

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHTON HAYES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chester

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111109

Headteacher: Mr R Ford

Lead inspector: Mrs J E Platt

Dates of inspection: 15 – 17 November 2004

Inspection number: 266331

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 149

School address: Church Road
Ashton Hayes
Chester
Cheshire
Postcode: CH3 8AB

Telephone number: 01829 751418
Fax number: 01829 752336

Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mrs P Tilley
governors:

Date of previous inspection: 23 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ashton Hayes Primary school is a smaller than average village school providing education for 149 boys and girls. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year because of the small number of pupils involved but overall is above average. The school serves an area which is socially and economically advantaged. A very low number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils need support because English is not their first spoken language. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well below the national average. Similarly, the number of pupils with special educational needs is well below average. Difficulties are mainly linked to speech and communication. The school is involved in a network learning project which focuses on extending pupils' personal and social skills. In 2004, the school achieved the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark which is awarded to those schools that have provided clear evidence that they have improved standards in literacy and numeracy.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Lead inspector	English Music Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language
9399	Mr R Watts	Lay inspector	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
29261	Mrs P Ward	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

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

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Ashton Hayes Primary School has many strengths and provides a **good quality of education**. The recently appointed headteacher provides good leadership and has already gained the respect of those involved with the school. Teaching and learning are good. Consequently, all round achievement is good and standards are high. Pupils are a delight to be with and this is a happy and busy school. Value for money is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and in Year 6 standards are well above average in these subjects;
- pupils make satisfactory progress in information and communication technology (ICT) but resources and the amount of time allocated to teaching ICT skills are insufficient to enable pupils to make better progress;
- pupils with special educational needs play a full part in school life and make good progress;
- leadership and management from subject leaders are good but management responsibilities are not evenly distributed between staff and they have insufficient time to develop their roles;
- the school carefully evaluates its performance but the plan to show how the school intends to tackle identified concerns is overlong and does not make it easy to identify the school's priorities;
- assessment procedures are satisfactory overall with good systems in place in English and mathematics. The school uses assessment information well to track pupils' progress although this is not always shared with pupils so that they have clear targets for improvement;
- pupils experience a rich variety of activities that make learning fun. The emphasis on extending pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong;
- attendance is excellent.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. A contributory factor affecting the pace of change has been the appointment of two headteachers in close succession and this has hampered the attention given to the concerns raised in the previous inspection. The school's development plan continues to need refining to focus on the school's most significant priorities. Although resources for ICT have improved, the quantity and pace of change have been insufficient to ensure the school keeps pace with developments in the subject. The school has given more attention to the needs of the higher attaining pupils and this has led to a good improvement in standards over the last two years. Outdoor play provision for the under fives is much better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	A	A*	A*

Mathematics	A	B	A	B
Science	A	D	A	B

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average;*

E - well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Overall achievement is **good**.

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage¹ and children exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception class in their language and communication and mathematical skills and in their personal development. The trend in the results of national tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 has been below the national trend over the last five years. Although with small schools this is often related to the differing ability of cohorts it is also linked to the higher attaining pupils who have not always been making enough progress especially in mathematics and science. The school has remedied this weakness with more focus on investigation, application of skills and more challenging teaching which enables these pupils to make good progress. As a result, standards in Year 2 are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics and in Year 6 standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This improvement can clearly be seen in the school's most recent test results. It is notable that in English the results were in the top five per cent in the country. Achievement is good in the infants and the juniors not only in the subjects which are assessed by national tests but across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets set for them. Several of these pupils achieve very well during their time in school and reach the level expected for their age.

Pupils' personal development is **very good**. Behaviour and relationships are very good. Pupils work hard in lessons and have very good attitudes to learning. Attendance is excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is **very good** and their cultural development is **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** with some very good teaching seen in the mixed age Year 1 and 2 class and the Year 5 and 6 class. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good because teachers provide practical activities to consolidate learning throughout the day. In the infant and junior classes, teachers have a secure knowledge of subjects they teach and ask probing questions which extend pupils' ability to think for themselves. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and lessons run smoothly. A positive feature of many lessons is the encouragement for pupils to do their best and pupils respond by working hard. Support staff have a clear understanding of their roles and are especially effective when supporting pupils with special educational needs so that they can play a full part in lessons. Assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in other subjects. The use of assessment information varies between classes with most tasks well matched to the ability of the pupils although this is not always the case. Targets are set for pupils but these are not always clear or followed up in lessons and so pupils are unsure about the next steps they need to take to improve. The curriculum is good and enhanced by a very good range of enrichment activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Resources are satisfactory except in ICT where they are inadequate and this restricts pupils' achievement. Provision for pupils' welfare and safety are satisfactory. Staff have a genuine concern for their pupils who are secure in the knowledge that staff will help them if the need arises. Good links with schools and the community enable pupils and staff to extend further their skills.

