

INSPECTION REPORT

**ORMSKIRK LATHOM PARK CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ormskirk

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119371

Headteacher: Mrs J O'Brien

Lead inspector: Mrs L Read

Dates of inspection: 17 – 18 May 2005

Inspection number: 271876

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 52

School address: Hall Lane
Lathom
Ormskirk
Lancashire
Postcode: L40 5UG

Telephone number: 01704 892375
Fax number: 01704 892375

Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mrs J Rimmer
governors:

Date of previous inspection: 15 December 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ormskirk Lathom Park Primary is much smaller than most primary schools with 52 pupils on roll. It serves a very wide area from Ormskirk to Skelmersdale and many pupils travel considerable distances. Taking into account the full range of local housing and employment, social and economic circumstances are average overall. Children joining the reception class have a range of learning experiences and attainments that are average overall for their age. Many pupils transfer to the school part-way through their education and a high percentage of these pupils have experienced learning, social or emotional difficulties in their prior education. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average and the proportion with a formal statement of special educational needs is around the national average. Most of the special needs fall into the learning or social, emotional and behavioural categories and a small percentage of pupils have physical or medical difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. All pupils are from white, British backgrounds. The school has been through a period of difficulty because of staff absence. At the time of the inspection, the only permanent teacher was the headteacher and others were on supply or short-term contracts.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21199	Mrs L Read	Lead inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language
19343	Mrs M Howell	Lay inspector	
30724	Ms D Hiscock	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Anglia House
Carrs Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 2LA

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Lathom Park Primary provides a satisfactory standard of education with some good features. Teaching is satisfactory and, as a result, pupils achieve satisfactory overall standards. Pupils also achieve very well in their personal development. The headteacher provides good leadership which has successfully ensured the school's improvement during a difficult time, despite recent disruption caused by staff absences. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The provision and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) has greatly improved and is now good.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs is good and they achieve well.
- Throughout the Years 1 to 6, pupils capable of higher attainment are not always challenged fully and do not achieve as much as they should.
- The guidance for pupils' academic development is unsatisfactory because they do not have targets for learning.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good and, as a result, they have very good attitudes to learning, good behaviour and relationships are very good.
- There are not enough opportunities for children in the reception class to explore and investigate.
- The good enrichment of the curriculum and good links with other schools support learning well.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Improvements

Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory. These include much better standards in ICT, sound improvements in writing and in the provision for reception age children. The accommodation has been extended but still does not include a hall for physical education or dedicated outside play area for the reception children.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	E	E	E*
Mathematics	E	E*	E	E
Science	D	E	E	E

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.

Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Overall standards of the five Year 6 pupils are average and are much higher than indicated by the well below average national test results of the past two years. There are a number of reasons to do with the school's special circumstances which account for differences between the test results and current standards which are explained in detail in the full report. However, the more able pupils in

Years 3 to 6 do not reach their full potential because the teachers' expectations of them are not consistently high enough.

Standards in Year 2 have also risen and are average in reading, writing and mathematics. The improvement in Year 2 is mainly due to improved teaching of mathematics, reflected in higher test results in 2004, and because an effective focus on reading and writing is also raising standards.

Children in the reception class make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected of children of their age by the time they begin Year 1; however, they do not have enough opportunities to explore and investigate. The pattern of national test results shows that boys have tended to do less well than girls at this school. However, there are many more boys who have special educational needs and, in class, both groups learn equally well from their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well taught.

The pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes and behave well. Relationships are very good. Attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils are generally punctual.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory overall.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory for the reception group and has improved, with a more varied range of practical activities. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6 and is good in ICT and design and technology. Teaching generally meets pupils' needs in the mixed-age groups but expectations are not high enough for higher attaining pupils, especially the older ones in the class. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning, especially in ICT and for pupils who have special educational needs.

A satisfactory curriculum meets pupils' needs. It is enriched well through out-of-school activities, lessons in a modern foreign language, visits and visitors. Accommodation has been extended but is unsatisfactory because there is no hall or dedicated play area for the reception children. Resources are satisfactory with a well-stocked library and good hardware and software for ICT.

Standards of care, welfare and safety are good. Guidance in personal development is very good but the monitoring of pupils' progress is not used effectively to set targets for pupils. Good links with parents, the community and other schools support pupils' learning well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is good and management is satisfactory. The headteacher monitors provision and standards soundly and provides a good lead in the drive for improvement. Governors provide sound support for the headteacher and are keen to be more actively involved in management. Overall, governance is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very confident in the headteacher and are very pleased with their children's education. Pupils very much enjoy the school and are proud of it. They play a good part in decision making through their school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do in its drive for improvement are:

- Improve opportunities for children in the reception group to explore, investigate and discover things for themselves.
- Set targets for all pupils' learning so they know what they are expected to achieve and, in the case of pupils capable of higher attainment, provide a better guide for teachers' planning.
- Ensure that lessons consistently challenge the higher attaining pupils so that they reach their potential.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards seen in lessons are average at Year 2 and Year 6. Overall achievement is satisfactory throughout the school and pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved since the previous inspection and is now average.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well in relation to their starting points and their progress is good.
- Pupils capable of higher attainment do not achieve as well as they should.
- Children's investigative skills are not as well developed as they could be in the reception class.
- Boys do not do as well in tests as girls.

Commentary

1. There is a wide range of prior learning among the children in the reception class. Overall, their skills and knowledge match those expected for their age when they start school. The pre-school group is helping to develop young children's early learning skills so that they are soundly prepared for full time education. During the reception year, the children make satisfactory progress. Some good progress was observed during the inspection, for example, in knowledge and understanding of the world, and this is due to the improving teaching in the class. However, the children do not have not enough opportunities to explore and investigate. For example, after an interesting discussion about 'creepy crawlies' they were directed to specific tasks rather than having a selection of activities based around the topic. By the start of Year 1, the majority of children have reached the expected targets in each of the areas of learning and are ready for the National Curriculum work. Achievement is satisfactory.
2. Standards of work seen in lessons and books for the present Year 2 group are around average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. By Year 6, standards are again average in English, mathematics and science. Although achievement is satisfactory overall, throughout Years 1 to 6, the more capable pupils could achieve higher standards. Attainment for the current Year 6 is similar to that reported by the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs has risen substantially since the previous inspection and this is reflected in a decline in the test results over the past few years. The judgements above represent a considerable improvement on the well below average results in the 2004 tests for reading and writing in Year 2 and in all subjects in Year 6. There are very good reasons for this, as explained below.
 - Fewer of the current Year 6 pupils have special educational needs than in the two previous years and the current pupils are capable of higher standards than those of the two former Year 6 classes. Since year group numbers at the school are very low, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs makes a

major difference to the grading since, for example, last year each pupil carried nearly 20 per cent of the marks.

- Many pupils join the school part-way through their education: most of these pupils have experienced problems in their previous schools which have resulted in a slowing of progress, as reflected in the test results. More of the present Year 6 pupils have been in the school since reception and fewer of them than in the past have experienced the disruption to their education caused by a change of school.

