This is more commonly the case in Years 3 and 4 than elsewhere in the school. On a few occasions, teachers do not insist on good enough behaviour or they talk for too long. When this happens, some pupils become restless. On other occasions, work is not thought provoking enough and pupils are not encouraged to work independently. Not enough is being done to help pupils think about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. As well as making a good contribution to the achievement of all pupils and to the smooth running of lessons, teaching assistants are particularly effective in helping pupils who have special educational needs. The learning mentor is very effective in helping the most vulnerable pupils. This typifies an attitude of care in which pupils have someone to turn to if worried. The school works well with outside agencies for pupils who have particular needs, especially behavioural. The school provides a good range of sporting clubs. A significant number of parents do not make the most of attempts by the school to work with them or support the school enough in ensuring that their children attend regularly enough.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Good leadership by the recently appointed headteacher aided by the deputy headteacher has helped make improvements in a short space of time. Team spirit is strong and the school has a clear sense of direction. Actions to ensure that the quality of teaching is checked up on and to see that changes are implemented well are at an early stage. This leads to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are very committed to the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils recognise that the school has come through a difficult period. They feel that recent changes have been positive, especially in improving behaviour. They have confidence in leadership.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that teaching and learning are more rigorously monitored and evaluated.
- Take more effective measures to improve pupils' attendance.
- Improve the consistency with which teachers involve pupils in learning, help develop their speaking and listening skills and set them interesting tasks.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Although standards are well below average pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's education gets off to a good start because of good achievement in the Nursery.
- Although factors such as mobility hinder achievement inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning also play a part.
- Pupils achieve well in science even though standards are below average.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. There have been significant changes in the context of the school since the last inspection which impact on standards. The school amalgamated with a local school in 2002 and this saw the beginning of a trend in which the proportion of pupils joining the school who have special educational needs increased. Their number is now significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection. This not only changed the profile on entry to school but also the composition of every year group, which goes some way to explaining why standards overall are lower than at the time of last inspection. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and a lack of breadth and expertise in leadership have also contributed to the school's decline in standards. The signs are that leadership and management are now getting to grips with both of these. Inconsistencies in teaching and learning can be clearly seen in the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage in which a better standard of teaching results in children achieving well in the Nursery as opposed to satisfactorily in the Reception classes. As a result of the differences in the quality of provision between the Nursery and Reception classes in developing children's language and literacy skills, their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, achievement overall is satisfactory. Consequently, many children are unlikely to meet the goals normally set for children at the end of Reception in these areas of learning. A more even pattern of achievement is evident in the development of children's personal and social education, with pupils achieving well across the Foundation Stage in this area of learning. However, a significant proportion of children are unlikely to reach the goals normally expected of children at the end of Reception. Good achievement throughout the Foundation Stage in physical development results in the majority of children being on course to meet the early learning goals at the end of Reception. Overall therefore, from attainment on entry in which children start the Nursery with skills that are well below those typically found, achievement through the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Despite this, many children are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals for the end of Reception.
2. The Foundation Stage is not exempt from the additional barrier that pupils' mobility presents to achievement. Although not as high as in other year groups, where it can exceed fifty per cent, it is nevertheless a contributory factor to low standards. The school is constantly looking to help pupils settle to school, many of whom have a fragmented experience of school and a significant proportion of whom have special educational needs. This undermines the credibility of results in national tests. These indicate a declining trend in results in Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 2, results in the 2004 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average and below average when compared to similar schools. Results in the national tests in Year 6 in 2004, although well below average in English, mathematics and science, were average when compared to similar schools in these subjects. Results also show a difference in the attainment of boys and girls, especially in English, where girls often

do better than boys. This is largely because of the higher proportion of boys who have special educational needs and because when behaviour deteriorates the effects are more widespread amongst boys and can on occasion adversely affect their achievement. The school targets for results in national tests are often rendered meaningless by the number of pupils who either leave or join the school in the older classes.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.7 (13.6)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	12.3 (13.3)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	14.4 (14.3)	16.2 (16.2)

There were 46 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	25.2 (24.8)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	25.1 (25.1)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.4 (26.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning evident in the Foundation Stage also continue through the school. The most consistently good teaching is to be found across Years 3 and 4, with differences evident in the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 contributing to a rather uneven pattern of achievement. Standards seen in lessons and in books largely match results in national tests and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. In reading and in writing standards are well below average in Year 2 and 6 despite the fact that pupils are receiving increasingly varied reading material and are benefiting from an increase in opportunities to write. One of the main reasons for low standards is the very low level of language skills children have when they start school. The school has looked to help pupils overcome this barrier by giving speaking and listening greater emphasis but this is meeting with mixed success. Although achievement is satisfactory, standards are well below average in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupil's lack of ability to express their thoughts and explain their thinking adversely affects achievement more generally. The rather mixed quality of provision offered to pupils in mathematics results in satisfactory achievement. However, standards are well below average in Year 2 and Year 6.
4. The emphasis given to investigational science and a greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning enable pupils to achieve well in science. Despite this, standards are below average in Year 2 and Year 6. As a result of an improvement to provision for ICT, pupils acquire skills at an appropriate rate and achievement is satisfactory. However, the school is yet to consider how to put pupils' improved abilities to good enough use. Achievement in religious education is satisfactory, with pupils meeting the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. However, pupils do not know enough about faiths other than Christianity. Although pupils attain expected standards in physical education in Years 2 and 6, teaching and achievement are stronger in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6.
5. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because teachers follow educational plans carefully and appropriate work is usually set for them. Good partnerships are established with teaching assistants, who provide good levels of help and, in the best instances, these ensure that pupils' work gels with that of their peers. The co-ordinator for special educational needs ensures that new targets are set regularly to lead pupils forward at a good rate. For the most part pupils who have social and emotional needs also achieve well.

However, there are occasions when teaching is not skilled enough to actively involve all pupils and at these times there is a tendency for these pupils to switch off or become disruptive. More often than not these are boys.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are satisfactory. Attendance is poor and punctuality to school is satisfactory. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Action taken to improve attendance has been insufficient to ensure success for the many pupils with poor attendance records.
- The way that the school promotes good behaviour is effective in helping pupils to understand the consequences of their actions.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are reducing because of the high priority given by the school to improving pupils' conduct.
- Although the school helps pupils to learn about local culture not enough attention is given to the understanding of the wider multi-cultural society.

Commentary

6. Pupils' attendance has deteriorated since the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory. The table below shows that the school's attendance rate last year was below the national average, and current figures indicate a further decline. The attendance of almost half the pupils falls below the national average, yet most pupils report that they do like being at school. A factor that contributes significantly to this unsatisfactory picture is the failure of a number of parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly. This presents a significant barrier to raising pupils' achievement, and it is, therefore, an issue to be tackled urgently. Previous attempts to improve attendance have focussed on the small number of pupils causing greatest concern. However, results have met with variable success, and many of the pupils supported continue to be amongst the poorest attenders. Furthermore, the support for the remainder of pupils and their parents has suffered because the approaches used by staff and support agencies to monitor and promote better attendance have lacked clarity and cohesion. The scale of the problem is too large for existing resources and approaches to make any significant impact.
7. The school has identified the action required to tackle the problem of poor attendance, and procedures are now being put into place. Better promotion of attendance to both pupils and their parents is seen, rightly, as a key to improvement. Whilst good procedures are now in place to involve pupils by rewarding them for improved attendance, only a few pupils have 'improving attendance' as a personal target to aim for. Efforts to inform and involve more parents are at an early stage.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94 %)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.7
National data	5.1	National data	0.3

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

8. Although the punctuality of most pupils in school is satisfactory, the persistent late arrival of pupils from a few families each day can be disruptive to the learning of others. Whilst sensible

steps have been taken to minimise the impact this has on the learning of both the late arrivers and their classmates, efforts to reduce the overall incidence of lateness have yet to be effective.