¹ The Foundation Stage starts when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **good**. The new headteacher provides good leadership. He has accurately identified areas for improvement and with the support of staff has sensitively introduced changes to simplify assessment in the school and gain a clearer picture of future priorities. Subject leaders manage their subjects effectively although some staff carry a heavy load of responsibilities without enough time to develop their monitoring roles. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and have a good understanding of the school but they have not fully challenged the school to ensure the concerns raised in the previous inspection have been totally resolved. The effectiveness of management is good and has led to improved standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the education provided for their children. Pupils have a very good opinion of the school and consider it a friendly and pleasant place to be.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- increase resources for ICT and make more use of these in other subjects;
- make better use of assessment information;
- distribute management responsibilities more equitably and provide staff with more time to fulfill them;
- make priorities clearer in the school's improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall achievement is good and standards in Year 6 are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Higher attaining pupils are making good progress and reach high standards throughout the school.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress especially in their basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets set for them.
- Overall progress in ICT is satisfactory but is hampered by a lack of resources and time for pupils to improve their skills.
- Achievement is widespread and not just in the subjects assessed by national tests.

Commentary

1. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year because of the small size of the cohort but overall many enter school with above average skills. Children in the reception class are taught with Year 1 pupils and the school plans carefully to meet their needs. Staff are especially effective in teaching literacy and numeracy and children quickly make the link between letters and sounds and learn to count. Effective teaching extends these basic skills so children exceed the early learning goals² and apply their skills in early reading, writing and problem solving activities. Satisfactory progress is made in children's knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development and pupils reach the early learning goal. A significant emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills establishes good learning habits as pupils learn to listen and follow school routines.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores³ in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (18.1)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.7 (16.5)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.6 (17.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

² Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

³ The average point score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades by all of their pupils with the grades attained by all pupils in another similar school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The score is obtained from the National Curriculum level attained by pupils in the national assessments. For example, in mathematics pupils are awarded 9 points for level 1, 15 points for a level 2 and 21 points for level 3. The average score is calculated by adding up all of the points and then dividing by the number of pupils who were tested.

2. As is often the case with a small school the results of national tests show a fluctuating pattern year on year and the overall trend in results over the last five years has been below the national trend. Results of tests in 2004 showed a dip in standards although they remained above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools standards were average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. This suggests some pupils were not making the expected progress. A closer

look at the results identifies a low number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age especially in reading and mathematics. The achievement of the higher attaining pupils was a focus for the inspection. The school's close analysis of the test results has identified this apparent underachievement and better assessment procedures are now in place to identify the higher attaining pupils more clearly so that they are now being more challenged. Consequently, in Year 2 more pupils are now working at above average levels. Overall achievement is good and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. In mathematics and science the school has increased the focus on investigation and application of skills and this has also played a part in the improved standards. Achievement in science is good and standards are above average. In 2004 the school was awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark which recognises improvement in basic literacy and numeracy skills.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.8 (29.1)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	29.3 (28.1)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.7 (28.1)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. As in the infants the trend in results in Year 6 has been below the national trend. The reason for this has been the low number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age in mathematics and science. Standards in English have been consistently high. Test results rose in 2004 in mathematics and science because more pupils achieved above average levels. Compared with all schools results were well above the national average and in English were in the top five per cent in the country. When compared with similar schools, results were also well above average in English and above average in science and mathematics. The reasons for this improvement are the same as in the infants. The emphasis on investigation and application of skills is having more effect on standards in the juniors as pupils are older and more mature in their approach to working independently. These improvements continue to influence standards and, along with the very challenging teaching in Year 6, more than a half of the pupils are working at high levels. As a result, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and this represents good achievement.
4. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively by teachers and support staff. When required, specialist help provides one to one support which enables pupils to overcome their difficulties. Individual educational plans are detailed and when one target is met another is set and this enables these pupils to make good progress to meet the targets set for them. Several pupils make very good progress and are removed from the school's register of special educational needs and reach the level expected for their age. Academically gifted pupils extend their skills through involvement in literacy, mathematics and science projects organised by the local secondary school. Although the achievement of boys and girls varies from year to year there is no significant difference between their achievements.
5. A weakness identified in the previous inspection was the provision for ICT. The newly appointed headteacher recognises more needs to be done and provision for ICT was identified by the inspection team and the school as an aspect needing close scrutiny.