- Improved teaching, especially of mathematics and writing in smaller groups in Years 3 to 6 is leading to higher standards.
 - Standards in Year 2 have risen because of improved teaching of mathematics and a continued emphasis on reading and writing.
 - The school is making more effective use of assessment to target lower and average attaining pupils which is supporting their progress well.
3. The targets set for last year in English and mathematics for Year 6 were not met. Most pupils make average progress between Years 2 and 6. However, there is little evidence of progress better than this. Not all those who were expected to exceed the average level expected for their age did so. This reflects the fact that higher attaining pupils are not as secure and confident in working at the advanced level as they could be. The school is set to exceed its targets for this year with all pupils on track to achieve the average level in mathematics and the great majority expected to do so in English.
 4. Achievement is satisfactory, overall, throughout the school. It is good in problem solving and investigative work in both mathematics and science, in ICT and for pupils who have special educational needs. Those pupils capable of higher attainment, however, should achieve more and need to work at higher levels. The school does not set targets for learning so pupils do not know what is expected, especially in terms of higher achievement, and teachers do not have a clear guide as to how much challenge they should introduce into lessons.
 5. Pupils with special educational needs progress well because they have specific, clear targets that move their learning on at a good pace. Teachers know where to pitch the level of challenge or support in lessons. Well-trained teaching assistants lead a range of group sessions that are carefully focused on promoting the skill or knowledge needed. The headteacher is very effective in supporting pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. Her calm, reasoned approach helps them to cope with problematic situations and the conventions of school life.
 6. Results over time indicate that boys do considerably less well than girls and the headteacher is well aware of this. An analysis of learning styles has shown that there are many boys who learn best through a practical approach and teachers are constantly looking for ways to accommodate this preference. Some good practice was seen in ICT, practical maths, science and design and technology. In class lessons in the inspection, boys and girls generally achieved equally well and teachers were careful to choose topics and books that interested both groups. Teaching assistants offer good support to those boys who find prolonged concentration difficult and often help with recording tasks.
 7. Attainment in religious education meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and there are strengths in pupils' moral and social development. Attainment in most other subjects where provision was judged is broadly average for the pupils' age, and in design and technology it is above average. It was not possible in the time available to make reliable judgements for art and design, history, music and physical education. There have been good improvements in achievement in ICT and attainment is now average by Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. The behaviour of the pupils is good. Attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to all aspects of their school work.
- Pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations of them.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a major strength of the school.

Commentary

8. Pupils enjoy going to school and are enthusiastic about their work. They show good interest and involvement in their lessons. Children in the Foundation Stage progress soundly in personal and social development and meet the expected learning goals by Year 1. Pupils throughout school collaborate very well; readily sharing ideas, knowledge and resources. The small size of the school means that classrooms are shared between a number of year groups. Although various tasks are going on at the same time, the pupils are not distracted by the other activities and work with good concentration. They are confident enough to find the resources that they need and clear away without prompting. Pupils of all ages take an active part in lessons and are eager to answer questions and join in discussions. They listen to the views of their classmates, showing good respect for opposing opinions.
9. The behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good. The pupils play very well together, both during breaks and at lunchtime. The older pupils are very aware of the needs of the younger ones and enjoy helping them. Pupils devise, know and understand the school rules. There are a minority of pupils whose behaviour is challenging, but the teachers manage and support them very well so there is no disruption to lessons. The school provides a calm and orderly environment that is achieved with very little prompting by the teachers. This indicates good levels of self-discipline among pupils.
10. There is very good overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff are experienced in dealing with pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. Strong links with families are important factors since issues are tackled quickly before they escalate into major problems. There are good opportunities for pupils to gather an insight into beliefs that are different from their own and to develop their spiritual awareness. The school places a high priority on the pupils' moral development; they clearly know the difference between right and wrong. They respect school property and are protective of their environment. Pupils are made aware of their role in society, and mindful of the needs of others. They are aware of the hardships caused by natural disasters and offer their help through fund raising events. There is good provision for the cultural development of the pupils. They benefit from a wide variety of visits to places of interest, and through visitors to the school. These activities broaden their horizons and arouse their curiosity. The multi-cultural links are less well established and the school is aware that the pupils need more opportunities to communicate with those from different religions, customs and traditions.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.7
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.7
National data	0.4

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

11. Attendance rates over the last few years have been below the national average. The school actively discourages holidays being taken during term time. The headteacher does not

sanction any holidays over the 10 days and this has resulted in a higher than average number of unauthorised absences in the past. In an effort to encourage parents to co-operate further, the school is having a two week break during this summer term. Early indications are that parents intend to take advantage of this change. There has already been a significant improvement in this year's figures, which now match the national average.

12. There have been no exclusions and this is a further indication of the school's very good provision for personal development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall with some strengths. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a broad curriculum that is well enriched. Care and welfare are good and there is good guidance for pupils' personal development. Not all pupils know their targets for achievement and therefore guidance to support pupils' academic development is unsatisfactory. There are good links with parents, the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The teaching of ICT and design and technology is good.
- Throughout Years 1 to 6, pupils who are capable of higher levels of attainment are not always fully challenged.
- Reception children do not have enough opportunities to find things out for themselves.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and there is a calm, productive working atmosphere in lessons.
- Teaching assistants are very experienced, well trained and briefed and provide good support for learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	9	8	0	0	0

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

13. The school has been through a difficult and unsettled time due to staff absences. During the inspection, there was only one permanent teacher; all others were on supply or temporary contracts. To the credit of this teaching team and the leadership of the headteacher, the majority of the lessons seen were good or better. However, the quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory, based on lesson observations, a scrutiny of pupils' work over time and an analysis of the records showing pupils' progress. This is a similar situation to that reported at the last inspection and there have been good improvements in teaching and learning in ICT, together with some recent improvements in the teaching for children in the Foundation Stage.

