

INSPECTION REPORT

**CAMBRIDGE ROAD COMMUNITY PRIMARY AND
NURSERY SCHOOL**

Ellesmere Port

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111084

Headteacher: Mrs G D Lloyd

Lead inspector: Mr J J Peacock

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th June 2004

Inspection number: 255699

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:	236
School address:	Cambridge Road Ellesmere Port Cheshire
Postcode:	CH65 4AQ
Telephone number:	0151 355 1735
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ken Salter

Date of previous inspection: April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average size community primary school moved into a new building in September 2003, provided under a private finance initiative. It is one of a number of local schools in an Education Action Zone (EAZ). There is a 26 place nursery class with 42 children attending on a part-time basis. Numbers are virtually identical to those in the previous inspection with 236 pupils on roll. There are 118 boys and 81 girls in seven single-age classes plus 37 who attend part time in the nursery. Only seven children are from ethnic minority backgrounds and five of these speak English as an additional language for which they have additional support three times each week. The attainment of most children on entry to the school is well below that normally expected. Many children have weak speaking and listening skills.

The number eligible for free school meals, 36 per cent, is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is also above the national average with 29 per cent on the register and the proportion with a statement of their special educational needs is about average. The school provides for all but 22 of these pupils from its own resources. Additional help has been sought from specialists for those who have moderate learning difficulties and those with social, emotional and behavioural problems. The mobility of pupils is a significant factor with 16 pupils joining and 24 leaving the school during term time last year. This amounted to 18 per cent, which is above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25344	Mr J J Peacock	Lead inspector	English
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Special educational needs
			English as an additional language
11368	Mrs K Lee	Lay inspector	
30834	Mrs A Lawson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			Information and communication technology
			Geography
			History
			Religious education
33325	Mrs J Westgarth	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Science
			Music
			Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Parents, pupils and governors are justifiably proud of **this effective school**. The excitement of moving into the new building is still fresh and it has further enhanced the quality of provision, enabling pupils to achieve well. The experienced headteacher has high aspirations and an excellent sense of purpose. Her clear vision ensures the needs of individual pupils are extremely well catered for. An astute chair of governors, fully supportive governing body and skilled staff, who work effectively as a team, give the school a bright future. However, standards in English are still too low at Year 2 and Year 6 and in mathematics and science at Year 6. They are adversely affected by the level of pupil mobility and the higher than average numbers with learning difficulties. Overall, the school is providing good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership and management of the headteacher are effectively moving the school forward. Governors give valuable support.
- There is a strong team spirit amongst staff. The quality of their teaching is consistently good and responsible for the good level of achievement of pupils.
- Standards in English are too low in the school, as are those for mathematics and science in Year 6.
- The many pupils with learning difficulties and the few who speak English as an additional language are supported most effectively and achieve very well.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school and children achieve very well.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted very effectively. The outcome is pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour. All enjoy an excellent, trusting relationship with members of staff.
- Pupils' written work is generally untidy and the organisation of completed work in the infant classes makes it difficult for pupils to gauge their progress.

The school's rate of improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The working conditions afforded by the new building are first class. Governors now meet all legal requirements for religious education and assemblies and have thoroughly addressed all other previous issues. Provision in the Foundation Stage, for example, is now a strength and music provision has improved with the help of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Rigorous procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching has resulted in a significant improvement throughout the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	D	E	C
mathematics	C	D	C	A
science	B	A	C	A

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

Achievement is good, overall. Pupils with learning difficulties or the few who speak English as an additional language achieve very well because of the very good quality of provision for them. Detailed assessment and the careful tracking of pupils progress shows that those who started in the nursery also achieve very well by the time they are in Year 6. An above average changeover of pupils and the well above average number with special educational needs in some year groups results in overall standards being adversely affected and makes comparisons from year to year difficult. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and science. Their overall performance is often in line with the average for all schools and on occasions, better. The school's overall performance in English suffers because of pupils' weak communication skills. The school has introduced some well

thought out strategies to try and improve this aspect. In the current Year 6, over half of the pupils have learning difficulties. All achieve well but overall standards in English and mathematics are well below average and below average in science. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below those expected. In religious education and design and technology, they are in line with those expected throughout the school. In Year 2, standards are below average in English, average in science and above average in mathematics. In ICT, they are in line with those expected. There was insufficient evidence to judge provision in other subjects. Good opportunities are planned for all pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills and computers in other subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well and attain all the early learning goals in each of the six areas of learning by the end of their reception year.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Attendance levels in the last full year were below average and there were five exclusions. Attendance has now risen as a result of school initiatives to improve it. Pupils' behaviour is very good as a rule. All pupils have very good attitudes to learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. In the Foundation Stage, it is very good, with the teachers and teaching assistants working effectively as a team. Teaching and learning are consistently good in the infant and junior classes. The encouragement and engagement of pupils and relationships are particular strengths. A high percentage of teachers demonstrated very good or excellent teaching and it was especially good in reception and Year 4. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. However, teachers do not always insist on neat work from pupils. The method of organising completed work in Year 1 and 2 does not allow pupils to easily see how they can improve. All teachers make good links between the different subject areas. Resources, particularly computers, are used very effectively throughout and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The assessment of pupils' learning is good in the nursery and reception and very good elsewhere. The staff provide pupils with a very good level of care, support and guidance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. Governance is very good. All statutory requirements are met. The highly respected headteacher is determined to make the school even better and key staff support her effectively. The management of special educational needs is very good and the Foundation Stage is very effectively managed. The commitment to equality of opportunity for all and to meeting the needs of individual pupils is excellent. The school contingency fund is too big when compared with that in other primary schools. It is earmarked to maintain staffing when pupil numbers drop and will reduce significantly by the end of next year.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views about the school. There were no areas of concern and nine of the 15 questions had 100 per cent parental agreement. Pupils were equally positive in their questionnaire, completed prior to the inspection. All agreed that they have to work hard and that they had an adult to go to when worried.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards in English throughout and in mathematics and science by Year 6.
- Improve the neatness of all pupils' written work and the presentation of pupils work in the infant classes.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils' level of achievement is good. However, with such a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs in Year 6, overall standards are adversely affected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage because of the very good quality of provision for them.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make very good progress.
- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics in Year 2 and standards are above average.
- Overall standards are well below average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Year 6.
- Good use is made of computers and most pupils achieve the standards expected in ICT. However, there is a dip in Year 6 and standards are below those expected.

Commentary

1 Most children enter the school with well below average levels of attainment. By Year 6, all pupils, including those with special educational needs have made at least good and more often very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. There is an above average turnover of pupils. Only 38 per cent of the current Year 6, for example, started in the nursery. Those pupils who enter the school from other areas and do not benefit from starting in the nursery or reception still make good progress at the school as careful tracking of their attainment levels show. Every parent who responded to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection agreed that staff expect pupils to work hard.

2 Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in mathematics, in line with those expected in science and below average in English. These standards have been attained against a background of significant mobility and with one third of pupils having special educational needs. Teachers, detailed records show all pupils achieve well in English and science and very well in mathematics. The consistently good quality of teaching that pupils receive is a major factor helping them to do well. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language benefit greatly from the very good quality of provision for them and all achieve very well.

3 Pupils' good progress continues in the junior classes. However, over 50 per cent of pupils in the current Year 6 class are on the register for pupils with special educational needs. Overall, standards by Year 6 are well below average in English, mathematics and science. The trend in the school's performance for all core subjects is improving at a rate broadly in line with the national trend. This has been achieved against a background of above average pupil mobility and well above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. It also reflects the consistently good quality of teaching in these classes.