Although the school has improved resources the rate of improvement has not been fast enough and the school still lags behind other schools. Many pupils practise at home the skills taught in their fortnightly lessons and as a result overall progress is satisfactory. Standards are average in Years 2 and 6 although there are gaps in pupils' knowledge linked to a lack of resources and insufficient use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.

6. Provision for religious education is good. Lessons seen were interesting and pupils reach the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and exceed them in Year 6.
7. In response to a rich curriculum, pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Although it was not possible to make overall judgements on standards because time was not available to see all lessons it is very clear from pupils' work and the imaginative displays that standards are high in other subjects especially art and design, design and technology, physical education and history.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **excellent** and punctuality is good. Pupils have **very good** attitudes towards their school and behave **very well**. The school promotes their personal development, including spiritual moral and social development, **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils, particularly the older ones, contribute with enthusiasm and maturity to their own learning; they behave very well.
- Very good relationships between pupils and with staff contribute to a good learning environment.
- Pupils develop character through taking on responsibilities, discussion and participation in decision making.
- As they get older pupils grow in awareness of the beliefs of others and respect for people of different ethnic groups.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

8. Attendance is very high compared to the national average and there is little unauthorised absence. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Nearly all pupils arrive at school on time, and after breaks they are keen to get back to their lessons.
9. Almost all parents believe that their child enjoys school. Pupils are very positive about the ethos of supportive teachers, who use humour and make learning fun. This is very evident from the way in which pupils enthusiastically approach all aspects of school life. They start work in lessons quickly and work hard to solve any problems they might face. Pupils listen carefully when the teacher is talking and there is always a good show of hands to answer questions. Their responses show an interest and willingness to extend learning by asking perceptive questions of their own. Behaviour is very good in lessons, assemblies, the dinner hall and on the playground. Teachers

rarely have to do any more than politely remind pupils if their attention drifts. There were no exclusions last year.

10. Pupils' are encouraged to develop their spiritual awareness in assemblies, which use Bible stories and other moral tales projected into the modern world to good effect. Pupils discuss their own feelings and many record how they can be a good friend in the diaries they keep to record their feelings. They are encouraged to discuss school related issues, such as school uniform, and learn to hold their own in debate, even with the governors.

11. The school has a very positive social ethos in which pupils are encouraged to consider others in their actions. Pupils respond with equal respect to all staff, whether teachers or lunchtime supervisors. They understand the effects of bullying and racism and respond with good sensitivity to these issues; although there are very few ethnic minority pupils, they know what racism is and speak strongly against it. Pupils understand right from wrong and can talk about their feelings and the impact of their actions on others. Pupils and parents are confident that staff will resolve any problems that do occur. Staff delegate many daily tasks to pupils and there is always a willing band of helpers. Year 6 pupils have a wide range of responsibilities, such as caring for younger ones; they help write a school newspaper and encourage environmental awareness. Pupils enthusiastically collect money for good causes. Representatives on the Children's Committee listen to the ideas of others and are learning the importance of decision making and representing the opinions of others. Pupils have a good knowledge of their own culture because of the rich curriculum. Older pupils have a good knowledge of a range of classical and popular authors. Work from famous artists is often used to stimulate responses for pupils' own work. Pupils respect other cultures and work shows an understanding of issues such as racism and apartheid and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are **good**. The range of extra-curricular activities is **very good**. The attention given to health and safety is **satisfactory**. Links with parents, the community and other schools are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment information are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The best teaching is in the Year 5 and 6 class where the teacher has very high expectations of pupils.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is based on a good understanding of the needs of these children.
- Teachers make learning fun by planning interesting lessons and encouraging pupils with lots of praise.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught well and these skills are promoted effectively in other subjects.
- Support staff provide valuable help in lessons especially for pupils with special educational needs.
- Resources are often imaginative and used well except for ICT where they are not always used to extend learning.
- Assessment procedures in English and mathematics are good but these procedures are new and not yet in place in other subjects.
- Assessment information is not always used well to plan lessons or to tell pupils how to improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	8 (26 %)	17 (55 %)	6 (19 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (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.