14. The reception group of children are taught in the same classroom as Years 1 and 2. Teaching and learning in this class was disrupted by many staff absences in the Autumn term and planned improvements to the provision for the Foundation Stage were affected by this situation. The class is currently taught by two part-time teachers who have made rapid strides to ensure that the curriculum suits the needs of the children. Planning is improving and ensures that sessions are based on the recommended areas of learning for this age group. The children have a broad range of experiences and learn soundly but there are not enough opportunities for them to explore, investigate or choose their own line of enquiry.
15. In Years 1 and 2, most of the teaching seen was good with a strong emphasis on reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. Skills in these three subjects are constantly reinforced and extended through work in other subjects. In the lessons seen, the work was often well matched to pupils' prior learning and the higher attaining pupils often had appropriate challenges. This accounts for the 75 per cent of good and very good lessons seen in this class. The work of previous terms however, does not always show similarly good practice and it is unsatisfactory that sometimes pupils of different age and ability have been set the same task. A similar situation was observed in Years 3 to 6. The topic or term's planning does not provide a clear guide for teachers at which level to pitch the work, especially in relation to the older, higher attainers in each class. Skilful teaching sometimes overcomes the problem but, in some cases, these pupils are not stretched to their full potential.
16. Throughout school, the experienced teaching assistants are well deployed and make a good contribution to learning. They play a very good role in whole-class sessions by sitting alongside pupils, helping them to clarify their thinking and encouraging them to answer questions. This ensures their full involvement in lessons. In lessons, assistants often take responsibility for pupils of one age or ability as a group, to provide the support they need. For example, in a design and technology lesson, one group was guided through linked work in ICT by a teaching assistant that enriched and extended the pupils' learning. In the guided reading sessions for the juniors, two assistants provide good tuition and sometimes lead interesting discussions.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Those who require additional help are identified as soon as possible when they begin school. Their particular needs are analysed and an individual education plan is then developed to provide tailored support. Regular review and assessment ensures that work is well matched to pupils' requirements.
18. Teachers share the aims of the lessons with the pupils in all subjects and then review the success achieved at the end. This is helping pupils to evaluate their own progress and to become independent learners. Homework is set weekly and pupils have a satisfactory range of tasks, largely based on reading, learning tables, mathematics and writing.
19. The checking of children's progress in the reception class and pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and the information is used in planning the next steps for the lower and average attaining pupils. However, this is not always the case for the higher attaining pupils. Apart from the scheduled assessments, teachers make informal checks on progress during and after lessons and often include helpful advice in their marking. The individual portfolios of work in ICT are a good feature of assessment, allowing both the teacher and pupil to track progress over time. This is one factor underpinning the good teaching and learning in the subject. Other factors include good lesson

planning and the inclusion of ICT into various subject studies so that skills are practised and consolidated. In the lessons seen, teachers and teaching assistants were very confident in using the electronic whiteboards, for example to project text for discussion in English or to illustrate life in another country in geography. Good teaching and learning in design and technology is exemplified by the teachers' skills and enthusiasm for the subject and open-ended tasks that allow pupils to take their learning to a higher level.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by a good range of out-of-school activities. The resources are satisfactory overall. Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has improved for children in the reception group and follows national guidance.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those starting school part way through their education are good.
- Pupils' learning is enriched well by the variety of experiences outside the school, visiting speakers and specialists and the good contribution made by volunteers and classroom assistants.
- The accommodation is lacking a school hall and a dedicated outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage.
- A good range of experiences are provided to develop personal, social and health education.

Commentary

20. The school has improved its curriculum since the last inspection to take better account of ICT. Planning covers all aspects of the subject and activities across the curriculum provide constant opportunities for pupils to use computers and thereby enhance their learning. In addition, the experiences planned for children in the Foundation Stage are now linked to the areas of learning and as such are satisfactory. Overall, the school's curriculum provides enough breadth of worthwhile experiences and tasks but those planned for higher attaining pupils could be more consistently matched to their prior learning and thereby help them to achieve more. Planning for mathematics and science has improved to broaden the range of activities and to incorporate a better emphasis on problem solving. The focus on writing is leading to better standards and there is good capacity to improve further. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in the main; however, the lack of a school hall means that apparatus work in gymnastics cannot be covered fully, although other aspects of physical education are in place. Lessons for religious education are based firmly on the locally agreed syllabus.
21. A particular strength of this small school is the way it enriches the curriculum. A modern foreign language is taught to the junior pupils, who enjoy these lessons. Local volunteers give generously of their time to help with out-of-school activities. In addition, outside experts provide additional experiences in the arts and sports and visits are arranged to different events and places to complement the work done in classrooms. Junior pupils take part in a residential trip which enhances geographical, historical and physical skills as well as promoting personal development. In total, there is a good range of additional experiences that help to bring learning to life and extends pupils' horizons.
22. One of the most successful features of the Foundation Stage provision is the seamless move from pre-school sessions to the reception class. At the time of the previous inspection, provision for the Foundation Stage did not meet the needs of the children. Lessons seen during the inspection reflect some good signs of improvement but there is still some way to go. There are too few opportunities for the children to

explore and investigate for themselves – work that is vital to their understanding and to fire their curiosity. Other improvements now include a 'wet area' for creative work, such as painting, and a space for role play and shared reading. There is no continuous access to outdoor provision and this means that the children have limited opportunities to experiment and extend their skills because outdoor play is kept within scheduled sessions. The links with the main high schools are effective and the pupils say they feel well prepared and confident about the move to the next stage of their education.

23. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. Activities are well planned and pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They learn to recognise the choices that are open to them and consider the effects of their actions on others through class discussion times. Sex and relationships education is tailored to suit the age group and pupils are taught about the dangers of drugs misuse.
24. The curriculum caters well for all the pupils who have special needs. Their work is adapted well to their capabilities and they receive close and effective support from teaching assistants and also from their classmates. This ensures that the pupils are fully involved in all activities and that they make good progress towards their individual targets. Those pupils entering after the reception year are welcomed warmly and supported well as they start in their new class. Those interviewed during the inspection had nothing but praise for the school and said they felt happy in their new surroundings. Teachers have recently assessed pupils' learning styles and are developing ways to cater better for the large numbers of boys who prefer practical activity. This approach is working very well in some subjects, particularly ICT and design and technology.
25. The accommodation is unsatisfactory because there is no school hall. This adversely affects pupils' achievement in gymnastics, although teachers make best use of the playground and field for physical education and games. The high school has offered the use of its sports hall and the headteacher is currently seeking funding for transport. The building is very well maintained and kept beautifully clean by a conscientious caretaker. Attractive displays of pupils' work create a stimulating environment for learning. Pupils appreciate these facts and, in turn, keep the cloakroom tidy and take good care of resources. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced although most are new to the school. The skills and training of the teaching assistants are well matched for their work.
26. Resources are generally satisfactory and the new library provides a good study and reading area. Resources for information technology have improved substantially since the previous inspection; they are now good in range and quality.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for the care and welfare of the pupils is good. The support and guidance for the pupils' personal development is very good. Guidance for academic development is unsatisfactory because pupils do not have targets for learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships within the school make a significant contribution to the personal development of the pupils.
- Guidance for pupils' academic development is limited to individual lessons and they do not have longer term targets to help them to improve.
- The school provides a very secure environment with careful attention to safety issues.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to express their opinions.

Commentary

27. The good provision for care, safety and welfare has been maintained since the previous inspection. The very good relationships that exist are a strength of the

school. The teachers have very good knowledge of all the pupils and ensure that their individual needs are met. Parents are particularly happy with this aspect of the care provided, and feel the teachers know how to motivate their children. The pupils are very confident that they can turn to the teachers for help, and know they will be listened to and their concerns taken seriously.