9. Until recently, pupils' poor behaviour and attitudes have been a cause for concern. The new headteacher's determination to tackle this, allied to the work begun by the deputy headteacher, are beginning to pay dividends. Whilst parents and pupils now think that the behaviour of a few pupils, mainly boys, still disrupts the education of others, they are right to think that most pupils behave well and that bullying is not as prevalent as it was. Last year, seven pupils were excluded, often on more than one occasion. This figure has reduced dramatically this year, with only two pupils being excluded. In addition, the proportion of pupils achieving end of week rewards has risen steadily. Improvement has been secured recently by giving highest priority to finding more successful ways of managing pupils' behaviour and improving their attitudes towards school and work. An important feature of this work is helping pupils to understand that, whilst they can make choices about their behaviour, their actions always have consequences. Appropriate sanctions for poor behaviour, along with self-chosen rewards for good behaviour, the involvement of pupils in devising their own codes of conduct and the celebration of achievements, all contribute towards raising pupils' self-esteem and encouraging them to try harder. These efforts have not only improved behaviour but have resulted in an improvement in relationships. In general pupils get on with others and positive relationships are established with adults. Pupils who have special educational needs for behaviour are well supported. Although there is a good range of strategies to help them to succeed and improve, a few pupils are involved in low-level disruption of lessons that adversely affects teaching and learning. Although there are clear signs of improving behaviour and attitudes as a result of staff training, not all staff always insist on the highest standards of behaviour, and this diminishes the overall impact of the good work being done and can result in inattentive behaviour, mainly by boys. Nevertheless, the school's efforts make a good contribution to pupils' moral development.

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	300	15	7
White – Irish	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

10. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development. Assemblies provide suitable opportunities for reflection. However, pupils have limited understanding of how to improve their learning and so self-knowledge is not as strong as it might be. Older pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility and to contribute towards the running of their school - for example, by taking out and collecting equipment from the playground. In lessons there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to work together, although the inconsistent way in which teachers promote speaking and listening does not always help pupils listen to one another views. The increasing focus on improving the school environment is helping pupils to think more about their own place within the school community and to develop a greater respect for property than previously. Pupils learn about the locality and people of differing cultures and religious beliefs through their work in religious education, assemblies and local visits. They have limited opportunities, however,

across the subjects of the curriculum, to think about and learn to appreciate the diversity and richness of cultures within our multi-cultural society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Nonetheless, there are variations in the quality of teaching which have a direct impact on learning. The school has a strong attitude of care, which can be seen in the good provision it makes for pupils who have special educational needs and in how it looks after the most vulnerable pupils. The satisfactory curriculum has recently been added to by an increased number of clubs to help make school life more interesting.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. The best teaching and learning is to be found in Years 3 and 4 and in the Nursery.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers meet with mixed success when talking to the whole class, in questioning them and in fostering the development of speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching assistants make a telling contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The best teaching ensures that tasks are interesting and engaging enough to make pupils think and give of their best.
- Pupils are not given a clear enough idea of what it is they need to do to improve.

Commentary

11. The overall quality of teaching and learning has declined since the last inspection. Until relatively recently too little has been done to equip teachers with the expertise needed to face the increased challenges resulting from the changed circumstances of the school. Although teachers are now meeting with more success in rising to these, inconsistencies remain.
12. The recent training teachers have received in the management of pupils can be seen in the way praise is prominent in lessons. On the whole relationships are good and classrooms productive places. Where teachers make deliberate attempts to discuss appropriate ways of behaving and working, lessons proceed well and teachers and pupils are able to go about their work in peace. Some teachers have devised particular strategies for this and explain these carefully in class discussions. In Year 4 for example, careful consideration was given at the beginning of the lesson to ensure that pupils worked well in groups by ascribing key roles of leader, scribe, observer and reporter to individuals. Expectations of how to act in these roles, prominently displayed around the classroom, helped in this. Leaders of groups form the first port of call for fellow pupils who need help. If these leaders cannot help them the rest of the group rally round. This very successful strategy liberates the teacher so that she is able to work with identified pupils and gives a structure to helping pupils work efficiently together. This useful strategy is not in widespread use. There are still occasions when teachers do not consistently stick to the rules that have been devised to govern behaviour. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher accepted answers from pupils who shouted out despite having reminded pupils about this earlier. A similar picture also emerges in the Reception classes. When this happens class discussion can become unproductive.
13. Questioning of the whole class reveals variability in the confidence and expertise teachers have in employing strategies to encourage speaking and listening. This is rightly seen by the school as vital given the low level of speaking and listening skills children begin Nursery with. Here staff are skilled at building discussion into a variety of activities, and extended talk is targeted. The school has encouraged and trained teachers in the use of strategies such as 'talk partners' and drama to build on this but is not universally successful. In the worst instances, as can be the case in some teaching in Year 6, pupils are talked at and no

response is elicited. This can result in fidgety and inattentive behaviour by some pupils and passivity on the part of others. On other occasions, talk partners are used to increase participation. However, once again these strategies meet with mixed success because the content of such exercises is not given enough thought and so, although pupils are speaking and listening, the exercise does not demand enough thought. In addition these occasions form interludes between times when teachers rely on talking to classes for extended periods. This can also result in inattentive behaviour. Subjects such as religious education are proving a fertile ground for drama but there is scope to extend such opportunities.. Pupils say that they enjoy times when they are involved in this way and respond enthusiastically to such occasions. In the main therefore teachers meet with more success in ensuring that pupils learn subject- specific vocabulary than in their ability to use talk to deepen and expand thinking

14. As a result of training of teaching assistants and consideration given to their role they have a telling impact on pupils' achievement. This is most keenly felt for pupils who have special educational needs. Forming effective partnerships with teachers who involve themselves well in planning, teaching assistants are able to work closely with pupils who have both learning and behavioural needs. This is at its most successful when support is synchronised with what the class teacher is doing. This was the case in two simultaneously timed literacy lessons in Year 2. Here the assistant was able to work with pupils from both classes as all pupils played a phonic game to start the lesson off. With little fuss pupils then gathered in their separate class groups so that all could be introduced to the overarching theme of the lesson, with the assistant once again providing help for pupils from both classes once all pupils were set to work on differentiated tasks. This strong teamwork succeeded in the dual aim of ensuring that pupils worked at an appropriate level and at the same time felt part of what all other pupils were doing. This is particularly important for pupils who have behavioural needs and by and large the school succeeds well in helping these pupils work alongside their peers. There are times, however, especially when the teacher is talking to the whole class, when teaching assistants could take greater care to ensure that quiet pupils are encouraged to join in and those who find it difficult to behave well are kept in check. Teaching assistants are playing an increasingly important role in working with pupils of other abilities. This is particularly the case in the Foundation Stage, where teamwork is especially strong. This not only contributes to the smooth running of lessons, but also ensures that all pupils come to see assistants as important sources of help and that the class teachers do not lose touch with pupils who have special educational needs.
15. As well as involving pupils well in lessons and working effectively with teaching assistants the best teaching also succeeds in setting pupils interesting tasks. As in other aspects of teaching and learning, variations exist. In the Foundation Stage, staff in the Nursery are more successful than in Reception in ensuring that maximum learning is obtained from group activities, including those where children are expected to take the initiative. Here, teachers are less successful in ensuring that group activities are challenging enough and in ensuring that tracking procedures check that children are offered a balance of experiences. Throughout the school careful consideration is given to making science active and investigational in nature. Pupils say that they enjoy this subject and it is no coincidence that pupils of all abilities achieve well. The school is also achieving some success in making writing interesting by linking it to other subjects. This ensures that pupils are increasingly writing with a sense of purpose. However, this is not the case in ICT where tasks are often mundane and, because of an over-concentration on skills, pupils are not provided with thought- provoking ways of using these skills. Teaching of this nature is very narrow and gives pupils insufficient scope to show independence and initiative.

16. The school's improvements to planning ensure that lessons often have a sense of purpose but the additional aim of involving pupils in learning is not yet achieved. This is because teachers do not make it clear enough to pupils what they are to learn and how they will demonstrate success. This undermines the potential of the end of lessons for pupils to join with the teacher in assessing how well they have done. Strategies, such as putting thumbs up or down, give a broad indication of what pupils feel, but too little is being done to test this out. For example, the conclusion to a lesson on writing poems about storms in Year 6 invited pupils to read out 'their best sentence'. No instructive comments were made about these and no attempts were made to check whether or not pupils had used the particular devices that had been studied during the lesson and were displayed for all to see. This means that pupils do not critically assess their work or that of their peers. Such teaching also does little to develop speaking and listening skills. Target setting is not yet successful as pupils are often unable to recall their targets and little mention is made of them in lessons. They are not therefore, at the forefront of the pupils' minds. In a similar way marking which often gives praise does not give pupils a clear enough idea of what it is they need to do to improve. As a consequence of these shortcomings pupils are not very clear about what they are currently trying hard to do, how successful they have been and what they need to do to get better.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (4%)	1 (2%)	16 (35%)	25 (54%)	2 (4%)	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 school provides a satisfactory curriculum with opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' personal and social education is given a high profile but teaching does not always make the most of this.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school is beginning to make good use of individual teacher expertise to improve learning and enrich the curriculum.
- The curriculum exploits the potential links between subjects and writing well but is not as successful in achieving this for speaking and listening.