12. As at the time of the previous inspection teaching is a strength of the school. All of the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and in many lessons it was good especially in the mixed age Year 1 and 2 and 5 and 6 classes. Teaching seen was consistently very good in the Year 6 class and the brisk pace and challenging activities in this class ensure much is achieved. The teacher encourages research and investigation so that pupils confidently come up with ideas and follow their own line of enquiry. This teaching has been most effective in raising standards in Year 6 with an increasing number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age.
13. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage. The imaginative environment stimulates the children and provides opportunities for them to learn through practical activities. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and the day runs smoothly. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of this age range and encourage independence, knowing when to offer help and when to stand back and allow children to resolve their own difficulties.
14. The focus on making learning enjoyable is continued into the infant and junior classes. Teachers are imaginative in their approaches and present lessons in an exciting way, which immediately attracts pupils' interest and sustains concentration. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and lead to very good behaviour. This allows staff to include humour in lessons and so add to the fun of learning. Good links are made between subjects and this makes learning more relevant because it has a sense of purpose. For example, in lessons to promote pupils' personal and social skills they write diaries of their feelings which extend both their literacy skills and their understanding of personal relationships.
15. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively. In the Foundation Stage and the infants letters and their sounds are taught in daily sessions using games and interesting activities so that pupils acquire this knowledge quickly and apply it in their early reading and writing. In the juniors, daily reading sessions enable staff to work with small groups and extend their research skills and enthusiasm for reading. Numeracy lessons include brisk openings with teachers effectively questioning pupils so that they learn to explain their methods of calculation.
16. The school requested the use of support staff to be a focus for the inspection. Support staff leading small group sessions out of class are secure in their knowledge and lead these sessions well. In lessons, teachers brief the support staff effectively so that they are well prepared and offer purposeful help. This is especially beneficial for pupils with special educational needs who are taught well. When required, detailed individual education plans are in place to guide teachers so that they match tasks accurately to pupils' identified needs. When it is deemed necessary pupils receive help on a one to one basis with specialist staff and this enables them to overcome more specific difficulties so that they are able to play a full part in all the school has to offer.
17. A strength in many lessons is the imaginative use of resources. This was very evident in the history lessons in the Year 2 and 3 classes where pupils experienced the effects of The Blitz in the class Anderson shelter and learnt about the hardships of daily life for Victorians by using domestic appliances from that age. Pupils are interested and eager to take part and effective learning is ensured. Although teachers are developing

the use of ICT in other subjects the lack of resources is hampering their endeavors. In the small group sessions, pupils are taught well but the time allocated is limited and the lack of computers in class means teachers cannot realistically build on the skills taught in these sessions.

18. The recently appointed headteacher has introduced new assessment procedures in English and mathematics. The positive effect of these procedures can already be seen as teachers show a good understanding of pupils' standards linked to National Curriculum expectations.

Although assessment procedures are satisfactory in other subjects they are not always providing teachers with relevant information to aid planning. The use of assessment information is good in tracking pupils' progress and setting end of year targets but is not always being used effectively in daily planning and, occasionally, tasks set pay more attention to pupils' age than their ability. The setting of individual targets is variable between classes and there is no clear and consistent approach to sharing with pupils the next steps that they need to take to improve.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good** and is enriched by a **very good** range and quality of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation, staffing and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements including provision for religious education and children in the Foundation Stage. Careful planning ensures pupils in the mixed age classes do not miss or repeat aspects of the National Curriculum.
- The curriculum is stimulating and is enriched very well by visits and visitors as well as participation in school clubs.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There is good emphasis on personal and social development and health education.
- The mobile classrooms are in a poor state of repair and the school has insufficient resources for ICT.