28. Great care is taken to ensure the pupils feel safe and secure whilst in school. The very welcoming and friendly atmosphere helps pupils to settle well into school routines and this is especially true of the pupils who transfer from other schools. The teachers work very hard to make new pupils feel welcome and their success can be seen in the subsequent progress made. Systems for health and safety and child protection are well established and are good. There is a very good early-morning welcome into school. This was devised to ensure the safety of pupils as parents drop off their children in the playground. Both parents and pupils arrive from around 8 o'clock onwards and the time is used for reading, ICT work or other interests. A very safe system operates at the end of school day when pupils are handed directly over to parents or carers. Parents who attended the meeting strongly praised these procedures.
29. The monitoring of pupils' progress is satisfactory but most do not have personal targets for English, mathematics or science. The assessment and marking of their work, which shows them how to improve from lesson to lesson, is satisfactory. However, they do not have longer term targets to strive for. There are some general, whole-class goals but these are of limited use for individuals. On the other hand, those who have special educational needs know their individual targets and these are shared with parents so that they can support their children effectively. Guidance for this group of pupils is effective. For the other subjects, goals for learning are largely based around the targets that are stated at the beginning of lessons and reviewed at the end and this is satisfactory.
30. There is a very effective school council. Pupils are elected to serve on the council and they take their roles seriously. They enjoy the opportunity to help their fellow pupils and to work closely with their teachers to resolve difficulties. They gather views from their classmates and hold some meetings without an adult being present. Through this democratic process, the pupils play an active part in running the school and their own confidence is increased significantly.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and home is good. There are effective links with the church, the local community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents are very supportive of the school and its work.
- Good links with the community and the church provide good enrichment for pupils' learning.
- Effective links with other schools provide additional opportunities, resources and expertise.

Commentary

31. The good links between home, school and the community have been maintained since the previous inspection. The parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and who returned questionnaires were very pleased with the very caring and supportive ethos of the school. They appreciate the benefits that a small school offers, and all said that their children had settled well and were very happy. A number of parents had transferred their children from other schools, and all were confident that they had made the right decision. The parents consider that the teaching is good and that the

children are encouraged to work hard. There was much appreciation of the extra work done by the headteacher in overcoming the recent staffing difficulties. The parents also said that there was now a more stable feeling in the school.

32. Parents are very pleased with the induction arrangements and feel their children settle quickly. The separately funded part-time pre-school arrangements mean that the under fives gain a good grounding in school routines and are familiar with the teachers. The transition into

full time education is therefore a small step for them and achieved easily. Parents generally provide good support for learning at home including hearing their children read and ensuring that homework tasks are completed; they make a significant contribution to learning.

33. Communications between parents and school are good. The early morning and after-school arrangements facilitate the exchange of information and parents say that teachers are very approachable. The open afternoon and parents' evenings are well attended and the annual written report is detailed. Parents enjoy courses held in school; they said that a recent mathematics evening helped them to understand how they can help their children at home.
34. The school feels very much a part of the small, local community and pupils regularly take an active part in church services. They are well versed on the history connected with the church building and local manor house. Visitors effectively enhance learning in art, music, history, science and literacy. The school is developing links with a nearby garden centre and this will enable the junior pupils to be fully involved in an environmental project. These links make a good contribution to learning.
35. The school is a key member of a cluster group of small schools. Through this group the pupils benefit from shared resources and expertise. The combined buying and bargaining power has helped to boost resources, for example in ICT. Regular joint training sessions enable the sharing of good practices and ideas. Through sporting links, the pupils are able to take part in competitive games and have access to facilities not available within their own school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides good, strong leadership and is effective in promoting and maintaining pupils' very good personal development.
- There is insufficient guidance for teachers' planning because target setting for individual pupils is not in place.
- The governors are supportive and keen to play a more active role in the running of the school.

Commentary

36. The headteacher provides good leadership for the school. Together with the present staff, she is successful in promoting a strong, caring ethos which is reflected in the very good standard of pupils' personal development and their enjoyment of lessons. The headteacher has been successful in maintaining a satisfactory level of education for the pupils during recent difficulties at the school. At times, this has meant teaching all day and completing management tasks at weekends. Both parents and governors expressed their appreciation of these efforts which show a very strong dedication and commitment to the school. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was the only permanent member of staff; there were two supply teachers who were new to the school and one teacher on a temporary contract. There have been difficulties in recruiting teachers to this small school where lessons cater for a wide age range. The

good teamwork seen and the settled, routine atmosphere is a further indication of good leadership. There is a strong commitment to inclusion. Leadership and management for special educational needs are good and specialist advice is sought, where needed, to ensure that pupils can take full advantage of all that the school has to offer. All statutory requirements are met except for the gymnastics element of physical education.

37. Management is satisfactory overall. At present, the headteacher undertakes all senior management functions. The monitoring of teaching, learning and standards is satisfactorily carried out by her, with the help of the teaching staff. The headteacher also checks the quality of lessons.
38. The school's analysis of its performance data from national tests is used effectively in drawing up the school's improvement plan. This effective planning has been disrupted this year by the absence of a senior manager and, for example, the implementation of the current action plan for the Foundation Stage is behind schedule. Because there was no senior member of staff in school to assist the headteacher at the time of the inspection, the usual judgement of the effectiveness of key staff, other than the headteacher, cannot be made. However, temporary staff and a teaching assistant are making a good contribution to management. For example, by continuing the improvements to the Foundation Stage provision and effectively supporting the headteacher in managing ICT and physical education.
39. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis and administrative support is very good. The secretary covers a diverse range of duties and frees up the headteacher's time for academic matters. She has been instrumental in supporting management during the recent difficulties. All teachers and teaching assistants are included in regular performance reviews, where a programme of training and development needs is established. Teachers are deployed well to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, to cater for the Foundation Stage children and to ensure that the junior pupils are taught in two separate classes for English and mathematics. The accommodation and resources are used efficiently and best value is routinely sought when making purchases. However, there is no effective system in place for the setting of pupils' individual targets.
40. The governors are supportive of the school and have the interests of the pupils at heart. They have recently undergone a self-evaluation process and are working through a training programme. It is anticipated that this will provide them with the skills needed to provide more pro-active governance. They work on the school improvement plan with the headteacher, monitor finance and some visit school to observe lessons and help in class. There is little evidence of their supporting the headteacher by taking some management responsibilities, such as completing risk assessments. At present, governance is satisfactory with a good capacity to improve.
41. The three main barriers to learning are fully recognised by the headteacher and governors; they are listed below, together with actions taken.