4 The good provision for children in the Foundation Stage ensures that they quickly settle into school and make good progress. All achieve the learning targets set for them by the end of their reception year in all of the six areas of learning. This is a significant achievement as many enter the school experiencing major difficulties with their speech and language. It reflects the quality of provision for them throughout their time in the nursery and reception classes. The very good quality of teaching and caring approach of the conscientious class teachers in the nursery and reception help to quickly establish very good relationships and this gives all the children confidence. Teaching assistants support them very effectively, often teaching groups. Drama is a speciality for one teaching assistant and children responded exceptionally well when in a role play situation,

trying to 'park' their bikes in the supermarket car park and get a ticket from the meter. The level of language promoted in this session was impressive and of great benefit to those who find communication difficult under normal circumstances. All children make particularly good progress right through the Foundation Stage because of the very effective way all staff work as a team, the quality of resources and the good use made of the spacious outdoor areas.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.5 (10.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	11.3 (10.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	13.6 (16.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5 In the 2003 national test results, pupils in Year 2 achieved standards which were well below average in reading and mathematics. In writing, standards were very low, being in the bottom five per cent nationally. There was no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys. In fact, boys were nearer to the performance of boys nationally than the girls. Detailed tracking records show all pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment level. The comparison with similar schools showed their performance was above the average for reading. The school gives credit to the help many parents give at home for this. In writing and mathematics the school's performance was well below the average. No pupils attained at the higher Level 3 in writing. However, the school has records to show that individual pupils' level of achievement was good with all making significant progress. Comparing the performance of last year with the preliminary results for this year is difficult because of the different proportion of lower achieving pupils and the number with special educational needs. Teacher assessments for science in 2003 show pupils' performance was below average for those achieving expected standards and also well below average for those attaining at the higher Level 3.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.1 (25.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (26.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.3 (30.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6 In the national tests for Year 6 in 2003, the school's overall performance compared to all schools nationally in mathematics and science was in line with the average. In English, it was well below average. Girls did much better than the boys in this subject. Compared to similar schools, the standards achieved were well above the average in mathematics and science but in line for English. The weakness in boys writing was a significant factor. School records show that individual pupils achieved well in relation to their prior attainment. The targets for English and mathematics in 2004 were set to reflect the potential of pupils taking the tests. Preliminary results for this year show that school's performance in the national tests for Year 6 are well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. The larger than average number of lower attaining pupils being tested and the disruption caused by a significant number of pupils arriving at or leaving the school are the main reasons. In a verbal reasoning test, for example, 70 per cent of pupils in the current Year 6 were below the average expected. The consistently good quality of teaching is a key factor ensuring that many of these pupils achieve nationally expected levels. The trend in the school's results over time is broadly in line with the national trend for improvement.

7 Standards in ICT were in line with those expected in the previous inspection and these standards have mostly been maintained. Pupils in Year 2 and in most of the junior classes are achieving at the expected level for their age. However, in Year 6, overall standards dip to below

average. This is wholly due to the make-up of this class with its high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Inspectors saw that the many computers were used extensively in most classes, including the nursery and reception. All teachers demonstrate a high level of expertise and make good use of the latest whiteboard technology. Skills are taught well in the ICT suite.

8 In religious education, standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in both Year 2 and Year 6. This is a big improvement from the previous inspection when the subject failed to meet statutory requirements. Pupils are knowledgeable about Christianity and other world faiths and show a good understanding of other cultures as well as their own. Design and technology is a popular subject with pupils as they work practically on a range of challenging topics with a good variety of materials and tools. There was a wealth of evidence available for scrutiny, including digital photographs showing past projects. Year 2 made some very interesting vehicles and Year 6 were busy making a slipper during the inspection. Standards are in line with those expected throughout. There was insufficient evidence for inspectors to make a reliable judgement about standards in art and design, geography, history, music or physical education at either Year 2 or Year 6. In music, the school makes good use of the expertise of the deputy headteacher and a number of specialist music teachers, who have taught some pupils in the junior classes to play instruments.

9 Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by the conscientious teaching assistants, this enables them to take a full part in all lessons. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, for example, the teaching assistant was able to give good support to all lower attaining pupils in a corridor teaching area. Their success in completing calculations correctly on perimeters significantly raised their confidence and self-esteem. The quality of teachers' planning ensures that they have suitably challenging work. As a result, pupils' achievement is very good. Care is taken to incorporate pupils' specific targets for learning in lesson planning. These are predominantly for literacy and behaviour with a few included for numeracy. There are currently no talented or gifted pupils identified on the register for those with special educational needs. Care is taken to ensure that higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are sensitively supported and helped in lessons. Most benefit from specialist help on three occasions each week.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school develops pupils' personal qualities very well. Pupils show very good attitudes to their learning. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is also very good. Attendance rates for the last full year were below the national average. The school is trying hard to promote good attendance and rates have improved so far this year. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good provision for pupils' personal development is having a clear impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and enthusiasm for school have a very positive effect on their learning.
- Pupils behave very well because of the calm orderly atmosphere, which is promoted by all staff.

Commentary

10 The school promotes pupils' personal development very well. Their moral and social education is planned most effectively through the personal, social and health education (PSHCE) programme. All staff act as very good role models and encourage pupils to form very good relationships with each other so pupils are polite and friendly and can work well together in groups. An excellent example was in a dance lesson where Year 5 pupils co-operated closely to make excellent progress in devising sequences based on "The Dream Catcher" poem. Pupils have a good understanding of the needs of others. For instance, pupils commented that they felt that the new school building was much better as it was now accessible to people in wheelchairs. There are

very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. The School Council is confident that their views matter and all pupils work to gain Citizenship Awards for good deeds in and out of school.

11 The school promotes pupils' spiritual development very effectively. School assemblies are very well organised and now fully meet statutory requirements. In one effective assembly, the headteacher used a computer projection to show the different days events in the story of the Creation. The visual impact with added sound effects of birds and appropriate music held pupils' attention very well. All have time to reflect on important messages such as tolerance towards one another. Parents report that their children know a lot about other religions. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to gain a good understanding about different cultures from their own and an appreciation of the way of life in countries such as India.

12 Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that some of the best things in school are “the exciting lessons”. They try very hard in lessons and achieve well due to the good teaching and the praise and encouragement they receive from all staff. They are very keen to answer questions and give their ideas because they know that their teachers value what they have to say.

13 The vast majority of pupils behave very well. This is because pupils respond very well to the high expectations of staff and the excellent relationships between adults and pupils. There is a friendly and caring atmosphere which supports all pupils very well, enabling them to concentrate on their learning and achieve well. Pupils know the “Golden Rules” and regard the consequences of breaking them as very fair. Pupils play very well together in the playground with everyone included in the games. Any bullying or misbehaviour is quickly resolved with pupils confident that they would “tell the nearest adult” if they had a problem.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93.6%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

14 The very good strategies the school has introduced to promote good attendance are resulting in a steady improvement in the attendance rate.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black African
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Chinese

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
163	4	1
2	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Very good care is taken over the welfare of pupils and all are well supported in lessons. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution, supporting all pupils and especially those with special educational needs or the few who speak English as an additional language. There are very good links with other schools through the Education Action Zone partnerships.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. This enables pupils to achieve well. Assessment procedures are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage because of the very good quality of teaching.
- Teachers make good use of the conscientious teaching assistants to support pupils' learning throughout the school.
- The way teachers in the infant classes file pupils finished work hinders observation of progress.
- Teachers do not provide enough emphasis on improving the neatness of pupils written work.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well.
- Teaching is best in reception and Year 4.
- Assessment information is used very well to modify the planning for future work and to track progress from year to year.