Commentary

19. As well as fully meeting statutory requirements the school has managed to maintain a rich and stimulating curriculum in line with the government's advice in the document *Excellence and Enjoyment* which recommends challenging activities that excite and engage pupils.
20. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in a class alongside Year 1 pupils and teachers check that they cover all of the areas of learning⁴. They place a strong emphasis on communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical development and achievement is good in these areas of learning. However, in knowledge and understanding of the world, the focus is not sufficiently based on extending pupils' skills. During physical education, when the reception aged children are taught together with the Year 1 pupils, the curriculum content is not always matching the children's needs and insufficient time was allocated to free exploration of movement.
21. The school requested their planning for the mixed age classes as a focus for the inspection. In the infants and juniors all classes span two age groups and the inspection judged the curriculum to be planned carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are effectively adapted to meet the school's needs. In literacy this can be seen in the additional, short focused

⁴ Areas of learning include communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

sessions which effectively enhance pupils' reading, spelling and handwriting skills. In mathematics and science much attention is given to investigation and this has most effectively raised standards. A rolling programme of topics linked to the pupils' work in humanities and the aesthetic and creative subjects enables pupils to have access to the appropriate curriculum for their age and ensures topics are not missed or repeated.

22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and fully meets the guidance in the Code of Practice⁵. Teachers and support staff are guided in their teaching by well focused individual education plans with small steps leading to relevant targets. The warm and encouraging atmosphere in the school is especially beneficial to these pupils who play a full part in all activities.
23. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Policy and planning guidelines are in the final stages of being reviewed in order to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding develop gradually and the issues of sex, alcohol and drugs misuse are sensitively incorporated. To improve its provision for personal development, the school is involved in the organic learning initiative organised by the network learning community. This project is adding to the variety of approaches staff use in their personal and social education lessons which make a significant contribution to the very good relationships and pupils' good personal skills seen throughout the school during the inspection.
24. The curriculum is enriched through a very good range of visits, visitors and workshops such as the recent multicultural week. Visiting musicians enable pupils successfully to develop their musical talents. A few parents thought the school had limited after school activities but considering the size of the school these are good and are well supported by pupils. The school is involved in competitive sport and teams do well in football, cricket and netball. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 5 particularly look forward to a residential visit. These exciting experiences include outdoor pursuits and successfully promote independence and the importance of team work. Pupils identified as academically gifted benefit from challenging projects in literacy, science and mathematics. The pupils performed *The Tempest* as part of a drama project in collaboration with the local theatre and other schools. Talented artists also extend their skills by taking part in art projects.
25. There are sufficient teaching and support staff with qualifications and experience to meet the demands of the curriculum. However, there is little flexibility in the timetabling of staff to enable subject co-ordinators to monitor work in the classrooms.
26. The accommodation enables all areas of the curriculum to be taught. The school is welcoming and displays of pupils' work make it a stimulating environment to learn. Since the last inspection there have been some good improvements to the building and the outdoor provision for children in the reception class is now good. Classrooms have been improved and the staffroom is much better. However, the two mobile classrooms remain a weakness and are far from ideal. They lack toilet facilities and adequate heating. The school now has a small room for teaching ICT to small groups but it is very cramped and can only accommodate a few pupils at a time.
27. Resources in the school are generally satisfactory with a strength in the good range of reading books. However, the school has insufficient computers and resources for ICT and this has a negative impact on the opportunities for teaching and learning in this subject.

⁵ Special Educational Needs Code of Practice- this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Care, guidance and support

Overall provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **satisfactory**. The school gives **good** support and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. Consultation with pupils is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a very happy, secure place where pupils feel confident and able to learn.
- Child protection procedures are in place but there are currently some shortcomings in staff training.
- Pupils' views are valued and acted upon through the school committee.
- Arrangements to introduce new pupils to school are good.

Commentary

28. Staff know the pupils well and there is an atmosphere of trust and respect that pervades the school. Conversations with pupils confirmed that they could rely on staff to resolve minor conflicts and personal worries; there are very few concerns about bullying or racism. Some staff are trained in first aid and give sympathetic and appropriate treatment to those who need it, but not all midday staff are yet appropriately trained. Teachers know the pupils well and write perceptively about pupils' personal development in their yearly reports. The school's maple-leaf system is a positive approach to discipline. Each class has a target of achieving 50 maple leaves over a two week period. As well as being an effective system to improve behaviour in the school this system also provides staff with a useful, visual record of personal development. Although the school sets the statutorily required overall academic targets for the end of Year 6, individual pupils do not consistently know what they need to learn to improve.
29. The staff and governors regularly inspect the premises for safety hazards and take remedial action promptly. Staff make and record risk assessments when pupils are taken on educational and residential visits, and adjust their plans to minimise the risk. Equipment is correctly checked for safety. However, there are some significant concerns about general safety, which were communicated to the school. Child protection procedures are in place, but as yet the newly appointed designated teacher has not had formal training. Staff lack a brief summary of procedures that would guide them if there was an immediate need. The school has made a good, practical start in promoting healthy eating by providing attractive and balanced meals after canvassing by interested parents.
30. The school gives parents and children a good introduction to the school when they start, so that children quickly and happily settle into the routines of school life. Staff visit the parents and prospective pupil at home and explain to parents how the school works so that they can support the new starter and reassure them.
31. Pupils on the Children's Committee meet regularly to discuss improvements they would like to see in the running of the school. They confer with their classmates and report back what has been decided. The school takes these opinions seriously and has acted on their ideas. For example, they discussed the contentious issue of whether girls should be allowed to wear trousers as part of the uniform and then put their arguments, successfully, to the governors. The recently appointed headteacher has already carried out a survey of pupils' views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