Barrier	Action	Outcome
No hall space for gymnastics	Daily exercise sessions for the pupils. Good use of the field and yard for games. Extra-curricular clubs to extend physical activities and competitive sport arranged with other schools. Good opportunities for swimming. Dance sessions supported by an outside specialist.	The school is doing all it can to overcome the problem. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education and do especially well in swimming.
Pupils entering school part way through their	Very good pastoral care and good initial assessments ensure that pupils' needs are met. A strong, friendly	Pupils settle quickly and subsequently, often make good progress.

education, many of whom have experienced difficulties in other schools.	ethos among pupils ensures a warm welcome.	Those interviewed said that they felt safe and happy in school.
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Staff absences	The headteacher has gone to great lengths to recruit temporary staff with the necessary skills. They have been well inducted and form a successful team.	Pupils are receiving a satisfactory education with some strengths.
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42. The main aids to learning are very good relationships, supportive parents and a good amount of help from the local authority who have responded actively to the headteacher's requests for support.
43. The school provides satisfactory value for money, taking into account the pupils' achievement, very good personal development, the quality of teaching, leadership and management and costs that are above average.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	132,020	Balance from previous year	18,738
Total expenditure	139,890	Balance carried forward to the next	10,918
Expenditure per pupil	2,914		

44. The reserves of nearly eight per cent were held to pay for refurbishments and equipment following the completion of the building work in 2004. The school has faced substantial, additional costs this year due to staff absences and has done well to avoid a deficit.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. When the small numbers of children start their reception year, their attainment is generally what is expected for their age. They achieve soundly in all the areas of learning and most children are on course to meet the goals set out for them. Improvements to classroom organisation and the creation of an additional small space have enabled teachers to provide a better range of activities, which are now satisfactory. Taking into account the evidence from the whole of this academic year, the quality of teaching and learning is sound. There have been many disruptions to learning because of staff absences. Nevertheless, provision has been boosted recently by some good improvements to planning introduced by teachers new to the Foundation Stage. Pleasingly, fresh approaches and some exciting and relevant experiences have begun to broaden and quicken children's knowledge and understanding. However, the children who have the capacity for higher attainment in their skills of reading and writing have made mediocre progress since they started their reception year. This is because the provision and teaching until recently has not stretched these youngsters enough. There is sufficient space now in the classroom but planning does not include a wide enough range of opportunities for children to explore and investigate for themselves. There is no dedicated outdoor area to which children have continual access and therefore accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. Resources are satisfactory and used well.
46. Assessment is satisfactory and the information is currently being well used in planning the next steps. However, evidence over the entire year shows that this has not always been the case, especially for the children capable of higher attainment. In the absence of the class teacher who is also the manager for this phase, the headteacher has provided satisfactory leadership and management. She is well supported in this by one of the temporary staff who is playing a good part in moving provision forward. The programme of improvements is now moving back towards its original timescale and the school has secured informed and helpful guidance from the local education authority to accelerate the process.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from the good model set by the older infants in the class and develop good attitudes to learning and good social habits.
- The children's learning is enhanced by the good classroom support, useful family links and the very good arrangements for pre-school shared experiences.
- Children have limited opportunities to learn for themselves by exploring or following their own line of enquiry.

Commentary

47. Children settle quickly into school because of the very effective preparation when they are three and four years old. Young playgroup children join the class for two

afternoons a week and those children who are coming up to school age attend part-time. This means that when they enter the reception class, they are familiar with the surroundings, routines and the adults. Good links with families also ensure that each child's needs are known and supported well.

48. Teaching is satisfactory and children are on track to achieve the expected learning outcome by the time they move into Year 1. Achievement is satisfactory. Children manage their own belongings and co-operate very well as they work alongside others. They are beginning to make choices independently and engage in organised play with sustained attention. The school has made good improvements in the organisation of activities but there is still some way to go. For example, more time is spent in directed activities with adults than is given to independent work. The children's books and records reflect too much formal recording at the expense of prime experiences for learning through exploration and investigation. There is scope, therefore, to increase skills of independence further.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have lots of interesting conversations, they listen well and are confident enough to express their opinions.
- Higher attainers could make faster progress and achieve more than they do.

Commentary

49. Children speak confidently and the language and phrases used show that they have a good grasp of language for conversation. Teaching is satisfactory and children are on course to meet the goals for skills in communication, language and literacy. Achievement is satisfactory. They understand that print carries meaning and they thoroughly enjoy books. There are lots of opportunities for them to listen to stories, alongside older infants. Their writing is satisfactory in range but tends to be mostly guided by teachers. There are limited opportunities for them to explore the many reasons and styles for writing, for example when working in the role-play area. Most read and write simple sentences with support and recognise the majority of letter sounds. There is scope to extend the higher attaining children's skills in retrieving information from books and writing for a wider range of purposes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a good understanding of numbers.
- The curriculum includes too great an emphasis on recording rather than engaging in practical work.

Commentary

50. Children's activities and recorded work show that most of them can count to 10 and some to 20. They can deal with problems involving the phrases 'less than' and 'more than' well. Teaching is sound and includes a strong emphasis on early calculation work; as a result, most children make progress in this area of their mathematical development. However, much time has been spent recording addition and subtraction

sentences, some of which has been at the expense of broader mathematical experiences such as exploring time, volume or patterns. This would help to develop greater understanding, curiosity and enjoyment. At present, achievement is satisfactory overall. Refreshingly, during the inspection, the scope of mathematics seen involved some exciting use of shape and very good use of computer technology. In these activities, the children were inspired to ask their own questions and worked independently.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Topics are interesting and effectively combine teaching and learning across different areas of study recommended for this age group.
- There are too few ways in which children can investigate or follow up an idea when they are curious about something.

Commentary

51. Children have a typical knowledge of living things and meet the expected learning goals by the end of the year. For example, they sort 'creepy crawlies' according to numbers of legs or whether they fly. They know the names of fruits and vegetables and observe the different shapes and patterns. In a very good lesson observed, the children prepared and assembled a fruit salad, served it to their classmates, entertained them with their musical skills then savoured the fruits of their labours. This they did with great interest and deliberation, describing their preferences to their classmates and adults with some thought. The lesson crossed the edges of the different areas of learning very well and was an exciting experience. Teaching is satisfactory overall and leads to sound achievement. Good use is made of ICT and children are developing good levels of competence in using the keyboard and on-screen prompts. There are however, few investigative activities or tools in the classroom that might entice a young mind to develop a sense of the past, of places and of different cultures.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have some interesting planned activities for making, painting and play.
- There are insufficient 'free choice' creative activities available throughout the day.

Commentary

52. Children achieve soundly and are in line to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Many of the activities are well linked to other areas of learning and the children readily enjoy creating pictures of fruits or vegetables that were introduced in other sessions. Teaching is satisfactory and promotes sound progress. The new 'wet area' provides a much needed resources for learning and is used well. Here, some shared arrangements with pre-school children provide precious time to paint, print and make models, using materials of their own choice. However, there are not enough continuous opportunities throughout the day for children to explore different media and materials. Children have sufficient planned and impromptu opportunities to sing simple songs and rhymes and to use musical instruments in creative ways. They have sound opportunities for developing creative use of language in the role-play areas.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

No judgement could be made about provision in physical development as no sessions were observed. However, playground activities at lunchtime indicate that most children are on course to reach the standards expected in some of their physical skills such as running and hopping. There

are few chances for the children to develop stamina, take calculated risks or negotiate climbing on large equipment. In general, their skills for handling small tools and tiny resources are typical of the age group. Planning indicates that children have sufficient activities to develop skills within the classroom but outdoor work is hampered by the lack of access to a dedicated play area.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been some good improvements in writing.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- The higher attaining pupils do not have enough challenge in their work.
- Targets are not set so pupils do not know their learning goals.
- Spelling and punctuation is in need of improvement for some older pupils.