Commentary

17. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' ICT skills had insufficient attention and resources and staff expertise were inadequate. The school has also addressed gaps that were identified in the curriculum for design and technology. Overall, the curriculum is supported by adequate accommodation and a satisfactory range of resources. There is a good programme in place for personal, social and health education, including making appropriate provision for sex education and drugs awareness education. The programme's high profile within the curriculum is enhanced by participation in the Healthy School Initiative, and by the good links established with outside agencies and with other professional groups. However, the impact of time dedicated to pupils' personal, social and health education is undermined by insecurities in teaching, which does not always go into enough depth.

18. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good overall, and it is very good in the Nursery and the Reception classes. The school attaches importance to making good provision, and this is reflected in the fact that the deputy headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator and in the good number of teaching assistants the school employs and the training it has ensured that they receive. Statutory requirements are met for pupils with statements of special educational need. Equal opportunities are well considered. The school achieves a good balance of withdrawal work and lessons in which pupils join with the rest of their class. This is most effective when year group teachers and teaching assistants work seamlessly to ensure that pupils are not withdrawn for the whole lesson but work with the whole class for part of the time and in supported groups at other times during the lesson. This enables pupils to feel that they are still part of their class. This general approach is supplemented by a range of programmes often involving the use of outside expertise, such as a music therapist, to address pupils' particular needs. This is particularly beneficial for pupils who have behavioural needs. Pupils are encouraged to join in all school activities and participate in clubs and sports teams and play a full part in school life.
19. The school is keen to respond to national guidance about the curriculum by finding innovative ways to continue to improve it. The headteacher carefully matches the individual expertise and interests of teachers to the curriculum responsibilities allocated to them. As a result, staff have a renewed enthusiasm and commitment to improvement. Attempts to use the varied expertise within year group teams is at an early stage. In Year 4 for example, the expertise of an experienced teacher is being used well as she teaches literacy to the whole year group. Innovation has been boosted by the appointment of leaders with responsibility for improving the quality of the accommodation and the learning environment, and finding creative ways in which the curriculum can be enriched, including by extra – curricular activities. Whilst these appointments are relatively new, detailed plans are already showing signs of improving the curriculum. There are now a good number of opportunities for pupils to participate in high quality sporting activities, often taught by specialist coaches. Both pupils and their parents appreciate this improved provision.
20. As part of the school's efforts to make the curriculum more meaningful for the pupils, teachers now plan for imaginative ways of improving pupils' writing skills through their work in science and in other subjects. However, pupils have infrequent opportunities to experience a wider range of our literary heritage through, for example, theatre visits or listening to visitors to the school, and this limits the depth of their response. Teachers recognise the need for pupils to learn and practise their speaking and listening skills as an integral part of their work in all subjects. The school, rightly, wants this to become a central over-arching feature of the curriculum in order to help address a major barrier to success. The school has increased the range of teaching techniques and has met with success in subject- specific language. However, teachers are not always expert enough in making use of strategies that have come out of recent training to make speaking and listening a central plank of learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Overall, support and guidance, based on the monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development, are good. The school has satisfactory procedures to involve pupils in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a safe and caring environment, where very good relationships between adults and pupils are fostered.
- The work of non-teaching staff and especially that of the learning mentor makes a significant contribution to pupils' support and guidance.
- Careful consideration is given to helping new pupils settle into school.
- Although pupils benefit from very good support and guidance in relation to their personal development, teachers do not give them clear enough guidance about how to improve their work.

- The school council is in need of revival, and there is no formal system for taking the views of younger children into account.

Commentary

21. Although the overall quality of provision is not as strong as at the time of the last inspection, relationships between pupils, teachers and support staff are very good. All adults give very high priority to caring for pupils' welfare, well-being and personal development. Staff know their pupils and their families well, and this helps them to offer the right support at the right time. This is backed up by good procedures for child protection. Pupils have good opportunities to support one another, for example, when older pupils take responsibility for watching over younger pupils in the playground. Pupils are pleased that their school is now a 'bully free zone', and know that they should tell others if they have any worries. As a result, pupils have become confident that, if they have a problem, there will be someone for them to confide in. They are pleased that the school is now a safer and happier place to be because of such recent initiatives.
22. The learning mentor works closely with teachers in order to identify pupils whose learning is at risk because of emotional and social matters. She establishes very constructive relationships with pupils, and this allows her to find out what help and support they most urgently need. Her carefully planned programmes of support, along with the watchful eye that she keeps on progress, ensure pupils' needs are met in the most appropriate ways, such as working with small groups of pupils or providing individual support. This allows the most vulnerable pupils to benefit more fully from their education, and makes a significant contribution to helping the school succeed in its aim to improve pupils' attitudes to school, raise their self-esteem and reduce the incidents of poor behaviour.
23. Well-trained classroom assistants also make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and to their academic learning. Teachers and classroom assistants increasingly work together to plan the use of their time in lessons, so that it is of greatest possible benefit to pupils' achievement. This practice is being used increasingly across classes and is promoted well by leaders. Well-trained welfare assistants ensure good continuity of care at lunchtime. They confidently use the school's system for rewards for good behaviour, and this ensures that pupils benefit from a consistency of approach throughout the school day. Productive links with a number of external agencies support pupils and their families well.
24. Whilst very good support and guidance for pupils' personal development helps them to develop well, particularly the children in the Nursery and Reception classes, teachers do not give clear enough guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. The school recognises that the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress needs to be developed further, including the marking of pupils' work. With the exception of pupils who have special educational needs and those supported through the work of the learning mentor, pupils are rarely fully involved in setting goals for improvement or given opportunities to discuss with adults how well they are achieving them.
25. Careful consideration is given to the arrangements for children to start Nursery and to transfer to Reception. Parents, rightly, think that these good arrangements help their children to settle into school life easily. Positive and early links with parents are forged through the on-site 'toddler group'. In addition, the school has also established effective procedures for supporting any pupils who join the school during the course of the school year. When new pupils arrive, teachers quickly establish whether or not they are going to need additional help, and ensure that it is forthcoming if necessary.
26. Overall, opportunities for pupils to contribute to the work and development of the school are satisfactory. All pupils discuss and agree their own school and class rules, and most believe that teachers listen to and value their ideas. Pupils' views are sought formally through the school council. They consider, for example, how playtimes could be improved. Membership is open to pupils from Year 2 onwards, but there is currently no clear structure for ensuring

that the views of younger children are represented. In addition, the existing council has been in place for two years and, over this time, has not been given sufficient priority for it to make a meaningful impact on the direction of school. This represents a missed opportunity for pupils to make a valued contribution to the school community, and take a more active and responsible part in its development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents, the community and with other schools are satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has an open and supportive attitude towards parents and is working hard to establish constructive relationships with them.
- Despite the school's efforts, few parents take advantage of the opportunities provided for them to become involved in their children's learning.
- The school ensures that pupils are confident and at ease with their move to secondary school.
- Whilst there is some good use of the local area to promote pupils' learning, the school is not yet a fully active participant in the life of the local community.

Commentary

27. The school has not maintained the good partnership between home and school that it had at the time of the previous inspection. There is a satisfactory partnership now, and staff are working very hard to foster better links with parents, including efforts to involve parents in the work of the school and encouraging them to support their children's learning at home. Good quality newsletters, and information sheets detailing what children will be learning about, keep parents well informed. The family learning computer courses and a games lending library enable parents to access resources that encourage them to play with and to learn alongside their children at home. Two-way home and school diaries promote better day-to-day communication between staff and parents and encourage parents to read with their children at home. In addition, arrangements for parents to find out how their children are doing at school, including reviews for pupils with special educational needs, are good. Despite this, parents do not always take advantage of these opportunities, and attendance at consultation and review meetings is poor. Few parents have taken up other opportunities available to help them to become more involved in their children's learning. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are encouraged to participate in their children's education. The school has met with mixed success, but more parents are gradually becoming involved and all are informed of the targets set in individual education plans
28. In the past, the school has not formally sought the views of parents about the work of the school, and a few parents currently feel that they are not consulted about its work. Recently, however, parents have been given opportunities to express their views- for example, about road safety - but the number of responses has been disappointing to the school. Despite this, school leaders are not deterred, and continue to look for other ways in which parents' views can be collected. This is now focussing on informal and personal discussions with individual parents. The headteacher makes herself available to chat to parents, and some now say that they feel more comfortable in approaching the headteacher and teachers with concerns. They appreciate the fact that their views are listened to and taken seriously. As a result of this approach and the increased opportunities that parents now have to come into school - for example, to class assemblies - partnership with parents is improving.
29. Overall, links with the community are satisfactory. Productive links with external agencies contribute well to pupils' personal development, as part of their work in personal, health and social education, and the programme of support for pupils who have special educational needs. The school makes good use of the locality - for example to enhance pupils' learning in history. However, community links have declined in recent years, and parents do not see

the school as an integral part of their community. School leaders believe that this is due to the poor behaviour demonstrated by pupils in the past when making visits out of school. They have identified, rightly, that improvements are needed in order to re-build the school's good image, and to re-establish more productive links with the local church, professionals, businesses and other community groups. The recent successes evident in improved pupils' behaviour and the increased priority given to providing more enriching experiences for pupils' learning mean that the school is now well placed to improve its community links.