The school has **good** links with parents which benefit both the school and the pupils. Pupils benefit from **good** links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- General information about the school is good, but some parents are dissatisfied about the information given in pupil reports.
- Parents provide very good support at home and work well with staff to raise the standard of their children's work.
- Parents of children with special educational needs are fully informed about the support their children receive and the progress they make.
- Pupils have the opportunity to broaden their knowledge through close links with the local community.
- The curriculum is enhanced by good liaison with local schools.

Commentary

32. According to several parents at the meeting held before the inspection, the relationship between them and the school has been somewhat strained in the past, with some feeling that the school and governors were insufficiently in touch with their views. They still have some concerns about the openness of communications with governors. All agreed, however, that the new headteacher has made a very good start in remedying what they saw as a weakness. He has begun to consult parents on their views and to circulate the results and the school's comments.
33. The other significant concern - expressed in the formal questionnaire - was the amount of information given about pupils' progress. Although annual reports meet statutory requirements to comment on all subjects, they are too bland and do not always give a clear statement about progress during the year. In addition, the text is sometimes prone to jargon and wooliness. Parents can discuss their child's targets with teachers twice a year. The information telling parents about what their children are learning is usually good and enables parents to help their children at home. Parents appreciate the weekly newsletters that keep them up-to-date with practical information and there have been workshops on teaching methods.
34. When the school identifies a pupil with special educational needs, parents are informed and given useful advice about how they can help at home. They are invited to review meetings to see how their children are progressing towards the targets set for them.
35. Most parents hear their child read at home and this support has helped raise standards in reading. Several parent volunteers help in school and pupils benefit from this additional assistance. There is a strong parent teacher association which organises fund raising and social events that contribute well to acquiring additional resources.
36. The school plays an active part in the local community. Old people in particular benefit with invitations to visit the school and attend school performances. The school plays a part in the Village Fete and pupils visit a local hospital to learn about first aid. Year 5 pupils have the chance to work with a local company on science and technology projects. Pupils sing and musicians perform regularly in village events. The local vicar takes regular assemblies which aid spiritual development and support religious education.

37. The school works well with local playgroups and nurseries so that the children are well prepared to start the reception class. Staff from local secondary schools liaise well with teachers at Ashton Hayes School to ensure that the pupils transfer smoothly between schools. Gifted and talented pupils can extend their skills at a club in the local secondary school. Pupils' social awareness is enhanced by links with a special school for autistic pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **good**. Leadership from the headteacher is **good**. The overall quality of governance is **satisfactory** with some good features. The effectiveness of the management of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently appointed headteacher has very high aspirations for the school and has very quickly established a good working relationship with staff.
- Leadership and management of English, mathematics and science are good with effective actions leading to improved standards.
- The deployment of management responsibilities is uneven with some staff having too many duties and not enough time to carry them out.
- Governors are supportive of the school but do not always offer sufficient challenge to decisions made about school priorities.
- The school monitors its performance well and has an informed picture of its strengths and weaknesses but this information is not carried through to become a clear priority for improvement in the school's development plan.