Commentary

53. Attainment of the present Year 2 and Year 6 pupils is around the national average in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Standards are roughly the same as at the previous inspection and are considerably higher than those in the 2004 tests. This is because there are fewer pupils with special educational needs in the year group and better tracking of progress has led to higher teacher expectations for the below average and average attaining groups. In turn, this has led to higher numbers working at the average level 4. There is still scope to improve numbers working at the higher level 5. The fact that the juniors are taught in two small groups for English supports their learning well. Looking at the school's tracking records, achievement remains satisfactory overall. Inspection evidence confirms this view but progress could be better for the higher attaining pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well from their starting points.
54. Most pupils are attaining standards in speaking and listening that match national expectations. By Year 6, pupils participate confidently in discussions and are able to justify and illustrate their point of view. Reading is promoted well and standards are average. Pupils demonstrate a good interest in books from an early stage. The younger ones know about the different types and structure of books, including fiction and non-fiction texts. There is currently a good emphasis on phonics (hearing and articulating letter sounds) but this has not always been the case in the past and this is one reason for the improved attainment in reading at Year 2. The older pupils infer meaning from the text and extract information efficiently from non-fiction sources; this supports their study skills well.
55. The school has taken action to improve standards in writing which were generally lower than those in reading. Due to the improvements, attainment is average but the headteacher realises that there is still some way to go and has a detailed action plan in place. She has secured the support of the local authority's consultants in this work. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are encouraged to rehearse their sentences out loud and to check whether they make sense. They often practise writing on wipe-off boards so

that they can edit their work easily. In one lesson seen, the teacher skilfully modelled and guided writing with some Year 1 pupils who subsequently produced work of an above average standard for their age. There is particularly good progress for Years 1 and 2 over the last term with much more independent writing; this has allowed pupils to practise their skills and achieve better standards.

56. In Year 6, pupils are able to write for a range of purposes but there is little use of extended sentences or imaginative use of punctuation that would take fiction writing to a higher level, in some cases. Spelling is sometimes inaccurate and there are too many silly mistakes. This is because several pupils have not received a good grounding in phonics to help them segment the sounds within words. In Year 6, most pupils are able to produce a fluent, joined style of handwriting.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is good provision for pupils who have special educational needs but the older, higher attaining pupils are not always stretched. In the mixed age classes, the younger, higher attainers often have challenge because they work alongside their older classmates on more difficult work. However, the oldest pupils in Years 2 and 6 do not have the same opportunity. Skilful teaching from the present staff sometimes overcomes this problem but a scrutiny of past work shows that there is a need to set work at the higher National Curriculum level in all lessons so that all pupils are consistently challenged. Boys and girls do equally well in class and teachers choose books to meet all tastes and interests.
58. Marking and the feedback given during most lessons helps pupils to improve and to evaluate their own work. Pupils do not, however, have targets for learning and so do not know the goals they are expected to achieve. These would also be a useful guide for teachers in setting work at the correct level of challenge for the higher attainers. Learning is enhanced through the use of ICT, especially for drafting, editing and refining. There are useful prompts displayed around the walls and pupils make good use of these, for example, to check spelling or punctuation. Classrooms are inspiring places with good displays of pupils' written work and books. The library is a good resource, providing an interesting selection of books, both fiction and non-fiction, and a useful study area. It is well used and pupils say they generally like the choice of books available for loan.
59. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall; there is a strong commitment and a good capacity to improve. Under the direction of the headteacher, the full team of teachers shares the monitoring of standards and provision and the current action plan reflects thorough evaluation and a drive for improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Pupils' literacy skills are average overall. Speaking, listening and reading skills are well applied and improved across the curriculum. A satisfactory amount of extended writing is seen in other subjects but there is scope to develop this further, especially for the older juniors. There are sound links with ICT and these enhance learning effectively. Pupils often word process their work to make reviewing and editing easier.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Infant pupils find their own ways to investigate and record work and juniors have good opportunities to solve problems.

- There is good use of computer technology in lessons that makes learning interesting and easier for pupils to grasp.
- Older, higher attaining pupils in classes should be stretched more than they are.

Commentary

60. The standard of work seen in Years 2 and 6 is broadly average. This is much improved on the test results for 2004 and is mainly due to the many improvements made in mathematics and the fact that there are fewer pupils with special educational needs than last year in both of the year groups. The splitting of the juniors into two small classes for mathematics also supports learning well. Achievement is satisfactory overall but there is a need to stretch some of the older, higher attaining pupils in the mixed-age classes who could achieve more. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because they have good support. Girls do better than boys in the tests but, in lessons, both groups progress equally and boys enjoy the more practical nature of mathematical investigation. Overall, standards are similar to those at the previous inspection and there is a better breadth to the curriculum, better assessment and much improved use of ICT.
61. The improvement of provision and standards in mathematics has been a priority for the school over the last two years. Leadership has tackled most of the weaknesses identified through the school's self-evaluation and has done so robustly; making good use of specialist advice to strengthen teaching skills and methods. The full impact of these improvements is now beginning to track through. Teachers' planning now ensures that lessons build on what has been taught previously and indeed aims to raise pupils' understanding by teaching to the higher level of the two year groups in each class. This is well thought through and works well for the average and lower attaining pupils. A weakness occurs because there are no targets set for the pupils. This means that pupils and teachers are not clear about expectations in regards to the actual level of work needed. As a result, the tasks planned for higher attainers in Years 2, 4 and 6 in these mixed-aged classes sometimes misses the mark. It is these pupils who could achieve more than they do.
62. Pupils' work in their books shows that most of them are making sound progress in their mathematical understanding and skills from their start in Year 1. Most Year 2 pupils can deal with simple problems in money, use numbers to 100 and combine or subtract numbers to 20. They enjoy investigating mathematical patterns and record their findings for themselves; sometimes quite creatively so. Ample use of new computer technology accelerates pupils' understanding of symmetry and pattern and is making a good impact on learning. In Years 5 and 6, most pupils can deal with equivalent fractions and some can reduce them to their simplest form. They double check to make sure their answers are reasonable and self-correct where mistakes are apparent. Work shows a better emphasis on, and an improved attainment in, problem solving. Pupils break down more complex problems into easier steps and link their knowledge across all aspects of mathematics to find answers.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall. Most of the teachers are new to the school. They have good subject knowledge and build very good relationships. They manage their classes skilfully and this results in good behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and good levels of concentration from pupils. Classroom assistants support pupils with special educational needs well, making sure that they understand their tasks and providing an additional layer of help that ensures success. The marking of pupils work is sound overall and there are some good examples of advice where the written comments explain to pupils exactly what they should do next to improve.

64. There is evidence of some good leadership in the past when the improvements have been driven through. At present, the headteacher supported by the teaching team, are providing satisfactory leadership and management for the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Pupils have average skills and use them competently to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. For example, they measure accurately in design and technology and use graphs and charts effectively to record findings in science. ICT makes a good contribution to pupils' enjoyment of multiplication tables, pattern and symmetry.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils cover a good amount of work, acquiring a broad base of knowledge and understanding.
- Investigative and experimental work extends scientific thinking successfully.
- Higher attaining pupils, especially in the older age group, are not always fully challenged.
- Pupils do not have learning targets to help them improve.