30. Links with the high school to which the majority of pupils transfer at the end of Year 6 are good. The arrangements made to prepare pupils for their move are thorough, well thought out and effective. This is because careful consideration is given to tailoring these arrangements to ensure that the needs of all groups of pupils are met. Effective liaison between the learning mentors and the staff that co-ordinate provision for pupils who have special educational needs within both schools ensure that the necessary support is maintained. Pupils are involved in these arrangements well. They benefit from good opportunities to visit their new school and, along with pupils from other primary schools, participate in a range of activities that allow them to familiarise themselves with their new school environment and to mix with their future peers.
31. Links with other schools, however, are at an early stage of development. Although opportunities for pupils to participate in activities alongside pupils from other primary schools have been limited, links have started to develop, particularly in opportunities to participate in local sporting tournaments. The recently established learning network group, comprising seven local schools, has been established to allow staff to share good practice. However, this is yet to become fully operational.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher, aided by the deputy headteacher, leads the school well. The leadership of other key staff and the quality of management are satisfactory. The quality of governance is satisfactory. Only fairly recently has the school met with success in overcoming the increased barriers to achievement now facing it.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A renewed sense of ambition and team spirit has given the school a shared sense of direction and optimism.
- Good use is made of outside expertise to tackle important priorities.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are at an early stage.
- Although governors are very determined and committed some of their efforts have not been focussed enough.

Commentary

32. Until recently too little has been done to build on strengths noted in management during the last inspection. In addition, since the last inspection, changes in the context of the school have increased the challenges faced by management. A lack of breadth in management practice, in which too few leaders were involved in quality assurance work, meant that the school has had trouble in successfully overcoming these. Test results began to decline and exclusion rates began to rise. A proactive attitude by school governors, a strong partnership with the local education authority and good leadership by the deputy headteacher and a newly appointed headteacher have affected recent improvement. Although work remains to be done, behaviour has improved, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and the school has the confidence of parents and pupils. A key task for the new headteacher has been to develop a collegiate approach. The views of staff have been sought and some key changes - for example, in the simplification of planning - have been made. Staff report feeling valued, and morale is high. Although little monitoring work had taken place until recently co-ordinators are now better placed to move their subjects forward, having been given a clearer role and some

time in which to carry out their duties. A clear agenda, which is targeted at pertinent key areas, is in place. This is of good quality, identifying actions, success criteria and monitoring strategies for important tasks. However, the role of the governing body in this is still ill defined, so that it is unclear how and when they will check that changes have had the impact intended. Collegiate leadership has also extended to teaching assistants who are increasingly successful in forming effective teams with year group teachers. The upshot of this is that staff feel esteemed, are willing to change and have a 'road map' to help support their work.

33. A key strategy for the school has been to involve outside expertise to work with staff in achieving change. This has ensured that positive changes have taken place. The local education authority has played a vital role in the diagnosis of key weaknesses, particularly in the quality of teaching, and in supporting the school in addressing these. For example, the deputy headteacher, working with various support agencies has improved provision for pupils who have special educational needs. Staff training in behaviour management has ensured that staff have become more confident and that classrooms are largely settled places in which praise is used well and in which pupils who have significant social and emotional needs are included. In addition, training on techniques to encourage speaking and listening, a key barrier to achievement of many pupils, has better equipped staff to encourage this. However, practice here is still inconsistent because of a lack of monitoring. Involvement with the Primary Leadership Programme has begun to equip key co-ordinators - for example, the literacy co-ordinator - with the management skills needed to lead provision forward. Not all partnerships have been fully effective and in particular work with the local authority to promote better attendance has not matched the scale of the task faced by the school. The school has, however, not always made the most of other mechanisms to promote improvement. Although the school has plans to address this, too little has been done to equip senior management with the skills needed for the performance management of teachers. This has been too informally based and superficial and, although fulfilling statutory requirements, has not served the implementation of key priorities or the development of staff expertise as successfully as it might.
34. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are still not a core part of the work of school leaders. As a result, some of the improvements made in recent times have not been checked up on thoroughly enough. This leads to variability in practice, in - for example, how well teachers use the school's behaviour strategies or employ speaking and listening techniques or in how they use sharper planning to involve pupils in learning. Attempts are now being made to involve more staff in a monitoring and evaluative role. Until of late, however, this was rather narrowly based and co-ordinators were not enabled to critically evaluate and support the performance of colleagues in assessing impact on learning. With the exception of the deputy headteacher, the role of other members of the senior management team has not been given close enough consideration. Recent developments have ensured that they now play a wider role in ensuring the smooth running of the school but they are not involved in any substantial quality assurance work. Not enough use has been made of assessment data to evaluate progress. The school tracks pupils' performance in tests as they move through the school. This information is used appropriately to help identify pupils who have special educational needs. Apart from this the primary use of performance data is to put pupils into ability groups within classes. The link between performance in tests and on-going specific targets for individuals and groups has not been given enough thought and too little is done to ask whether pupils have made enough progress from one year to the next. This undermines the school strategies for targets in English and mathematics and, with the exception of pupils who have special educational needs, means that some pupils whose progress is not what it should be, slip through the net.
35. The governing body shows a strong commitment to the school and is prepared to challenge how well it is doing. Training on how to analyse national test results has, for example, helped governors ask pertinent questions about the performance of the school. However, because evaluative work has not, until of late, had a distinct pattern or been widespread enough it has undermined efforts to check on the impact of specific tasks. Regular visits to school has helped governors form some impressions of how well the school is doing but discussions with

co-ordinators have not been focussed enough. For example, the ICT governor has met with the ICT co-ordinator but contacts of a general nature rather than occasions to check the progress and impact of items within the ICT action plan. Governors have received reports from the school on its priorities but, because their role is not specifically spelled out in the school development plan, they do not use this document to set an agenda for their work. Governors have a good grasp of finances. They have been proactive in making spending decisions and have ensured that finances continue to remain on an even keel through the fluctuations in pupil numbers. Projected budget planning is used well to plan for the future. Governors also ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties to, for example, ensure that the school has a race equality policy that is put into action.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,132,741
Total expenditure	1,127,847
Expenditure per pupil	2,892

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	72,802
Balance carried forward to the next	77,695

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. It is good in all areas of learning in the Nursery and good in personal, social and emotional and physical development in the Reception classes. Children's levels of attainment when they start in the Nursery are well below those expected for their age and in speaking and listening skills they are particularly low. Children respond well to the sensitive and effective teaching in the Nursery and achieve well. Teaching in the Nursery is consistently good and is based on well-informed knowledge of very young children's needs. Teaching in Reception is satisfactory overall with some good teaching observed in both classes. The principal difference in the quality of teaching is the level and challenge in some activities and the ability of staff to derive maximum learning from what is planned. Induction procedures are good and parents are given the opportunity to meet with Foundation Stage staff on a number of occasions before their children start in the Nursery. This helps children settle to school quickly. Parents appreciate the weekly newsletter from the Nursery staff, informing them of what will be happening in the coming week and how they may become involved in their children's learning.

Careful planning ensures that the six areas of learning are covered, often through a good range of stimulating activities. Assessment procedures are thorough. However, the information gained from them is not consistently used to plan work to match the needs of all children, particularly in mathematics and communication, language and literacy in the Reception classes. A strength of the provision is the very good support given to pupils who have special educational needs. Good practical resources are used very effectively by caring staff who know when to help and when to encourage independence.

Co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Strengths are to be found in the way the co-ordinator works closely with both Nursery and Reception staff to produce two effective teams so that organisation within each team is seamless. However, there are no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and this has meant that inconsistencies in teaching have gone unchecked. The physical position of the Nursery fragments the Foundation Stage as a complete unit. The accommodation and resources are organised to good effect to provide an exciting environment for young children, particularly in the Nursery outdoor area. Both outdoor areas are used productively to support all areas of learning but the Reception area is part of the infant playground and this limits children's experiences.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are skilled at promoting children's personal development in everything children do.
- Very good relationships exist between staff and children.
- The curriculum is planned to allow children to initiate their own activities and to make choices and decisions.
- Teachers are not consistent in checking children who call out during class discussions.