Commentary

15 The previous inspection reported that teaching was 'at least satisfactory' and that there were 18 per cent of lessons, which were unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection and this is helping to improve standards. Consistently good teaching was seen in most classes with the highest incidence of very good or excellent teaching being in the reception class and Year 4. However, a very high proportion of teachers demonstrated teaching of a high quality. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Parents, at the meeting prior to the inspection, were keen to emphasise the close and caring relationships between all teachers and pupils. In their opinion, this is a happy school because of this. They recognise the quality of the teaching staff and appreciate their obvious enthusiasm for their work.

16 The overall quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved from satisfactory in the previous inspection to very good currently. Children settle quickly and concentrate well on the interesting and challenging tasks set for them. All achieve well in all areas of their curriculum. All staff work extremely hard to compensate for the difficulties faced by many children who have speech and language problems. It is a credit to them that all children attain the goals expected of them in all areas of their curriculum by the end of their reception year. The accommodation is imaginatively used by staff to provide interesting areas, which stimulate children's interest. All enjoy using the parking bays to park their bikes and trikes when pretending to be at the supermarket car park. The very good range of resources and the outdoor areas are used most effectively for promoting learning in all six areas, which make up the Foundation Stage curriculum.

17 The latest curriculum guidance has been adopted by the school and detailed schemes of work set out clearly the learning for each year group. The detailed curriculum guidance helps teachers' lesson planning and they work closely together to ensure that pupils' learning is a continuous process. In the infant classes, pupils completed work for most subjects is stored in one file. However, as work in different subjects is not separated, it makes it difficult for pupils to see any progression in each subject area. Furthermore, marking comments are not easily accessible in this jumble of papers, so that pupils are not able to see clearly how they can improve their work.

18 Opportunities to use computers to support pupils' learning in all subjects are identified and computers are effectively used in all classes. All staff make good use of the latest technology using the new interactive computer-linked whiteboards and digital camera to enhance pupils learning. All teachers make links between the various national curriculum subjects and provide good opportunities for pupils to use and consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills in many lessons. However, not enough attention is given to the neatness of pupils' finished work. All pupils regularly practice their handwriting but their care over neatness in their handwriting books is not transferred to their work in most lessons.

19 In the best lessons, mostly in reception and Year 4, planning was exceptionally detailed with well thought out tasks which successfully motivated and interested pupils. A good pace and high expectations, coupled with the excellent use of support staff, ensured that pupils' full attention was guaranteed. As a result, learning was very effective. Pupils were so engrossed in solving problems in a mathematics lesson on perimeter, for example, that they did not want to go out to play. Equality of opportunity is a key consideration for all staff and very good quality support or guidance is always on hand for all pupils.

20 Lessons are well organised and teachers make their expectations about behaviour clear. As a result, most pupils are keen to learn. They willingly complete homework assignments, for example. Pupils enjoy a warm and trusting relationship with their teachers and other staff. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils with special educational needs well and their work in lessons is well planned. They ensure that these pupils have equal access to subjects and all activities. Individual work is appropriate to ensure pupils know what they have to do and most is marked with supportive comments. The very good support provided by teaching assistants ensures pupils have every opportunity to learn as effectively and independently as possible. Continual assessment and regular reviews contribute well to individual education plans and targets.

21 Provision for all pupils with learning difficulties is very good and has a major impact on their quality of learning. All achieve very well because of the quality of support that they receive. Pupils who need help are quickly identified and specific targets are set for them. These are communicated to parents so that they can support their children and the learning support teacher re-writes these targets so that individual pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Pupils are often taught in small groups in the small teaching areas in each corridor or in the 'Group Room'. Praise and encouragement help establish very good relationships with pupils. Year 3 pupils concentrate well when replacing nouns with pronouns and Year 1 listen attentively as a teaching assistant uses a glove puppet to give them instructions about writing a shopping list to make sandwiches. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from specialist language support in three short sessions each week. Teachers take care to ensure that they understand instructions and support staff usually sit near enough to help them when they are working.

22 Assessment procedures are very good. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is undertaken regularly and in depth for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. It is just as thorough in all other subjects giving teachers a clear indication about the attainment and progress of individual pupils. Pupils' achievements in their work each term and their performance in the national tests are carefully analysed. Assessment information is used very well to modify the planning for future work and to track progress from year to year. Specific learning targets in English and mathematics are planned for pupils from the results of the detailed assessments in these subjects, ensuring all pupils build progressively on their previous learning. These targets are communicated very well to individual pupils and their parents in order to involve them more and give a better understanding of what needs to be achieved.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (7%)	12 (29%)	18 (43%)	9 (21%)	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and there are good opportunities provided for the enrichment of the curriculum. The accommodation in the new school is very good and pupils, parents and staff are rightly proud of it. The level of resources is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good range of enrichment activities adds significantly to the quality of the curriculum for pupils.
- Involvement in the Education Action Zone (EAZ) is a significant benefit to the school.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum is inclusive allowing all pupils to gain from the learning opportunities offered.
- Pupils benefit from a good range of residential visits and visitors to school.
- The new building is impressive but there are a few shortcomings in the ICT suite.

Commentary

23 The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection and now meets statutory requirements. Drugs and alcohol education and sex and relationships education are covered effectively within the school's curriculum.

24 There is a good programme of activities to enrich pupils' learning before, during and after the school day. The school's many clubs and activities are well attended, and where possible, are open to a wide range of ages. A good example is the popular cheer leading class. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 recently won a competition in this activity. A good programme of visits and visitors gives pupils interesting first hand experiences; for example, during the inspection, pupils from Year 2 visited Chester Zoo. The trip was supported by EAZ funding. Opportunities for pupils to participate in sports and the arts are good. Parents and pupils were very positive about the quality of the opportunities.

25 Pupils still treat their new school building with care and respect. The internal courtyard is an excellent feature with decking, seating and a water fountain trickling over large stones. It provides a restful and calming environment for both pupils and staff to use. However, the accommodation in the ICT suite is cramped by inappropriate furniture and was too warm.¹ Background noise from an extractor fan made it difficult for pupils and teachers to hear one another. Without the fan, the temperature quickly became oppressive. The size of the chairs, some with arms, make it difficult for pupils to share a computer and reduces the space available for groups of pupils.

26 All pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. The deployment of skilled and experienced teaching assistants in every classroom enables all pupils to have their learning needs met. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school provides well for lower attaining pupils through a mixture of work matched to their needs by class teachers and withdrawal for effective work with specialist teaching staff and teaching assistants. High quality individual education plans provide very good support for pupils and are shared and understood by parents and pupils. Individual behaviour education plans support pupils very well to meet the school

¹ Since the inspection,¹ staff have discovered that there are controls to boost the air conditioning in the ICT suite in the cleaners store cupboard. The inspection was carried out during one of the hottest weeks of the year so far.

high expectations. Well-focused support is also provided for pupils learning English as an additional language. As a result, all pupils make good progress.

27 The school has good procedures for preparing pupils for subsequent stages of education. These include careful consideration of the needs of children about to enter the nursery and those about to leave for secondary education.

Care, guidance and support

This is a very caring school, which values all pupils. Pupils receive very good support and guidance, which enable them to make at least good progress. The school involves pupils well in its work and in their own learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships support pupils' learning.
- The school is committed to the care of pupils and supporting their good behaviour and personal development.
- There is very good support for pupils who have special educational needs and who have English as an additional language. This enables them to make very good progress.
- Because of the way class teachers organise and store work, pupils in Years 1 and 2 cannot see clearly how well they are doing in all subjects.