Commentary

65. Standards are average by Years 2 and 6. This is a similar picture to that at the last inspection but meanwhile, there have been some lower standards in the tests. Attainment at Year 2 is similar to the results of last year's teachers' assessments while that at Year 6 is much higher than in the 2004 tests. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs this year and pupils' improved investigative and experimental skills have boosted standards overall. Achievement is satisfactory throughout school. The breadth of study for science has improved since the last inspection and there is currently a better emphasis on practical work.
66. The quality of teaching in the two lessons seen was good and led to good learning. Taking into account a broader range of evidence, including the scrutiny of pupils' work, planning and progress over time, teaching and learning are judged as satisfactory. There are strengths in the provision including good support for pupils with special educational needs and a strong emphasis on practical work, both of which make a good contribution to learning. In these mixed-age classes, the younger pupils who are capable of higher attainment have sufficient challenge because they can work alongside the older age group. However, the planning does not provide enough work at the higher level for the oldest pupils and evidence in pupils' books confirms that this is an issue because they are not achieving highly enough. The problem was overcome in both lessons seen because the actual teaching was better than the planning would suggest and there was sufficient challenge for all. However, the teachers are not permanent members of staff and it is important that the planning is improved to provide better guidance for the future.
67. Pupils thoroughly enjoy practical work and are keen to investigate. In Years 1 and 2, they discovered the link between incline and speed through a process of trials. In Years 3 to 6, pupils investigated and dissected different fruits in order to decide how their seeds might be dispersed. In both lessons there was very good collaboration between pupils who shared ideas and resources sensibly. Work in books shows a good coverage of all aspects of science with some good opportunities for pupils to pose their own questions and find their own ways of recording their findings. Girls and

boys achieve equally in lessons. There are many boys at the school who learn best through a practical approach and they do especially well in the experimental and investigative tasks.

68. The teachers in school at the time of the inspection set open-ended tasks in their science lessons so that pupils have to organise themselves, decide on a plan of action, predict what might happen, try out their ideas and make sense of the outcomes. This is encouraging pupils to think and act as scientists and promotes good progress. There are good links with

mathematics and ICT; for example, pupils measure carefully and are competent at producing graphs, both hand-written and in electronic format. Staff promote speaking and listening skills well and check that pupils understand new terminology. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively, for example, to provide additional help for pupils who work at a slower rate or for those who find it difficult to clarify their thoughts or record their findings. This supports the pupils with special educational needs effectively and they achieve well.

69. Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly and progress is tracked from year to year. However, there is no target setting in place to inform pupils what they are expected to learn over the term and to help teachers set work at the correct level. Resources are sound and well supplemented by ICT hardware such as the electronic microscope and sensing equipment. On a temporary basis, the subject is led by the headteacher and the monitoring of planning and work is completed at staff meetings. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in the subject is much better than it was at the previous inspection and pupils have good access to computers.
- Pupils have made rapid strides in their achievement.
- There is very good collaboration in lessons.
- The influence of the specialist teaching assistant for ICT has been of great value to staff and pupils in raising levels of confidence.

Commentary

70. The school has made very good improvements since the previous inspection and standards are now average at Years 2 and 6. The quality of teaching and learning is good which has helped the older pupils to make up the shortfalls in their earlier learning. Achievement of boys and girls is good throughout school and the younger ones are set to attain above average levels by Year 6 if they maintain the good progress they are currently making. The ICT specialist teaching assistant supports all age groups and has helped to improve colleagues' ICT skills by working alongside them and introducing new hardware and software. The full curriculum for ICT is now taught and pupils have good opportunities to apply the skills that they acquire. The range and quality of resources are good for a school of this size and programs have been carefully chosen to supplement work in all subjects. Computers are well used in lessons and during the early morning study time.
71. Since the previous inspection, teachers and teaching assistants have received training and now teach the subject with confidence; as a result, teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers are increasingly using the interactive whiteboards to make their explanations clear, to help them demonstrate new skills and to incorporate resources from different media. Teachers achieve a good balance between formal instruction and time for pupils to practise skills. They make lessons interesting and tasks challenging, with the result that pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy their learning and do well. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoyed

the new challenge of interrogating a database to find information about fruits as part of their project in design and technology. Junior pupils collaborated very well on a difficult task. They entered data from an investigation they had conducted and discovered how to produce graphs to illustrate their findings. In both cases, pupils showed a willingness to persevere and to try out different solutions when problems were encountered. Progress is checked regularly and the information used to ensure

that lessons contain the right amount of support or challenge. Each pupil has an electronic folder of completed work which they sometimes re-visit. For example, in the before-school session, pupils often choose to amend or improve a previous project as they learn new skills.

72. The leadership and management in this subject are good. The headteacher works in partnership with the specialist teaching assistant to evaluate provision and standards and there is a constant drive for improvement. The partnership with other small schools makes a good contribution to this subject. Shared intelligence and evaluations of products have helped in securing the best resources and the combined buying power has led to lower costs.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. The pupils have average ICT skills and these are applied effectively across the curriculum. An action plan has been developed to extend this good practice further. Linking their work well with mathematics, junior pupils used the spreadsheet facility to investigate and produce magic squares where the numbers in each direction added to the same total. Written work is often presented attractively, using different fonts and incorporating graphics. Pupils use the Internet confidently to find information or import pictures and pupils in Year 6 were proud of their multimedia presentations on the Egyptians which they had produced.

HUMANITIES

History

During the two days of the inspection, it was not possible to observe teaching in history and therefore no judgement on provision is made. From an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them, indications are that pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school and reach standards that match what is expected by the end of Year 6. This is a similar situation to that at the previous inspection and there is better use of ICT for research and recording work.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a sound understanding of the passing of time, change and of heritage by researching their family tree. The curriculum includes a sound emphasis on people and events of the past and of their influence on modern life. In Years 3 to 6, pupils study the Romans and identify the changes they brought about, such as building major towns and the road network. Evidence of sound enquiry skills is seen in the recent work completed, for example, about Henry the Eighth, and pupils made good use of ICT for research in this project. They employed good skills of interpretation as they investigated Henry's various problems from different viewpoints.

When studying the Civil War, teachers make good use of the school's locality by including a strong emphasis on the siege of nearby Lathom Hall. This provides good opportunities for pupils to research information and to find out how their own locality was affected by a major event. Visitors to school provide additional experiences and provide good motivation for learning. For example, pupils had been inspired by a 'Viking' who came to talk about his life and demonstrate his skills. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory; staff share in the monitoring of planning and work through regular meetings.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

- Pupils enjoy the subject, which makes a good contribution to their understanding of worldwide culture.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to engage in local studies.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged, especially those in the older age group.