Commentary

36. Many Nursery children are reticent and need much encouragement to participate in activities when they first join the Nursery. However, the very caring attitudes of all staff soon make each child feel special. As a result, beaming smiles are the order of the day as children arrive and they soon settle into the routines of the Nursery. Teachers and support staff in both Nursery and Reception classes treat children fairly and with respect and they develop very

good relationships with them. In this secure environment children learn to socialise well, for example, by taking turns and sharing equipment. One boy willingly gave his friend extra pieces of a construction kit when he realised that he had more than his fair share. Staff are quick to recognise the potential of these occasions and use praise well to reinforce such behaviour. Activities are set up effectively so that children learn to choose what they would like to do. This encourages their independence and helps them to persevere at a task until they are satisfied with the outcome. The positive attitudes of all staff in response to children's efforts enhance their self-esteem and spur them on to try even harder. Behaviour management is good. Comments such as "I like the way you are sitting still and ready to listen" reinforce teachers' expectations positively and help children to conform. However, because teachers are not consistent in their approach to children who call out, the problem stills remains for a significant minority of children in both Reception classes. Children achieve well in this area of learning, and, although few are on course to reach the expected levels, the gap between national expectations and what they are able to achieve will have closed considerably by the time they leave the Reception classes.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links with other areas of learning that help the development of language skills.
- Some group activities lack focus and challenge.
- Children enjoy developing writing skills in independent activities.

Commentary

37. In the Nursery, teaching of good quality means that even the very youngest children learn to explain their immediate needs and begin to offer simple contributions to discussions. This is because staff constantly talk with children. Every activity involves asking questions and emphasising words and names. Foundation Stage staff as a whole encourage children to become confident speakers and employ their own good use of language to help children to broaden their vocabulary. Adult-led groups discussions provide occasions for children to speak to an audience. Staff compliment them on their efforts and this encourages them to do their best. One Reception teacher boosted a child's confidence by saying, "I liked the way you spoke loudly and clearly." There are times, however, when staff, particularly in Reception, accept one-word answers without modelling an appropriate reply or step in too soon to give an answer. This can undermine the otherwise good efforts made to help children overcome the very low level of language which the school rightly recognises as being a major barrier to achievement.
38. Children enjoy shared reading times because stories are read with expression and excitement. This time is spent well not only to develop children's reading skills but also to develop their understanding of the text. However, in the Reception classes, some activities following the story lack clear learning intentions and challenge. On these occasions, children's achievement is barely satisfactory. Some parents are effective partners in enabling their children to master early reading skills by helping them to learn new words and letter sounds. However, this good practice is not widespread. A good feature of all the teaching is that children are taught how to form letters correctly and are given regular opportunities to write. A number of these are during role play when, for example, Nursery children 'write' tickets for a train journey and Reception children make appointments at the vet's or programmes for the puppet theatre. Although achievement is good in the Nursery in this area of learning, it is satisfactory overall and, because of their low starting point, many of the children are well below the standards normally expected.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and Nursery nurses are good at teaching basic skills both verbally and through the use of resources.
- Opportunities are taken to develop mathematical skills in other areas of learning.
- Activities are not always matched to children's abilities.

Commentary

39. Children achieve well when adults make learning fun. For example, children in the Nursery enjoyed 'swimming' in the 'pond' as they counted the 'Five Speckled Frogs' and Reception children delighted in finding real coins in the treasure chest. Teachers make effective use of practical activities such as baking and playing with water and sand, to foster children's awareness of different quantities. They are skilled at bringing mathematical development into other areas of learning, either when planned or incidental. For example, concepts such as 'in' and 'out' are developed well as Nursery children weave. Addition and subtraction skills are reinforced as Reception children count the difference in the numbers of boys and girls at each table during snack time. However, at times, Reception teachers do not use their good knowledge of the children to ensure that activities are matched to meet their needs. Some activities in numeracy lessons lack focus and are not challenging enough for the higher attainers. On these occasions, there is too much choice for children, resulting in a rather hit and miss approach to the amount and quality of the mathematical experience each child receives. The overall satisfactory teaching in mathematical development ensures that children's achievement is sound although standards remain well below those expected because a significant number of children are not on course to reach the Early Learning Goals for the end of Reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area.
- There is a strong emphasis on healthy eating.
- The systems to track and assess children's activities in this area of learning lack precision at times.
- Children do not have enough opportunities to practise their ICT skills.

Commentary

40. The planned curriculum for this area of learning is enhanced by good opportunities for enrichment. Opportunities are planned to extend the children's learning both in and out of school. For example, Nursery children visited a local farm to discover how the animals are cared for and to make connections between the farm and their food supply. Reception children visited the local safari park and developed their mapping skills well as they drew a map of the park showing the areas they had seen.. Other cultures are celebrated and enjoyed as, for example, when children drew Rangoli patterns and sampled Indian food. Everyday activities also provide children with good opportunities to use and develop their senses. They know that eating healthy food is good for them and tuck into their snacks of fruit, cereals and yoghurts provided by the school. In the Nursery, they filled small containers with different materials and watched intently as the materials fell from a spoon or sifted through their fingers. One child was enthralled as she watched the changes to the cornflour powder when

she added water. Many of the activities in this area of learning form a significant part of what children do every day. However, tracking systems, at times, lack sufficient rigour to ensure that children are getting the full benefit from all the activities on offer before moving on to others.. Children do not spend enough time practising their ICT skills. Although the computers in the Foundation Stage are used regularly, opportunities to enhance provision are missed because no use is made of the computer suite. Overall, achievement is satisfactory but most children's knowledge and understanding of the world are currently well below expected levels.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very effective use of the outdoor area in the Nursery.
- The formal teaching of physical skills is good although opportunities are missed for children to evaluate each other's achievements.
- Children have ample opportunities to use small tools and implements for writing, drawing and painting.

Commentary

41. Imaginative planning ensures the best possible use of the space available in the Nursery outdoor area. This area is used very well by Nursery staff to support all areas of learning but particularly children's physical development. Children experiment and experience challenging physical activities through, for example, climbing equipment, tunnels and trampolines. They negotiate wheeled vehicles around the pathways in a controlled way and with an awareness of space. Reception children also have regular access to an outdoor space but, because equipment has to be set up and put away at the end of each lesson, they do not experience the range of equipment open to Nursery children. However, Reception staff do make good use of the school hall for physical development. Here Reception children are good at finding a space to work in and can move in a variety of ways. They develop increasing control over their body movements because staff not only give clear instructions but also demonstrate the correct techniques. They are given opportunities to watch each other at work as their teacher evaluates what they do. However, they are not invited to take part in the evaluations and this limits any improvement to the quality of their own work and does not make the most of such occasions to foster talk. Children's skills in manipulating small tools develop well because they are taught how to use them correctly and they have plenty of opportunities to practise using them on a daily basis. The overall good teaching in this area of learning results in most children being on course to reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Role-play activities give children opportunities for imaginative play.
- Children enjoy music lessons although they call out answers too often.

Commentary

42. Children's imagination is evident in role-play. In the Nursery, children enjoyed taking the 'train' to various 'stations'. Timely interventions by the Nursery nurse helped to take the learning further as, for example, when the view from the window was discussed and how long the journey would take. In Reception, children enjoyed taking their sick animals to the 'Willow Tree Veterinary Surgery' where a number of remedies were on offer. Again interventions by

the Nursery nurse helped to develop both language skills and imaginative play. The weekly music sessions in the Nursery, when children's singing is accompanied by a grandparent playing the piano, are enjoyable occasions. A wide range of songs is included and even the youngest children can take part because adults model the words and actions well. Children in Reception recognised the instruments used in a piece of music because their teacher had asked them at the beginning to listen. Her clear diction and tuneful singing ensured that they quickly learned a new song. However, their enthusiasm to take part caused several to call out answers, which slowed the pace of the lesson. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers plan a wide variety of activities where children can explore colour, texture and shape. Although children's achievement is sound overall the attainment of most of them is likely to be below the standard expected by the time they leave Reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been clear identification by the co-ordinator of key areas for improvement but too little has been done to check for inconsistencies in teaching and learning.
- The sharper focus on raising pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is undermined by teachers' varying expertise.
- There is a clear emphasis on widening pupils' vocabulary, on giving more opportunities for extended writing and in using other subjects to promote literacy skills.
- Pupils do not understand how to improve their work because they are given insufficient advice about this.