Commentary

28 The excellent relationships between adults and pupils are an essential part of the atmosphere of care and trust. Pupils know that they are valued and cared for by all staff. Staff are sensitive to the needs of all pupils and respond quickly as the welfare of pupils is at the heart of the school's work. Parents are very happy with the school's efforts on behalf of their children. The school encourages pupils to do their best through praising them at every opportunity. Pupils respond very well to the many rewards. In all classes, for example, "Stars of the Week" are chosen by the pupils themselves. The school involves its EAZ partners very well in promoting pupils' personal development, for example, with their efforts to improve attendance, which are beginning to have success.

29 The school provides very well for pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. The individual education plans for each pupil are written in a child friendly way. This means that not only do pupils understand what their target is, but can see for themselves the progress that they are making.

30 In the infant classes, teachers keep all pupils' work, except for English and mathematics, mixed together in one folder for each pupil. This means that pupils cannot see a connection between work that they have done previously in each separate subject and how they can improve and make progress.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school promotes a good partnership with parents. Very good links with the community and other schools benefit pupils' learning and their personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very hard to involve parents in their children's learning.
- The school's links, including those through the Education Action Zone (EAZ), promote pupils' learning very well.
- Parents have very positive views of the school.

Commentary

31 The school is committed to its partnership with parents in order for them to work together to support pupils' learning. It organises a good range of courses in the Learning Centre to improve the skills of parents so that they can help their children at home and in school. Parents receive regular information through the very friendly letters and useful annual reports on their children's progress. These contain a good indication of what pupils can do and share pupils' targets for improvement with parents. It also contacts parents every day, if necessary, in order to improve their children's attendance. The school regularly seeks the views of parents. For example, the anti-bullying policy was sent to parents with the opportunity for them to make comments.

32 The school takes many opportunities to use the community to extend pupils' learning and experience. The EAZ plays an important part in this aspect of the school's work through staff training and the enrichment of the curriculum on offer to the pupils. There are very strong links with other schools in the zone, including a very effective induction programme to support the transfer of pupils to secondary education. The booklet "LEAP – transition from Year 6 to 7, a successful experience" and the session taken by the Education Welfare Officer are very effective in helping Year 6 pupils to have increased confidence in the move from one stage of education to the next. The very good links with industry enrich the curriculum. Pupils spoke about the visitors from Shell UK for the science workshop. There are also many sporting links with other schools and local clubs and many visits to local places of interest, which extend pupils' personal development.

33 Parents feel that the school is meeting the needs of their children very well. From the pre-inspection questionnaires and meeting, parents are very content with all that the school has to offer. Parents regularly work in school to support in class and with pupils' reading, for example. The Parent Teacher Association is active in organising events and providing much appreciated resources for the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are very good. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. Key staff support the headteacher effectively. Governance of the school is very good and management is very effective as a result. All statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has an excellent sense of purpose, clear vision and high aspirations for pupils' academic and personal development. Staff work very well as a team to support her.
- The governors are very committed and totally dedicated to the school and play an active role in supporting its work.
- The concern for the needs of individual pupils is excellent and ensures equality of opportunity so that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life.
- The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.
- The contingency fund is much higher than the norm for a school of this type.
- There are very good systems in place to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's work.

Commentary

34 Since the previous inspection, the school's governance and leadership and management have improved. The headteacher is an outstanding leader and a very good role model for staff and pupils. Governors report that she is in constant motion around the school during the school day! She has been instrumental in creating the very good climate for learning. The results of her hard work and dedication are very evident in the improved quality of teaching and in pupils' academic performance. Senior staff support the headteacher effectively. A real strength of their work is the very effective systems they have established to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. There is very good analysis of data, pupils' progress is carefully tracked and teachers are observed

teaching. Through these rigorous processes, the school gains a clear understanding how well it is doing and what it needs to do to further improve.

35 Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils and staff get on well and most pupils respond positively to the high expectations set by the school's leadership. The school actively involves the pupils and their parents in the decision making process. Parents of pupils with special educational needs, for example, are fully involved in target setting and the review of targets and pupils' views are listened to through the school council. Parents are well informed about all aspects of school life and have much confidence in the headteacher and her staff. At the meeting prior to the inspection, they challenged inspectors to find any fault with their school. The new building, occupied since September 2003, has further enhanced the quality of provision for pupils. The excitement of pupils about their new school is still fresh. Parents were at pains to point out that they had great respect for the work of the headteacher and her staff and were proud to be associated with the school when it was in the old building.

36 There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that all pupils achieve their full potential. This begins in the extremely well managed Foundation Stage. All staff in this department work very effectively as a team to provide children with a worthwhile curriculum and to combat the difficulties many experience with communication. This aspect is one of the most significant barriers to pupils learning and good strategies have been developed by the staff to improve all pupils speaking and listening skills. The few pupils in school who are from a minority ethnic background are supported well and are fully included in all activities. Additional help in learning English ensures that the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language manage to keep up in lessons. "Welcome Books" are available in any language for new pupils. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective. Parents and pupils are fully aware of learning targets and these are reviewed regularly. The co-ordinator often translates learning targets into simpler language so that pupils understand exactly what is expected of them. Staff who are responsible for mathematics, English and science are effective in the work they do. They have been empowered through training and support to lead the school towards raising standards. They have examined strengths and weaknesses in the subjects through lesson observations and analysis of test results. Through action plans they have adopted strategies to address gaps in teaching and learning. As a result, pupils achieve well as they move through the school.

37 The governors play an active part in the life of the school and are fully supportive of the headteacher and the staff. They have a great diversity of skills and challenge the school in what it plans to do to ensure that decisions benefit all users. The chair of governors in particular offers strong support to the headteacher with weekly visits when ideas can be exchanged and any issues discussed. He is very astute and has a very clear understanding of all aspects of the school's work. The management of the finances is good. School spending decisions relate closely to priorities for improvement and benefit all pupils. Governors are careful to check the impact of all spending on the quality of education provided and on pupils' achievements. The move into the new school building has meant that the pressure on the school budget for repairs and refurbishment has been less than usual. As a result, the carry forward figure is in excess of five per cent. This will reduce over the next two years to a more acceptable figure as it is used to maintain staffing levels and compensate for an anticipated drop in pupil numbers.

38 All the key issues raised in the previous inspection have received much attention. As a result, the school has maintained its rate of improvement and is now an effective school. Taking account of the slightly below average costs per pupil, it is providing good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	615,276
Total expenditure	533646
Expenditure per pupil	2,143

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	106,952
Balance carried forward to the next	188,582

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39 The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is a strength of the school. There has been a very good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Children enter school with well below average skills and boys in particular have poor skills in early writing. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Learning support staff are very well trained and make a significant contribution to both the classroom management of activities and the overall achievement of the children. Teachers and learning support staff work very effectively as a team. All children achieve very well and by the time they leave the reception class, the majority of children reach the standards expected of them in all areas of learning. Relationships with parents are very positive and parents feel confident that their children are both very well cared for and benefit from very good quality teaching.

40 The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. A key feature of leadership is the ability to inspire and enthuse all staff to work towards a common purpose. This is done very effectively and all staff work very closely to plan a very good range of learning experiences. The curriculum is planned and organised well, with many opportunities taken to enrich the curriculum through the effective use of visits and visitors. Procedures to assess what children know, understand and can do are good and the co-ordinator has plans to develop this further. Those children with special educational needs are identified early and the school liaises quickly and effectively with parents and outside agencies to ensure that individual needs are met. Provision for special needs children is very good and their achievements are impressive. Those children who are learning English as an additional language are very well monitored and supported by a good range of resources. They learn English rapidly and make new friends quickly. The transition arrangements between the Foundation Stage and Year 1 are good, so children settle quickly into the more formal structure of the infant class.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given good opportunities to make choices and become independent.
- Supportive relationships are established from when children first enter school, so children feel confident and happy.
- All staff have high expectations about behaviour and as a result, children behave very well.