Commentary

74. From the lesson observed and an analysis of pupils' work, indications are that pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily throughout the school although the higher attaining pupils could achieve more. Standards match what is expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is a similar situation to that reported at the time of the previous inspection and there have been good improvements in the use of ICT in the subject.
75. Mapping skills are developed from an early age as pupils draw their own 'pirate island' with grid references to show where the treasure is hidden. The curriculum includes a strong emphasis on comparing and contrasting different locations. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 study how life on an island is different from that in their local area, focussing on physical and human features. Their maps include colour codes and are of a good standard. In their study of an Indian village, pupils in Years 3 to 6 noted that schooling, houses, dress and cultures were different from those seen in Ormskirk. In the lesson seen, older pupils were able to explain reasons for the differences, including climate and finance.
76. Satisfactory use is made of books and photographs to find information and as a starting point for geographical investigations. Through topics, pupils are encouraged to consider environmental and conservation issues which provides a good enhancement for the subject and for their personal and social education. Those in Years 3 to 6 discussed points for and against a local retail development, considering issues such as road congestion and pollution together with work and leisure opportunities.
77. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and learning is sound. Teachers provide good opportunities for speaking and listening and use the electronic whiteboards very effectively to bring the world into the classroom. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum is based on a four-year cycle to ensure that work is not repeated and that skills are developed progressively. However, plans do not include added challenge for the higher attaining pupils and this is an area for development. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory and the information used to plan tasks for those who need extra support but not for those who need extra challenge.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social education.
- There are good links with the local church.
- Pupils have very limited opportunities to communicate with children of other faiths or to visit different places of worship.

Commentary

78. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Achievement is satisfactory. Across the age groups, pupils have a sound understanding of Bible stories and older pupils understand that religious belief often influences people's way

of life. There is a good emphasis on learning about world religions and pupils know about the main leaders, festivals and important events in different faiths. Lessons include a good element of personal education where moral and social issues are often discussed. For example, after learning about the Ten Commandments, pupils developed the rules for their class. Good links with the local chapel enable pupils to study church furniture, architecture and artefacts. However, they do not have opportunities to visit places of worship of the other faiths that they study.

79. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Resources are well organised and the cycle of planning ensures that pupils cover all the programme of study, developing skills, knowledge and understanding progressively. Pupils with special educational needs often do well in the oral sessions and are supported effectively when recording work. Provision and attainment is monitored regularly by staff, under the direction of the headteacher. Recent evaluations have led to an action plan aimed at developing multi-cultural and multi-faith aspects of the curriculum. School assemblies play a good part in strengthening teaching and learning. There are strong moral and social themes, often through interesting stories that can be understood by all age groups.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The subjects of art and design, music and physical education were sampled during the inspection because there was insufficient evidence to make a fair judgement on provision. During the two days, one lesson was seen in music and none in art and design or physical education although exercise sessions and playtimes were observed. Additional evidence was gathered from looking at completed work, teachers' planning and discussions with older pupils. Two lessons were observed in design and technology and this subject is reported on fully.

Art and design

It is clear from teachers' planning and pupils' work that the full programme of study is taught and statutory requirements are met. Attainment in art and design matches what is expected by Years 2 and 6. Discussion with pupils in Years 5 and 6 indicates that their knowledge of the work of artists is broadly typical. For example, they talk knowledgeably about the artist Van Gogh and the techniques he used. Their work on display indicates that their skills with pastels and crayon are satisfactory and that they are likely to develop a sound level of skilfulness overall.

Music

Evidence from teachers' planning and discussions with pupils shows that the main elements of listening, appraising and composing are soundly covered over the year. Attainment matches what is expected by Years 2 and 6. Pupils have a sound knowledge of composers from different parts of the world and times in history. Music is well used during worship and pupils listen attentively to the piece played as they assemble. This creates a good, spiritual feeling to the proceedings. Singing is tuneful and pupils have good pitch. Their knowledge of music is illustrated as they make informed choices of the piece to be played as they leave the assembly. There are many opportunities for pupils to sing or enjoy music, especially in Years 1 and 2. When serving their fruit salad, one group decided to entertain the class. The musical rhythms they performed featured untuned percussion instruments and singing to a familiar tune, which they did with great enthusiasm.

Physical education

In the discussion with Year 6 pupils they were enthusiastic about the subject and told of the good range of sports activities they enjoy, sometimes with other schools, and of the clubs they take part in. On the basis of the evidence gathered, attainment matches expectations in all areas except gymnastics. This is because the school has no facilities for lessons using large apparatus, although there are opportunities for floor work. Pupils described the lessons they enjoy each week and the daily jogging or exercise they undertake "to keep us healthy". There is ample equipment and resources for the subject. The school makes

considerable efforts to compensate for the lack of a school hall which curtails the range of gymnastics activities that can be provided. The larger classroom is used for dance lessons and all junior pupils swim for two terms each year. Standards here are good with 100 per cent of pupils attaining the minimum swimming distance and many going on to much longer distances and survival work. The extensive grounds are used imaginatively for sport and athletics. Orienteering has recently been introduced and the residential holiday provides additional opportunities for outdoor activity.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is above that normally seen by Year 6.
- Topics make good links with other subjects so that learning is reinforced.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their design and making work.

Commentary

80. This subject is well taught, pupils' skills develop well and standards are above average. This marks a good improvement since the previous inspection. In Years 5 and 6 pupils draw annotated designs and make detailed costings of the items they need. They study similar commercial products carefully in order to gain a good idea of what might function well. Their practical skills for making are better than most pupils of the same age. For example, they made money containers using their knowledge of mathematical shapes, materials and fastenings to very good effect. Opportunities for food technology are provided regularly across the school. During the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made a fruit salad, paying good attention to the blend of colour, taste and texture. Their evaluations and suggestions for improvement were of a good standard.
81. Good links to science work help pupils to consolidate and apply their knowledge. There is evidence of the effective use of computers in this subject. For example, some pupils researched for information about products using a database. In Years 3 to 6 pupils use a graphics program effectively to aid design, for example when working on the layout of the classroom. Pupils with special educational needs do as well as the majority in this subject. They often enjoy the opportunity to make creative or original designs and have the help they need to record work. The practical nature of the subject especially appeals to those pupils, especially boys, who learn best by actually doing things. In discussions with pupils, design and technology was often mentioned as a favourite and the perseverance shown in lessons confirms that they enjoy the challenges set for them.
82. Leadership and management are satisfactory and shared between the teaching team. There is a wide range of consumable materials from which pupils may choose and topics are organised on a two or four year cycle to ensure that work is not repeated and that skills are progressively developed. The open-ended nature of the tasks allows pupils to reach their potential. For example, the higher attaining pupils produce more detailed diagrams and work schedules and often set higher standards by which to appraise their products.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their positive relationships with staff and each other reflect the school's strong commitment to this aspect of development. There is no formal curriculum in place at present but lessons include a good emphasis on diet and health as well as personal and social skills.

Classes have discussion times each week to discuss and explore feelings and relationships and this is an important part of the school's successful approach to behaviour management and to developing self-esteem. Assembly themes consolidate learning in class and strengthen spiritual development. The council members gather pupils' views and make a good contribution to the running of the school. Links with the geography and science curricula support learning well as pupils study the importance of water in people's lives and the benefits of maintaining the balance of nature. The school has recently embarked on a link with the local garden centre so that pupils will have opportunities to extend their understanding of living things.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
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	0
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). 0 represents no evidence.