Commentary

43. Factors depressing attainment have increased since the last inspection. To some extent, issues such as increased mobility and an increase in pupils who have special educational needs account for a decline in standards. However, weaknesses in provision also contribute. As a result, achievement, although satisfactory, is not as strong as it was in the last inspection in Years 1 and 2 and standards are currently well below average. There have been improvements in achievement through Years 3 to 6, which now make it satisfactory, but much remains to be done as standards are still well below average. The school has introduced a range of strategies to improve provision in speaking and listening and writing in Years 3 to 6, but until of late too little has been done to assess how well teachers use these or assess their impact on learning. As a result, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, though this is satisfactory overall. A newly appointed co-ordinator, benefiting from taking part in the Primary Leadership Programme, has written a good quality action plan which identifies clearly what needs to be done and crucially how the school will assess impact. A good start has been made on this and there are signs that improvements are having some effect. There is a firm commitment to raising standards through the identification of teachers' in-service training needs and in meeting these in a range of ways. Good use is being made of the support available through a number of local authority literacy initiatives, through in-house support given by the local literacy advisors and through whole-school training days. However, although there has been some direct observation of teaching this is not a significant part of the co-ordinator's work. It is for this reason that leadership and management are no better than satisfactory and that differences in the quality of teaching and learning remain.

44. The greater emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills has recently been given a sharper focus, although it is too soon to see the overall effect of this on standards. Well-documented in-service training in the use of drama strategies to improve the range and effectiveness of speaking activities in lessons has had a positive impact on how these skills are taught. All pupils are given planned, frequent opportunities to engage in talk in a range of groupings and situations. There is inconsistency, however, in the rigour with which these strategies are used. In the most successful teaching, pupils are given the opportunity to evaluate their progress in appropriate detail through discussion and to exchange ideas about how they could improve their work. In some lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6, talking activities are not followed up with challenging discussion or evaluation, so that pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn through comparing their ideas with those of others. There are some examples of pupils being told what their opinions ought to be without being given the chance to work them out for themselves. This does little to serve pupils' understanding or speaking and listening skills. Although achievement is satisfactory, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening remains well below expected levels. As a result the school is yet to fully overcome the barrier to learning which poor speaking and listening skills present. Many pupils still lack confidence so that across all age groups their oral contributions, especially in whole-class situations, remain brief and hesitant. Many pupils, especially the younger ones, speak indistinctly.
45. Since the previous inspection, additional time has been allocated for extended writing. The additional time given for writing and the clear emphasis placed on the consideration and selection of words are having a positive impact. Teachers use a good range of strategies to focus attention on the idea of choosing the best word for its purpose. For example, in a Year 1 lesson recently acquired drama techniques were used successfully to enable pupils to share suggestions for words in a 'thought tunnel'. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, the deconstruction and analysis of the Haiku form of poetry successfully focussed attention on how to select words precisely and effectively. However, there is too much use of mechanical 'exercises', especially in Year 6 and to lesser extent in pockets of teaching dotted around the school. Such exercises do not enable pupils to put their growing skills to good enough use. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in the use of description and detail in their written work, although standards remain well below average in both Year 2 and Year 6.
46. Teachers put much thought and initiative into presenting pupils with an interesting range of literature. However, although pupils' achievements are satisfactory, standards are well below average in both Year 2 and Year 6. The use of interesting and challenging text is beginning to impact well, especially on the range of vocabulary pupils have to draw on in their written work.. For example, in one Year 6 lesson pupils were comparing accounts of a storm at sea from both a traditional poem and a modern children's novel. This helped them to get under the skin of the texts and to see what devices were used to bring them to life. The increased emphasis given to using 'real' books can also be seen in the interest and enthusiasm for stories and poetry that pupils demonstrate. In this respect, there is no marked difference between the response of boys and girls. However, inconsistencies in the quality of questioning, which does not always probe deeply enough, and the inconsistency with which teachers use text to elicit talk form a weaker part of group reading sessions. Teaching assistants are well deployed to teach reading and work well with teachers to ensure that pupils are given a good balance between reading in groups and being given the individual attention they need. This enables pupils who have special educational needs to achieve well. The majority of these are boys and it is for this reason that fewer boys than girls reach nationally expected levels.
47. Recent attempts to streamline planning are helping to give lessons a clear sense of purpose and, because teaching assistants are well deployed, enable the school to meet with increasing success in matching work to pupils' differing abilities. However, planning is not always used to best effect to explain learning to pupils. This undermines the school's attempts to involve pupils in their learning, by for example, using the end of the lessons to reflect in a meaningful way about whether or not pupils have succeeded. The marking of written work does not give pupils enough information on how well they are doing, what their

individual targets are or what they need to do to improve. For this reason, pupils have little sense of involvement in their own learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. In general, pupils make good progress in using vocabulary specific to individual subjects because teachers are careful to ensure that specialist words and phrases are introduced to pupils. As a result pupils use subject-specific vocabulary more confidently than their more general vocabulary. In science, for example, pupils make good progress in using their subject vocabulary but teachers are less successful in using discussion to extend understanding. In some subjects - for example, history and religious education - pupils are given good opportunities and support to develop their extended writing for a range of purposes. Year 4 pupils across the attainment range wrote thoughtful and lively accounts of Palm Sunday from the point of view of the donkey that carried Christ through Jerusalem. In history most pupils learn how to write notes and label diagrams in order to record their knowledge and understanding, as well as writing about events in history from the point of view of people who experienced them.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are not monitored with enough rigour to ensure improvements in provision and standards.
- There are inconsistencies in the way teachers make lessons thought provoking and in how they engage pupils.
- Marking is often too brief and target setting is not embedded as a tool for improving achievement.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well so that pupils who have special educational needs achieve well and maintain concentration

Commentary

49. Standards have declined since the last inspection, but the school's circumstances have changed, with greater mobility of families and amalgamation with a neighbouring school. Bearing in mind pupils' low starting points on joining the school - often during the school year - and the significant language problems evident, achievement is satisfactory. Nevertheless, this is not as strong as that noted in the last inspection. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are well below average. Recent staff changes have disrupted the leadership of mathematics and, although the co-ordinator has a good plan for improvement, until recently there has not been enough monitoring of lessons to ensure that teaching of a consistently good quality helps pupils learn at the optimum rate. Analyses of the school's performance in national tests from year to year are being developed appropriately to identify and deal with areas of mathematics that pupils are finding difficult but too little is being done to see that these aspects are well taught. As a result leadership and management are not yet better than satisfactory and variations exist in the quality of teaching and learning.
50. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall it is often better than this in Years 3 and 4. Here teachers make good use of improvements to planning, which clarify aims by making sure pupils know what is expected of them. They are better at reminding pupils of what they should be doing and learning and so make good use of recent revisions to planning. Although not exclusively confined to Years 3 and 4 better teaching occurs when there is a brisk start to lessons and pupils' interest and involvement are engaged from the beginning. In these lessons, teachers use simple resources, such as the board, flipchart or school-produced equipment, such as the 'function machine'. With the latter, numbers are put into the machine and answers come out after a particular operation, such as multiplication, has occurred inside.

This makes pupils think. Pupils are enthusiastic during such activities, and this leads to comments about mathematics being their favourite subject.