Commentary

41 This area of learning is taught very well and is a clear focus of teaching in the nursery class. As a result, children achieve very well and most are likely to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, activities are thoughtfully planned to give young children the time to work together, either in pairs or as a group and to take turns and share equipment. Very good opportunities are given for children to develop their independence. For example, aprons are placed near to tables where creative activities take place, so children independently put on an apron before working with paint or glue. Children are also expected to clear up after themselves and to make sure tables are tidy for other groups. All staff have high expectations regarding good manners and behaviour and make this clear to the children. As a result, clear boundaries are set, children know what is expected of them and they respond well to class routines. In the reception class, children show the ability to concentrate for extended periods at more focused activities. They are keen and eager to respond to new challenges. All children behave very well. What all staff do very effectively is to form trusting relationships with children and their parents and as a result of this, children are relaxed and happy.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has put in place a wide range of strategies to tackle the weak language skills displayed as children enter school and these are proving very effective.
- New technology is used very effectively to help children develop their listening skills and to teach them basic skills.
- Visits out of school are given high priority to provide opportunities to enrich vocabulary and develop early writing skills.

Commentary

42 The Foundation Stage co-ordinator makes very good use of initial assessment data to highlight key weaknesses in the children's language skills and to put into place very structured strategies to tackle these weaknesses. Very effective use is made of the school's involvement in the EAZ to purchase resources, or to participate in extra professional training. Teaching in this area of learning is very good. Basic language development programmes, many of which use very attractive and tactile toys and puppets, are used extensively and all staff have been trained by a speech and language therapist, so they are now very skilful in using the programmes called 'Sure Start'. Effective liaison with parents and carers ensures that some programmes are also continued at home, thereby increasing their effectiveness. As a result, children's vocabulary increases quickly and they achieve very well. By the end of the reception year, most reach the standards expected of them.

43 Many children have special educational needs related to speech and language difficulties and they are given very good support to help them achieve their potential. For example, in the reception class, teaching staff wear microphones to ensure that all children can hear them clearly. These are very effective and children are able to respond quickly to instructions. Only one child is currently learning English as an additional language and is learning new vocabulary very rapidly because of very effective teaching and the very good use of resources.

44 In the reception class, for two days a week, the class benefits from having two teachers so that basic skills in language are taught very intensively to smaller groups. All ability groups benefit from this arrangement and the scrutiny of work shows that in particular, higher attaining children make very good progress in their early writing skills. For example going from making simple marks in September, to writing short, independent sentences with simple punctuation, in April. Visits out of school are used as often as possible to broaden children's experiences, widen their vocabulary and provide them with exciting things to write about, such as a recent visit to Chester Zoo.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Interactive whiteboards are used to very good effect in the reception class.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall and excellent in some lessons.

Commentary

45 This area of learning is consistently taught very well. During the inspection, there was an example of excellent teaching seen in the reception class. The reception teacher showed a very sensitive awareness to the needs of her class as she encouraged the children to join her in a short "brain gym" exercise. They had been sitting for quite a while, working hard and they were about to move onto another part of the lesson that the teacher knew would be challenging for them. This set

the scene well. The children had fun, moved about, and then sat down, eagerly anticipating the next part of their lesson. The teacher made excellent use of a wide range of resources, including an interactive whiteboard, to teach numbers up to 100. She subtly assessed what the children knew, understood and could already do, to increase the pace of the lesson and move on to more challenging work. Achievement was excellent, as this group of young children were able to look at the whiteboard and identify all the missing numbers in a 100 square. Children were bouncing off the carpet to give her the correct answers!

46 All staff work very effectively as a team to promote learning. Activities are very well organised and resources are used to engage the interest of the children, many of whom have significant special educational needs. As a result, all children achieve very well and are likely to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year. The scrutiny of children's work shows that they are all given individual "Clever Caterpillar" learning targets, which children respond well to. Higher attaining children are able to recognise numbers up to 100 and in one lesson when the reception teacher used a large interactive whiteboard, children were able to identify missing numbers from a hundred grid and explain how they knew this. Children said; "24 is the missing number...23 comes before it and 25 comes after it. 24 is one more than 23 and one less than 25". In the nursery, very good teaching in the recognition and sequencing of numbers up to 10 provides very good groundwork for future work in the reception class. The nursery teacher and classroom assistant use a very good range of resources and activities to engage the interest of the youngest children, whilst at the same time carefully assessing what they know, understand and can do, so the next activity can build on this.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of interesting activities are planned to provide first-hand learning experiences.
- Very effective use is made of visits out of school.

Commentary

47 Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception class. An impressive variety of appropriate and interesting activities are planned to stimulate curiosity, develop new skills and deepen understanding of the world. Early science skills were developed in one lesson in the reception class as children worked outdoors to investigate the simple forces of pushes and pulls by using large wheeled toys and a range of toys brought into the school. Children sorted toys into two categories for "pushes" and "pulls", but discovered that they needed a third category as some toys worked by both pushes and pulls! They were shown how to use a digital camera to record what they found. In design and technology, children in the nursery and reception classes enjoy cooking as they weigh ingredients and cut out biscuit shapes. Children learnt about healthy eating when they made a shopping list, then went on a trip to the supermarket to buy their ingredients before making sandwiches to share with others. Children use computers to help them find new words when they are writing, or they use the interactive whiteboard to show the teacher what they know and understand.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the nursery, children are given daily activities to develop their fine motor skills and to give them a wide experience of using different tools and media.

- The curriculum is very well planned to ensure that older children in the reception extend their skills and deepen their knowledge by looking at the work of famous artists.

Commentary

48 The quality of teaching is very good and teachers and learning support staff work effectively together to provide a wide range of learning experiences. As a result, children achieve very well in their ability to use a range of media and to develop specific skills, such as using watercolours. Most children are likely to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, children are taught new skills thoroughly as they work in small groups. In one lesson, children enjoyed painting scales, using watercolours, on their "Rainbow Fish", then learnt how to use rollers and thick, oil-based paints to make a background for their display. Older children in the reception have their skills extended and their knowledge deepened as they explore the work of famous artists, such as Paul Klee and Georges Seurat. Music resources are of very good quality and enable children to explore sounds.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision is made for children with special educational needs and this enables them to achieve well in their development of skills.
- The school's outdoor accommodation is used effectively to promote the development of more adventurous activities.

Commentary

49 The quality of teaching is very good, with teachers making good use of the school's accommodation and very good range of resources. As a result, all children achieve very well and most are likely to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year. In an observed lesson in the hall with nursery children, the learning support assistant gave very effective support to those children with special educational needs. This meant that all children were fully included and could begin to tackle some complex skills, such as walking backwards whilst looking over their shoulder! Activities are very well planned to make the best use of the outdoor accommodation and the very good range of large wheeled toys.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning of English is a strength within the school. This leads to good achievement of pupils in all classes.
- Overall standards are below average in Year 2 and well below average in Year 6 although achievement is good from when pupils enter.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve very well in literacy because of the quality of teaching.
- The school has a very effective system of monitoring and tracking pupils' achievement.
- The accommodation is excellent and resources are very good for all aspects of English.
- Literacy skills are used well in other subject areas.
- Pupils' handwriting in many classes is untidy and this affects the neatness of their work. Year 5 is the exception and provides a model of good practice.