Commentary

38. The headteacher has quickly set to work gaining an informed picture of the school and building relationships with all involved. Teaching has been monitored effectively and changes in assessment introduced to guide teachers in their planning as well as reduce the amount of work involved. The weakness in ICT has been promptly identified and an action plan to improve resources put into place with staff eagerly awaiting the imminent delivery of interactive white boards to raise the quality of their teaching. The headteacher's management style is based on collaboration and he has already gained the respect of all involved with the school.
39. The headteacher has taken on the role of co-ordinator for special educational needs. This role is being carried out effectively with detailed individual educational plans being put in place and a tracking system to enable the school promptly to spot pupils needing extra help as well as check on the progress of pupils with special educational needs.
40. In English, mathematics and science more assessment information is available to inform subject leaders about standards in their subjects. Co-ordinators have carried out a thorough analysis of test results and a review of pupils' work and used the ensuing information most effectively to raise standards. This is evident in the improved focus on investigation and the application of skills in mathematics and science and in writing and has yielded benefits especially for the higher attaining pupils.
41. Being a small school all staff carry additional management responsibilities but the deployment of these is uneven. This is especially the case for the deputy headteacher who has a heavy load of management duties as well as teaching Year 1 and 2 pupils. She carries out these duties effectively and has played an important role in aiding the new headteacher to settle quickly. However, staff have limited time to fulfill these

management roles and this leads to many working long hours after school and also restricts their role in sharing their skills and observing what is happening in other classes.

42. As at the time of the previous inspection, the governing body fulfils its responsibilities in an organised manner and ensures all statutory duties are met. Governors are fully committed to supporting the school and through their regular involvement in many activities have a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. A few governors work closely with subject leaders and are involved in setting priorities for the subject but this is not always the case. Although governors regularly review the school's performance they are not all fully involved in identifying priorities or in challenging the progress being made to achieve them. As a result, the weaknesses in ICT and the lack of clarity in the school's plan for improvement, identified in the previous inspection, have not received sufficient attention to resolve them fully.
43. The overall effectiveness of the management of the school is good. Self-evaluation procedures, although often informal, are effective because of the small number of staff involved and as a result the school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Performance management is securely established and training matches school objectives. Support staff are included in a simpler version of performance management which is effectively managed by the deputy headteacher and leads to staff being more confident in their roles. The school evaluates its performance effectively by thorough analysis of the results of national tests to identify areas needing attention and this information is used effectively to draw up action plans to raise standards. In some cases there is confusion between what is deemed to be success and the evaluation of actions but in general these plans are of a good quality. These plans are incorporated in the overall school improvement plan. Although governors have reduced the size of the school improvement plan since the last inspection it remains a lengthy document because all subjects are included. This means the most significant priorities for the school get lost alongside less important areas for development.
44. Financial management is satisfactory. As at the time of the last inspection the large number of priorities in the school improvement plan has a knock-on effect on spending as the plan is not making it clear to governors which areas are most in need of additional funding. Similarly, the timing of the identification of priorities in the school improvement plan does not always aid the most effective allocation of funds when the budget is set. However, governors monitor spending closely and the day-to-day finances of the school are well managed. The recommendations of the most recent audit report, which were of a minor nature, have been implemented. The budget setting and monitoring processes are secure and the school makes full use of the financial advice purchased from the local education authority. The budget surplus is well within bounds. Governors give due attention to value for money when making major spending decisions. This can be seen in the impact on the learning environment by the recent investment in refurbishment of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	337,099	Balance from previous year	(1,280)
Total expenditure	321,074	Balance carried forward to the next	16,025
Expenditure per pupil	2,058		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision in the reception class is **good**. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the development of the outdoor area as an effective environment for learning.

Teaching and learning are **good** overall and children generally achieve well. They are on course to exceed the early learning goals in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development and reach them in other areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Children with special educational needs are identified promptly and receive good support with the school seeking out additional support to enable them to settle happily and achieve well. The curriculum is good and is planned to ensure children cover all the recommended areas of learning. Children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils and occasionally this leads to work not fully matching their needs as was seen in physical education. Leadership and management are **satisfactory** and have led to a broadening of the curriculum especially in independent learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff establish a stimulating and supportive learning environment where children grow in independence and develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Religious education lessons and class assemblies promote spiritual development very well.