51. However, active learning is not always as well promoted. In a significant proportion of lessons, there is some low-level fidgeting and chattering. This behaviour is not severely disruptive, and teachers ensure that the purpose of lessons is maintained. The cause is usually a slower pace of delivery, overlong explanations or uninspiring tasks. These also undermine the school's attempts to develop speaking and listening skills. Teachers are good at ensuring that pupils acquire and use vocabulary specific to mathematics, and better quality teaching gives pupils enough time to expand their answers and sort out their ideas during class discussions. However, this is not always the case, especially in lessons where the teacher talks for too long.
52. Teachers encourage pupils to display the steps in calculation that lead them to their answers. This helps pupils to sort out problems more confidently and it also helps staff to tease out pupils' misunderstandings when work is checked during lessons. Pupils become increasingly proficient at applying their mathematical knowledge in a variety of situations, but the school recognises that this is an area for further development. Although pupils gain expertise in choosing appropriate mathematical operations to solve 'real-life' situations, such as shopping, they often have difficulty in combining two or three operations to answer questions that are more complex. Pupils who have special educational needs require a great deal of support to apply their knowledge of the number system to practical situations. Teaching assistants usually work well with these pupils, supporting groups effectively and ensuring that pupils know what to do and keep on task. As a result pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they build effectively on earlier learning through good support in lessons.
53. Day-to-day assessments of how pupils have achieved in lessons are used effectively to plan appropriate work. Systems to track pupils' progress through the school are at an early stage and, although work on target setting is under way, it does not involve pupils enough in the learning process. Pupils' involvement in self-assessment is limited to giving 'thumbs up' or 'down' during plenary sessions when learning is reviewed. When this happens opportunities to use the end of lessons for pupils to explain what they have learnt and for the teacher to check understanding are undermined. Teachers' marking of work is variable through the school. Opportunities are lost to engage pupils more in improving their work when there are few encouraging remarks or suggestions for improvement

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Mathematics is used and developed satisfactorily in other subjects. ICT is used effectively when pupils draw graphs and interpret results. In science, pupils make measurements, and in design and technology, they measure materials. Shape and pattern are explored in art and design and patterns feature in musical composition, when pupils record simple rhythms with symbols.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy interesting and well-organised investigations that help them to become enthusiastic young scientists.
- There are some imbalances in the pupils' experiences of the subject..
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced as they work sensibly in groups to solve problems.
- Science makes a good contribution to pupils' writing skills but is less successful in promoting speaking and listening.

Commentary

55. Pupils enjoy science because it is presented and taught with enthusiasm and is based on practical involvement that promotes a sense of discovery. The whole-school approach to improvement through motivation and involvement of the pupils is proving successful. This can be seen in the consistently good quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are good at fostering an interest in the world around through 'hands on' practical work and through observations in the classroom, in the area around the school and during fieldwork on visits further afield. In Year 1, children went pond dipping to a local environmental centre. They were delighted as they watched caterpillars turn into pupae in the 'butterfly house' in the classroom – they will release the butterflies in the school grounds. In Year 3, pupils have planted seeds and are nurturing them in preparation for outdoor planting. On a residential visit to Wales, pupils in Year 6 explored the various habitats in the local countryside. Such activities account for the school's particular success in the teaching and learning of life processes and living things. In addition, they result in good behaviour in which pupils learn to work in groups to investigate problems. Pupils recognise that their efforts can sometimes meet with failure and that they may have to rethink their approach. Such co-operation with classmates contributes well to pupils' personal development.
56. The well- thought- out use of teaching assistants enables teachers to plan for practical science. Assistants increasingly work with all abilities of pupils. However, their impact on achievement is strongest for pupils who have special educational needs. They are well integrated into groups, are interested and motivated and are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. As a result they achieve well.
57. The success of leadership is to be found in the lively approach that characterises many of the lessons. However, formal monitoring is at an early stage so some imbalances exist in pupils' experiences and in the approach taken to some areas of science. The same active and participative approach that typifies work in life processes is less commonly found in the approaches used to develop pupils' understanding of materials and their properties. Results in national tests show that pupils are not so clear about this area of science. The co-ordinator, a science specialist, recognises the necessity to review the school's assessment procedures so that pupils' progress is tracked through the school to ensure better progress in every aspect of science. A draft policy for this is already in place. Nevertheless, leadership has been effective in ensuring that pupils achieve well. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. However, because of pupils' low starting points, they reach standards that are below expected levels in Year 2 and 6.
58. Occasionally, the first part of lessons is too long and pupils are itching to get on with the interesting tasks they can see prepared around them. At these times questioning does not always ensure that all pupils are actively involved or are encouraged to talk about science. Some teachers draw pupils' findings together and share them with the class more successfully than others. When the last part of lessons is used only to repeat what has been done, rather than encourage pupils to explain what has been learnt, deeper understanding and better speaking and listening are not well served. In the main teachers are better at ensuring that pupils use scientific vocabulary correctly than at helping them to explain their thinking. Pupils' books are often delightful to see, with lively drawings and well-presented written work. Writing skills are well practised and used, with good descriptive accounts of investigations written by pupils of above average ability. Marking, however, does not lead their learning forward well enough. It is good in Years 1 and 2. Elsewhere, peremptory ticks and the lack of helpful comments do not do justice to the efforts that many pupils have made.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Accurate teaching pays close attention to the development of skills.
- Not enough thought is given to helping pupils use skills in challenging enough ways.
- Too little has been done to see that assessment procedures are used to best effect or to check up on the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

59. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection because resources have been added to, staff training has been given priority and a progressive scheme of work has been put in place which allows for the sequential development of skills. This represents the success of leadership. Teachers' confidence can be seen in the way skills are accurately demonstrated using interactive whiteboards. Most lessons begin with pupils being shown new things to do - for example, in Year 2 how to log on to the Internet and search for key information. A good feature of this lesson was the use made of additional staff. Following the opening a group of pupils were then able to work in a small additional suite, thus ensuring that each pupil had access to a computer. This is not always the case and there are times when pupils have to share machines or wait their turn. This slows achievement. Nevertheless, the regularity of lessons and the focus on skill development ensures that pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
60. However, standards remain below expected levels because pupils do not use their skills in thought-provoking ways. The potential of computers to make pupils think is largely untapped. This represents a lack of ambition in teaching, which is satisfactory overall. A weaker feature of the lesson in Year 2, for example, was the use to which pupils put their newly found Internet skills. No scope was given for pupils to make decisions or to think about what information they would collect and how they would use it. This limited learning to the memorising of a sequence of steps as pupils drilled their way down into a website on pond life to draw an insect. This did not link with any other work pupils were doing and so they were unsure of why they were doing it. As pupils progress through the school they add to their range of skills but do not use computers in an increasingly sophisticated manner. For example, pupils in Year 6 were shown how to carry out a refined internet search and were given a series of random questions to answer. This restricted learning to the memorising of a sequence of steps - albeit a more complex sequence - as pupils looked to see what was number 1 in the pop charts and translated a sentence from English to French. It is the lack of problem solving that restricts learning, as teachers are too focused on the controlled demonstrations and practice of skills. On some occasions, pupils are under-involved in demonstrations. This was the case in a lesson in Year 6. Here pupils' contribution was reduced to a watch and listen role. Such teaching does little to address the acquisition and use of speaking and listening skills. It can also result in low-level fidgety behaviour, as pupils' eagerness to use the computers gets the better of them.
61. Whilst the co-ordinator has ensured that a better structure has been put in place to support the teaching of ICT; too little has been done to assess how well pupils are learning. Until of late, the co-ordinator has had no time check up on the quality of teaching and learning. This undermines the effectiveness of leadership, which is satisfactory overall. For example, the potential of a system for pupils to self-assess their progress is diminished because not enough thought has been given to how pupils and staff should go about this. Using a skills 'ladder' pupils reflect at the end of a unit on the skills they have learnt but such reflection is not a part of everyday teaching in which, on a habitual basis, pupils are encouraged think about what they have learnt and how they might improve.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. There are some good examples of pupils using computers to aid study in other subjects. Pupils in Year 4, for instance, having first studied the paintings of Kandinsky, went on to produce artwork on the computer in his style. This involved making decisions about composition and which tools best mirrored his techniques. However, the most common use is to type out best copies of previously written work. This does not require sufficient thought. All in all, practice is piecemeal and, although satisfactory, leaves too much to the discretion of individual teachers.

HUMANITIES

63. Too little teaching and learning was seen in **history and geography** to make an overall judgement on provision. Work previously completed by pupils indicates that they have knowledge and understanding of an appropriate range of historical situations, events and well-known people. Pupils begin to develop a range of historical skills across the age range. In Year 1 pupils show that they understand some of the differences between periods in history and life in the present day. Pupils in Year 6 make progress in using extended writing to record their understanding of history and begin to make simple notes and to use diagrams to clarify these. The planning for history indicates that the curriculum is covered satisfactorily and that links are made with what is studied in geography. In geography pupils study a satisfactory range of locations both around the world and in the more immediate locality and begin to recognise key physical and social features of these areas. They begin to use a range of geographical skills- for example, co-ordinates- although in a Year 6 lesson pupils' skills in using an atlas were well below national expectations. In this lesson they made competent use of ICT skills in order to use the Internet to research information from around the world. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator has identified the updating of resources as a priority and it was observed during the inspection that pupils' were using out- of- date atlases.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning is linked well to pupils' everyday lives, and speaking and listening and writing are well promoted.
- There are inconsistencies in how well teachers manage behaviour and in how interesting they make lessons.
- There are good links with local churches, but not enough with places of worship in faiths other than Christianity.