Commentary

50 On entry into the nursery, children's attainment is well below the standards that would be expected nationally for children of a similar age and many experience difficulty with their speech and language. Children achieve very well in all areas of literacy because of the very good quality of the teaching and learning experiences that they receive. The many children who experience difficulties with speaking and communicating are quickly identified and the school is developing a good range of strategies to help them. Lessons are delivered with good pace and high levels of interest are maintained. Children's progress is closely monitored and individual educational plans are quickly established for them. Teachers are supported very well by the conscientious learning support assistants, who provided valuable support to individual children in the lessons observed. This overall support, linked to the opportunities provided, results in very good progress in all areas of learning.

51 Pupils continue to achieve well in the infant classes. However, with one third of pupils in each class with special educational needs, overall standards by the end of Year 2 are below average. In the current Year 6 class, over half of all pupils are on the special educational needs register. Overall standards here are well below average. The preliminary results from the national tests for 11 year-olds reflect this with 43 per cent achieving the expected level or higher and only 20 per cent attaining the higher Level 5. The above average movement of pupils in and out of the school is having a detrimental effect on overall standards. Detailed tracking shows that the level of achievement is rather better for those pupils who entered in the nursery and remained at the school.

52 Speaking and listening skills are developed through a range of strategies. These include 'hot-seating', when children are interviewed by their classmates and having pupils review what they have achieved in lessons. This technique was used to excellent effect in a Year 1 lesson, when children were asked to predict the content of stories from the pictures on the cover. Question and answer sessions in all classes are lively, with pupils making significant contributions. This was partially due to the quality of questioning by the teachers. By Year 6, most pupils have reached a satisfactory level in speaking and listening, with the most able developing into confident communicators. In the lesson on explanatory texts, for example, pupils researched information about Mount Everest, how magnets work and the life cycle of a caterpillar. Good links were made with science and geography. Groups confidently relayed their finding to the rest of the class.

53 Reading standards are improving rapidly thanks in part to parental help at home. The preliminary results in the national tests show eight out of ten pupils achieving the expected level but only 14 per cent attained the higher Level 3. Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to read for a variety of purposes. In a number of lessons observed, guided text was read, with the

teacher supporting a small reading group. Reference books were in evidence, particularly amongst the boys, who had brought them from the school library.

54 Pupils read with varying degrees of confidence. They used a number of phonic-based, word-attack skills to address an unfamiliar word. The younger children take their books home. However, some older pupils said that they often forgot and did not read at home. Reading is monitored and informs class records of individual pupils' achievements. A number of entries within the reading diaries confirmed a range of differing levels of support that children had received from home. Some of the younger children in Year 2 said that they visited the local library with a parent. However, none of the younger pupils could suggest a favourite author and some said that they had few books at home. By Year 6, the most able readers can read with expression and feeling. They can describe a favourite story in detail, discussing plot and the characters. The school library has a very good range of books. All pupils have good access and confidently use it for research, successfully developing their skills as independent learners.

55 Pupils achieve well in writing during their time in the school. Pupils start in the infants with the development of simple sentences that build into more complex ones. Grammar and punctuation are taught systematically and well on a regular basis during the literacy hour. There was evidence that, by Year 6, children had experience of writing poetry, imaginative stories and factual accounts. Handwriting and the improvement of presentation are practised regularly in both infant and junior classrooms. However, pupils written work is often untidy and the neatness shown in most pupils handwriting books is not transferred into their other books. The exception is in Year 5 where most work produced by pupils of all ability levels was neat and well presented. The neatness of pupils written work in this class is a model of good practice for all other classes.

56 The quality of the teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is good in literacy. Lessons are well organised and meet the needs of the ability range that exists within each class. All the pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported by appropriate work. In addition, the high standards and skills of the classroom assistants make a significant contribution to these children's individual needs, with staff developing positive working relationships with the children.

57 Subject co-ordination is good. There have been a number of observations of teachers teaching literacy and the co-ordinator has, on occasions given demonstration lessons. The procedures for assessing and tracking of pupils' progress are very good. As a result, teachers have a clear understanding of the ability of individual pupils and they are able to plan work which closely matches pupils' ability levels. A detailed policy statement and recently revised scheme of work effectively guides all teachers.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58 Pupils have many opportunities to use their literacy skills when studying other subjects of the curriculum. In subjects such as history, religious education, science and geography good opportunities are planned to provide pupils with the chance to use their skills in writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good, ensuring all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- The good curriculum provided impacts well on pupils' learning.
- Support for pupils with special educational need is very good.
- Standards are well below average at the end of Year 6.

Commentary

59 Consistently good teaching lifts pupils' attainment to above average by the end of Year 1 and progress made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs is very good from the well below average starting point when pupils enter school. This represents a very good level of achievement. Standards in Year 6 are well below average. Good, focused teaching tries to overcome the many difficulties pupils face, including the impact of poor English and high pupil mobility. Pupils with special educational needs benefit greatly from the very good provision for them.

60 Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well and track their progress in marking. This is usually very helpful and most marking tells pupils what they have achieved and what they must do to improve. However, pupils' presentation of their work is often untidy and this is not dealt with effectively by most teachers.

61 Teachers have good subject knowledge. They are skilful at questioning and encourage pupils to explain different strategies. This promotes good mathematical thinking. The positive support pupils receive from teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils to achieve well and make the best progress they can.

62 In one excellent observed lesson, teaching was stimulating, enthusiastic and consistently challenging as pupils are asked to explain their methods and answers, helping more hesitant pupils understanding of perimeter. The teaching assistant reinforced and supported learning very effectively. Pupil motivation was high throughout the lesson as pupils were caught up in the teacher's enthusiastic approach.

Example of outstanding practice

Year 4 mixed ability whole class group.

An excellent lesson in which a leading mathematics teacher successfully challenges pupils to calculate the perimeter of different shapes and work out missing dimensions when the perimeter was given but not all measurements of the mathematical shape

Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and the new computer linked whiteboard used to display various rectangles of different size and colour. Pupils are shown the lazy way to calculate perimeters by 'walking the dog around the shape'. This is not good enough for Year 4 who are assured by the teacher that they are tackling Year 5 work. 'Mathematicians calculate' and pupils are challenged to devise the formula for calculating the perimeter of regular rectangles. The pace of the lesson is quick and the teacher constantly praises individual pupils, raising their self-esteem. Pupils are expected to explain their answers and this helps the understanding of the less confident class members.

All enjoy trying to find the 'secret' measurement. Noise levels are low as the 26 boys and 6 girls in the class, over half of whom have special educational needs, concentrate on finding the missing dimensions. When break time arrives, most want to remain in the class to solve some more problems. The final challenge is to use the formula they have devised to work out perimeters or missing measurements in their head. Most cannot wait to tell Year 5 that they have been doing their work!

63 As a leading mathematics teacher, the subject leader has a very good grasp of the strengths and areas for development in mathematics. There has been an impressive analysis of standards and this helps to set priorities for development as well as to highlight areas of success. All areas for development raised in the previous report have been successfully addressed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64 The range of work that pupils are given in each successive year group cover the National Curriculum well, and teachers are good at forging links between different areas of the curriculum. The use of mathematical skills is evident in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' level of achievement is good, due in the main to purposeful teaching and the skilled support given by teaching assistants.
- There is good emphasis on the use of specific technical vocabulary.
- Proper emphasis is placed on investigative work and the skills of scientific enquiry which are supported by local industry.
- Good use is made of ICT to support science.
- All pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed.

Commentary

65 Overall standards in the current Year 2 are in line with those expected and all pupils achieve well. Although the inspection confirmed that overall standards remain below the national average in Year 6, improvements continue to be made. Detailed tracking shows that individual pupils achieve well in science throughout the junior classes. In the preliminary results in the 2004 national tests 93 per cent of pupils achieved expected levels with about a quarter attaining at the higher Level 5, this is a remarkable achievement for this year group. Over half the pupils are on the register for pupils with special educational needs. The school has worked hard to enable its pupils to develop their investigative skills and understand more complex scientific concepts. An established science club is very popular, and provides pupils with first hand experiences to investigate and discuss.

66 Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that teaching caters effectively for the range of attainment within each class. The needs of pupils with special educational need and those with English as a second language are met well. Progress is assessed regularly and questions posed for improved performance.

67 Overall, teaching is good and seeks to develop pupils' natural enquiry, presenting lessons and activities in ways which are interesting to pupils. Good teaching is built on good knowledge of the subject and good planning that challenges pupils in their learning. Pupils in one lesson had a clear understanding of the conditions governing a fair test. 'We can't change it all at once it wouldn't be fair, we need to change one of them.'

68 Teachers encourage pupils to discuss their work, to work well collaboratively, to make careful observations and to record their findings. ICT, in the form of interactive whiteboards in each classroom, is used effectively as a teaching tool in science, adding to the interest and understanding of pupils. For example video clips of parachutes falling demonstrated the effect of air resistance. Teaching and learning through all years are developed through practical activities and investigations. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in lessons by helping pupils develop a clearer understanding of scientific ideas and methods.

69 The subject leader has a very clear understanding of how pupils achieve in literacy and numeracy and how this impacts on pupils' access to the science curriculum. Targets for pupil achievement are set in both key stages, with clear indication in marking when a target has been achieved. Assessment of science has been reviewed and the outcome of assessment informs teachers planning. The strategic plan for the subject identifies future developments. Analysis of end of key stage assessments shows a very clear understanding of where strengths are and where the school should focus to improve standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is being led and managed well and this is having a positive effect on staff training in the new technology.
- Pupils are learning new skills quickly and as a result, all are now achieving well.
- Problems with the accommodation in the ICT suite are affecting the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

70 Since moving into the new school, with its wealth of new ICT, the subject leader has had to work hard to up-date subject guidance, learn new skills herself and then train all staff in how to use the new resources. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in the quality of resources, which are much improved. The real challenge to the subject leader is to ensure all staff now make best use of what are costly resources and to appreciate the power of the new technology as a day to day teaching tool. This will take time. The new software available to the staff is very good, but all staff now need time to become familiar with the new resources.

71 The standards reached by pupils by Year 2 are in line with those typically found. Standards are not as high at Year 6, being below national expectations. They are not as high as those found at the previous inspection. However, expectations in the subject have moved on and pupils of all ages are now learning new skills quickly and as a consequence, they are achieving well. For example, a good lesson in a Year 4 class, which has a very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, enabled all pupils to quickly develop and extend their understanding of how to use a database. These pupils are currently reaching standards that are above expectations for this age group, which is very impressive. This is a direct result of the good quality of teaching all pupils receive in the school and is also a consequence of the very good resources now available.

72 Whilst the school's new technology resources are very impressive, there are some problems with the accommodation available in the ICT suite. The suite was built to accommodate 30 pupils but some classes are larger than this. For example, in the lesson observed in Year 4, the class had to be split up, with one group working with a teaching assistant in the classroom, whilst another group worked with the teacher in the suite. This worked well and the lesson was successful, but each class does not have a teaching assistant available to them. In some lessons, pupils are squashed together as they sit on chairs that are too big. Some pupils are unable to reach the keyboards and become frustrated. The suite becomes hot and the ventilator fan is very noisy, which means that there are many missed opportunities for pupils to learn new skills, either because they are unable to hear their teacher, or other pupils contributions to the lesson. The quality of teaching and learning is often marred because of these issues.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73 Interactive whiteboards are in every classroom, apart from the Nursery, and are used very effectively to teach new skills. Pupils are quickly learning the power of new technology to expand their knowledge and skills and in discussions, are keen to point out how much they enjoy this aspect of their lessons. The scrutiny of work in all subjects however show that there are few examples of pupils using information and communication skills to support learning in all subjects, apart from in literacy, where there are frequent opportunities. Currently, the planning for each subject does not yet highlight sufficient opportunities to use ICT to support learning.

74 Of real benefit to those pupils who have special educational needs is the use of microphones, which are used by all teachers in all lessons. This is very effective and is of real benefit to all those children, particularly younger ones, who have weak vocabulary skills due in part to hearing impairment.

HUMANITIES

75 In humanities, work was sampled in history and geography, with only one lesson seen in each subject. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. The sampling of pupils' work throughout the school however indicates that pupils benefit from a curriculum enriched by visits to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

76 In **geography**, teachers make effective use of the locality to teach the geographical skills of map reading and conducting traffic surveys. In Year 5, for example, pupils wrote up their accounts of a traffic survey, noting relevant issues relating to traffic hazards for pedestrians. They considered the impact of pollution to local residents caused by the noise and fumes of traffic. Younger pupils in the infants used maps of Great Britain to locate and name the seaside town that was nearest to them and learnt that their home is located on the Wirral Peninsula.

77 In **history**, a very good lesson in Year 4 on life in Tudor England enabled all pupils to develop their understanding of the significant political events related to the dynastic marriages of Henry VIII. The teacher's very effective use of new technology, using the interactive whiteboard, developed pupils' understanding of chronology as they looked at a Tudor street scene and "deleted" those things that were chronologically incorrect, such as a penny-farthing bicycle.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is led and managed well by a co-ordinator who has good subject knowledge and is able to give good guidance to all staff.
- Visits and visitors are used well to provide pupils with first-hand learning experiences.
- Teachers do not organise the work of pupils well in Years 1 and 2, which does not give the subject the status it merits.

Commentary

78 The subject co-ordinator has specialist subject knowledge of Judaism and this has meant that teachers and pupils have deepened their knowledge and understanding of the Jewish faith. The co-ordinator has ensured that all the key issues for improvement from the previous inspection have been rigorously tackled. As a result, the school now fully meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and teaching is at least satisfactory and often better, as staff have received training to improve their subject knowledge. As a consequence, all pupils reach the standards required of them and they achieve well in their ability to reflect on what they have learnt.

79 The school makes effective use of visits and visitors to provide all pupils with new experiences and this is very necessary to broaden pupils' general knowledge. For example, many pupils have little knowledge of Christianity in their day-to-day lives and so find it hard to make comparisons between the Christian and Jewish Sabbath. When it is not possible to make visits to different places of worship, teachers make effective use of resources to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Some use is made of ICT to support learning, but opportunities are missed because teacher's planning does not always make reference to how ICT can be included. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with clear strengths in the opportunities given to pupils to reflect on what they have learnt. Consequently, the impact on pupils' personal, spiritual, social and emotional development is good. Pupils with special educational needs, or those who are learning English as an additional language, are given good support to ensure their full inclusion.

80 The scrutiny of pupils' work throughout the school shows that there are disadvantages in the way teachers organise pupils' work in Years 1 and 2. Pupils work on pieces of paper, which are then kept in folders mixed up with work in other subjects. This has the effect of not giving the subject the status it merits and also means that pupils are not able to see how their work develops

over time, or indeed take note of the teacher's marking in order to improve the quality of what they do.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

81 No lessons were seen in art and design and insufficient in music or physical education to make firm overall judgements about the quality of provision in those subjects. Evidence was gathered from the few lessons observed, from talking to pupils and from examining teachers' planning and pupils' completed work.