Commentary

64. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, which results in pupils' achievement being satisfactory. Religious education contributes well to pupils' personal development. This is fostered through the study of stories such as the parables of Jesus, and aspects such as keeping rules are related to pupils' own lives. Religious education plays a significant role in the school's drive to improve pupils' speaking and listening. These are usually promoted well as teachers question pupils effectively, help them to tease out their thoughts and encourage them to express their ideas. Drama was used well in a lesson in Year 1 where pupils enacted a baptism and a wedding. These experiences helped pupils to become more aware of the importance of religion in many people's lives. Pupils who have special educational needs benefit particularly from these approaches to personal and language development. Occasionally, pupils are not given enough time to discuss issues; for example, when in Year 6 they watched a video recording of a Jewish boy's preparation for his Barmitzvah and noted the special artefacts involved. Although discussion was planned for the next lesson, much of the impact will have been lost. Pupils are given good opportunities to

write in interesting ways and often present their written work well, with carefully organised writing and good illustrations. Pieces of extended writing are sometimes done in English lessons, making good links between the subjects and encouraging pupils to see the practical use of literacy skills.

65. The best teaching combines effective management of behaviour with interesting tasks. In the excellent teaching seen in Year 3, the management of pupils' behaviour was effortless. This was because the teacher praised good behaviour throughout and the lesson proceeded at a cracking pace, with interesting and absorbing tasks, drama and opportunities for pupils to discuss topics in pairs. Good behaviour was not promoted as well in some other lessons because the subject matter was not presented in an exciting way and teachers' expectations were not high enough. Pupils sometimes call out during discussions and disrupt the flow of lessons.
66. Learning is also made more relevant for pupils when they visit local churches to see what is in them and to talk to the priests. As a result, teaching and learning in the classroom becomes more meaningful when references are made to the visits. The local vicar leads assemblies on a regular basis and occasionally teaches in lessons, reinforcing the teaching of Christianity. Although pupils gain a satisfactory understanding of a range of other faiths, including Judaism, Islam and Hinduism, their understanding is not enriched through visits to a variety of places of worship or through regular visits to the school by people of other faiths.
67. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and examples of pupils' work satisfactorily, but this does not give her the overall picture of how pupils are learning in the classroom. This results in some variations in the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils are not being helped to improve, nor is there any celebration of what is done well. Marking of work, for example, is not used enough to extend thinking by challenging or congratulating pupils on what they have written. Overall, pupils attain in line with the recommendations in the nationally planned scheme used by the school. This concurs with findings at the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

68. No lessons were observed in **art and design** but teachers' planning and the work on display indicate that enough opportunities are provided for pupils to work with different media. Work is often linked to other subject areas. For example, pupils in Year 6 used vibrant colours for their paintings on fabric to show African sunsets as part of their work on Kenya. As part of their religious education topic concerned with relationships, pupils in Year 4 studied examples of well-known pictures of the Madonna and Child before producing their own pictures using crayons. These were of a high standard. Pupils in Year 2 combined their art and ICT skills to produce self-portraits. Pupils in Year 4 also used computers to design a pattern of concentric circles in the style of Kandinsky. The art club for pupils in Years 1 and 2 enhances the provision for younger children.
69. It was not possible to observe any lessons in **design and technology** and so no overall judgement can be made. Discussion with the co-ordinator and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that shortcomings identified in the curriculum for pupils in the juniors during the last inspection have been put right. The co-ordinator has seen to it that all year groups have the opportunity to study design and technology and has given thought to the range of experiences they encounter. Simple but effective monitoring arrangements, often based on photographs of pupils' work, enable her to keep an eye on whether or not the scheme is being implemented. Work on purses made in Year 4, for example, shows attention to designing, making and evaluation. The standard of work met expectations and made suitable allowances for fostering creativity.
70. No lessons were observed in **music**, as it was not a focus for the inspection. From listening to music in assemblies, scrutiny of planning and discussion with the co-ordinator, it is clear that pupils experience a satisfactory range of activities to extend their knowledge and understanding in the required elements of the subject. Singing in assemblies is well pitched

and rhythmical. Pupils have a good number of opportunities to perform in musical concerts, both in the school and together with other schools in larger settings. Although pupils currently play percussion instruments, there is no peripatetic teaching of other instruments. The newly appointed co-ordinator is a talented musician who has prepared a promising action plan to enliven the subject.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils achieve well.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate each other's performance.
- Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development.
- There is a strong commitment to extra-curricular sport.

Commentary

71. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain typical for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Teaching and achievement in Years 1 and 2 are good and, in Years 3 to 6 satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils will achieve and give opportunities for them to practise their skills. This was particularly evident in the dance work in Year 1. The teacher was successful in giving pupils the confidence to experiment with their ideas which in turn led them to putting together a sequence of movements with a partner. Most performed creatively and with no inhibitions. Another good feature of the lesson was the opportunity pupils were given to evaluate their partner's work although this was done in a congratulatory way with no reasons given for the evaluation. Generally, this is an area for development. On most occasions when an evaluation is given, it is by the teacher without reference to the pupils. This is a missed opportunity, both to help pupils to think about what is important and what could be done better, which then improves the quality of their own work, and also to develop speaking and listening.
72. Good opportunities are given for pupils to work together in pairs or groups. When expectations of behaviour are made clear at the beginning of the lesson, pupils take heed and work together collaboratively, listen to their partner's ideas and practise and refine their movements. When clear expectations are not given, pupils do not listen well and are not always aware of the consequences of their actions. This slows the pace of the lesson and achievement is barely satisfactory. The behaviour of pupils who are behaving well is not always rewarded or used to reinforce expectations.
73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, there are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that any inconsistencies are dealt with effectively. There is a good and recently extended range of extra-curricular clubs available for both infants and juniors. These include specialist coaching, for example, in fencing and judo. Sporting links with local schools are good and pupils take part in the St Helen's Dance Festival each year.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PHSE) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A high profile is given to developing pupils' understanding of social, personal and health issues.
- Teaching is not always probing enough.

Commentary

74. The co-ordinator has seen to it that a good structure has been put in place to help develop pupils' understanding of a variety of issues. A thorough programme for sex and relationship education and for drugs education forms an important part of the curriculum. Participation in the Healthy Schools initiative can be seen in some useful links made with other subjects. For example, in Year 2 as part of their work on science pupils study what makes a healthy sandwich. Clear guidelines are given to teachers that outline the main themes of weekly PHSE lessons. The subject enjoys a high profile in the curriculum and is seen as an important subject, given the low level of personal and social skills children have when they start school.
75. However, although guidelines have been given to teachers, not enough has been done to ensure these are well used. As a result of this there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, which is satisfactory overall. The impact of leadership and management is also diminished and is also merely satisfactory. In the main teachers set a good tone for lessons. In Year 1 for example, the lesson was set up well because of a useful discussion about how pupils were expected to conduct themselves. This involved talk about the need to show respect and to be patient. As a result the lesson went smoothly. This is not always the case, however. A lesson in Year 5 on how to be an active listener was undermined because of the teachers' difficulty in ensuring that pupils listened carefully in the first instance. As inattentiveness continued through the lesson pupils learnt little.
76. Teachers employ a variety of ways to explore themes such as the importance of collaboration and 'what makes each of us special?' This has the benefit of ensuring that pupils come at themes from differing angles and helps maintain their interest. In Year 4 for example, all pupils had a role to play in ensuring that a ball of wool was passed successfully from person to person without ensnaring them all; thus they were practising collaboration. In Year 1, as a change from listening to the teacher, a large glove puppet asked questions of the pupils and pupils were very keen to converse with it. However, not enough is made of the varied methods teachers use. Two main problems exist. *Pupils' understanding is not deepened.* There is a tendency to cover the same ground in a variety of ways without deepening thinking. Pupils' thinking on collaboration was restricted to listing games and occasions where collaboration is important but did not go beyond this. Although a variety of methods is being used they are not leading to a deeper understanding. Opportunities are missed, for example, to consider what it feels like to be special or if your talents go unnoticed. Pupils exploring collaboration were not encouraged to apply lessons to their everyday life and to consider, for example, what qualities a person exhibits who works well with others or what the effect is on a group when individuals show a selfish tendency. As a result, therefore, teachers are not always getting the most from the activities they plan. *Not enough is made of opportunities for speaking and listening.* Strategies, such as 'talk partners', that have come out of recent work on speaking and listening are increasingly being used. Where teaching does not delve below the surface of personal and social issues speaking and listening are shallow. There are too few occasions for pupils to explore emotions and feelings through these strategies. On some occasions pupils do not turn and talk to partners but sit and watch. This does little to exploit the potential of talk strategies.

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	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	6
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
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).