82 It is evident from teachers' planning and the attractive displays around the school that **art and design** has a high profile. In the previous inspection, standards were judged to be in line with those expected at Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. No lessons were seen so it was not possible to judge overall standards. However, the work displayed was typical of that seen in most schools. Pupils say they enjoy the subject and are keen to point out their finished work in class displays.

83 All pupils are given a broad range of activities to enable them to experience different media and techniques that reflect the school's scheme of work and national guidance. The range and quality of resources for pupils is very good and they are used well in a wide range of contexts. Teachers often plan opportunities for pupils to use their skills in art and design as part of their work in other lessons. Pupils in Year 1, for example, record in pictures their trip to the Boat Museum in history and in geography, Year 2 pupils create postcards following their trip to the seaside at Thurstaston.

84 Year 4 show pride in their Aboriginal 'Dream maps' with their colourful arcs, circles and dots and Year 3 artwork links effectively to their topics on 'Romans' and 'the Celts'. In Years 5 and 6, pupils develop their skills and techniques and their drawings become more detailed and complex when adding designs to their Aztec masks, designing book covers or copying the work of famous artists. They produce individual work in the style of Van Gogh and together produce large murals in the style of Kadinsky.

85 In **music**, the issues identified in the previous inspection have been resolved. Pupils have more opportunities to play instruments and many chances to listen to and appreciate music. The scheme of work has been revised and is now firmly based on the latest national guidance. In the lesson observed with Year 2, pupils used instruments effectively to match the sound of rain or running water and to accompany singing. Year 4 pupils began to recognise and use musical notation, adding instruments to a simple chant. Teaching in this lesson was very good, reflecting the teachers excellent subject knowledge.

86 The subject leader, who has a particular expertise in music, has successfully raised teacher expertise with the introduction of the new scheme of work. Lessons are carefully planned. Resources are very comprehensive, covering a range of multi-cultural instruments. There is a well-focused assessment programme, which clearly identifies pupils' achievement and any who may have a particular talent in music. In the past, some have gone on to take singing lessons and perform in shows and the county choir. There are singing rehearsals each week for each key stage where pupils are given opportunities to play instruments. Regular opportunities to listen to music are built into the curriculum.

87 Regular workshops, visits from bands and EAZ funding have impacted on pupil experiences. Teachers' confidence in teaching music has improved as a result of in-service training with a specialist music teacher. This has resulted in higher standards being attained by pupils. In a recent audit on the impact of additional help provided for schools in the EAZ, for example, pupils skills in music were highly commended.

88 Local businesses have sponsored a visit to the Liverpool Philharmonic orchestra. Pupils responded with delight and awe at the experience. The school choir is involved with the local community, singing at the local retirement home and the local hospice.

89 In **physical education**, only one lesson was seen. Planning is closely based on National guidance and National Curriculum requirements are met. Provision for swimming is good with all pupils in the junior classes having four terms of swimming tuition.

Example of outstanding practice

Outstanding practice was seen in a Year 5 lesson using poetry as the basis for a dance lesson. The quality of teaching was excellent.

An enthusiastic approach, clear instructions and good discipline ensured that pupils worked together extremely well. They willingly collaborated with one another, working very hard throughout the lesson with obvious enjoyment. The class teacher set the mood and focused pupils on lesson objectives extremely well before leaving the classroom to go to the main hall for the lesson. Using the language of the poem, 'Calmly', pupils described and understood how to match their movements to the words of the poem. A very good lesson warm up using circular movements, swinging arms, stretching the whole body gave pupils a very good opportunity to practise movements required in their dance session. Very good guidance from the class teacher enabled pupils to make body movements at different levels, stretching and crouching, improving their performance as a result.

The class teacher reinforced the objectives of the lessons whilst circulating between groups so that most groups extended their sequences to include, for example, a period of stillness. Excellent use of pupils to demonstrate enthral other pupils who with the class teacher's excellent guidance watch very carefully the different elements and parts of the poem so that during the next opportunity to dance, the whole class improved their dance movement. The class teacher's excellent discussion and questioning brought out ideas for the dance. When pupils suggest 'holding hands in a circle to make a cloud of goodness' the class teacher asked what they know about clouds (full of drops of water) the pupils extend their thinking in different ways to make a cloud. The class teacher's expertise and guidance leads all pupils to make excellent achievement in a very difficult concept.

90 The physical education curriculum is enriched by support from the local education authority's School Sports Co-ordinator who comes to work alongside class teachers and assisted the school to achieve the Active Mark. Of pupils who have taken part in a wide range of after school clubs, several have gone on to join local clubs, for example, following the coaching in Tag rugby, a pupil joined the local rugby club and after Athletics coaching another pupil joined the local Athletics club. The physical education subject leader has a very good grasp of the subject and has received a wide range of training as part of the School sports co-ordinator programme.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in Year 2 and Year 6 is good.
- Effective links are made with other subjects.
- Resources are very good.
- Pupils take pride in their work.

Commentary

91 The level of improvement since the previous inspection has been good. This reflects the competent way the subject is led and managed. Teacher's benefit from clear subject guidelines and satisfactory procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of teaching. Assessment procedures have improved significantly and are now good, showing pupils' progress clearly. All pupils, including those with special educational needs take pride in their work and achieve well. Overall standards have been maintained and are in line with those expected throughout the school. This is an achievement in view of the significant level of pupil mobility and higher than average numbers of pupils with special educational needs in some classes.

92 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are carefully planned using national guidelines and topics have been devised to ensure that skills are taught in a systematic

way so that pupils have opportunities to develop their ideas through investigation and making. Pupils say they enjoy design and technology and challenging tasks range from making biscuits or designing interesting sandwiches using healthy ingredients to making wooden photograph frames and taking apart torches so that they can label the different parts. Good links were made with science as pupils learnt about light, circuits and switches, pupils writing skills are employed in labelling and writing accounts of what they did. Geography and science knowledge was needed by Year 1 pupils as they sorted fruit and vegetables and cut samples in half to observe what they were like inside. Pupils did well to locate the countries of origin for each fruit on a map of the world. All pupils learn how to use handsaws, drills and strong glue safely. They design model houses, slippers and vehicles before making, decorating and evaluating them. Good opportunities are provided for them to discuss their work and evaluate what they have made, effectively promoting their speaking and listening skills. Literacy skills were further enhanced as pupils in Year 2 drew puppets and labelled the various parts.

93 Pupils talk confidently about their work and show an awareness of properties of different materials. In a good lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils sewed fabric together to make a slipper. They learnt how to pin a template to fabric and then cut it out carefully. Pupils are well supported by teaching assistants and parent volunteers. Good use is made of computers and digital cameras; for example, Year 4 recorded their visit to a water mill in photographs and Year 2 drew puppet designs on their computer.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

94 The school is successful in promoting pupils' personal and social skills and their awareness of citizenship. This is achieved through good links with the community and initiatives such as the school's council and playground friends. Through this, pupils learn to take on responsibility and play their part in the day-to-day organisation of the school. Clear policies exist for the promotion of pupils' awareness about racial equality, drugs and for their sex education and relationships.

95 In lessons set aside for this subject, pupils are given opportunities to discuss their thoughts and feelings about anything that concerns them. The school is good at teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe and well; for example, all are taught about the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle.

96 School assemblies are well planned and provide pupils with time to reflect on a range of issues such as tolerance for other people. One lesson seen followed up an assembly on the similarities and differences of people. Pupils remembered seeing the different coloured Smarties shaken up in water to remove the outer colour and this helped them to understand the message that, 'we may look different on the outside but we are the same inside'.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).