Commentary

45. Teaching and learning are **very good**. Children achieve very well and many are on course to exceed the early learning goals. Relationships are very good. All staff communicate high expectations of behaviour and encourage children to make choices and ask questions for themselves. As a result, children grow in self-esteem and are becoming confident and enthusiastic learners. Routines are securely established and many good opportunities are provided for children to take responsibility. Consequently, pupils are keen to be chosen and carry out minor administrative or monitoral tasks with pride. Staff establish a quiet calm atmosphere, particularly in religious education lessons and class assemblies, and use questions effectively to provoke thought. Children show sensitivity, for instance, when reflecting on celebrations, such as christenings, and are successfully developing respect for their own beliefs and for those of others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning meets the differing needs of children in the reception/Year 1 class well.
- The careful, structured approach to teaching letter sounds promotes early reading skills effectively.
- Whole class story sessions are particularly effective, but the management of group tasks is not always efficient.
- Good links between home and school successfully support the development of reading.

Commentary

46. Teaching and learning are **good** and lead to good achievement and the children are on course to exceed the early learning goals. Information from on-going assessment is used effectively to ensure that all children are challenged by the tasks set so that all make good progress. Letters and their sounds are taught thoroughly in short formal sessions and are consolidated in play activities. Most children recognise letters by shape and sound and use this information in their reading and in their early attempts at writing. Several children read fluently from the introductory books in the school's reading scheme. They are beginning to write a sentence making good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds when attempting to spell new words. Good attention is given to the development of speaking and listening skills in large and small groups and in pairs and children are confident talking about their experiences. Teachers tell stories with good expression and use interesting artefacts particularly well so that children concentrate hard. They enjoy joining in repeated refrains and show good understanding and vocabulary in discussing the plot. When the class is working in groups, learning is sometimes slowed because groups are rotated when individuals have been given either too much or too little time to complete their tasks. Parental support is effectively enlisted in helping children to learn to read. Individual diaries are sent home daily and provide supportive advice and on-going dialogue with parents. The literacy workshops for parents are well received and parents feel able to support their children at home.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use their good understanding of the subject and of the needs of young children to plan interesting practical tasks.
- Number rhymes are used to good effect to enhance learning.
- Incidental opportunities to consolidate skills are wisely taken across the curriculum.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are **good**. Achievement is good and children are in line to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Staff provide a good range of practical counting, matching and sorting activities which promote learning successfully. The classroom environment is organised attractively with

prominent interactive displays which encourage children to be active in their learning. All children sort objects accurately by colour, shape and size. Most children count correctly to ten, several to way beyond this. They recognise numerals reliably to 5. Higher attainers confidently and correctly identify one more or one less along a number line. Addition and subtraction skills are practised successfully in number rhymes, with attractive resources in which children take enormous enjoyment. Skills are consolidated successfully throughout the day, for instance, in counting the children for the attendance register, or the washing and pegs on the line.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources, including visits, visitors and the outdoor area, are prepared carefully to support interesting topic work.
- Good opportunities are provided to learn ICT skills.
- Some lessons lack challenge and activities do not focus sufficiently on extending skills.

Commentary

48. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Children achieve satisfactorily and are in line to meet the early learning goals. Well organised visits, such as to Delamere Forest, and visitors, successfully enrich children's knowledge and understanding of the world beyond the classroom. In class, practical resources are well managed so that children are encouraged to be curious and explore a wide range of experiences. For example, they successfully discuss and notice change when making pizza. Whilst these activities are interesting, they do not always challenge children as much as they could. For instance, when planting bulbs, clear instructions and demonstrations are provided so that children complete the practical task well, but insufficient attention is given to promoting observational skills or to discussing the process of growth. Good use is made of the computer suite for small group teaching. As a result, children are proficient in using the mouse to drag and click on screen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the school hall but the balance of time in physical education lessons does not always meet children's needs well.
- The teaching assistant provides very good support.

Commentary

49. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Achievement is satisfactory and children are in line to meet the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. Regular use of the school hall provides good opportunities for children to develop skills of control and co-ordination. Many children confidently climb and swing on the large apparatus, but struggle to balance on the small benches. Whilst they control their bodies to make large and small shapes, the length of time spent on the large apparatus is too long for this age range and eventually the real focus of the activity is lost and the pace of learning slows. Relationships are good so that most children are confident in exploring space. The teaching assistant provides very good support for individuals by encouraging less confident children to take a full part in the lesson.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

A secure judgement on provision cannot be made because of insufficient evidence. Scrutiny of children's work on display indicates that the curriculum is organised successfully towards the early learning goals.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.
- Overall achievement is good across all aspects of the curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from effective support and make good progress.
- Improved assessment procedures are helping teachers to track pupils' progress but not enough use is made of assessment information.
- Leadership and management are good and co-ordinators monitor their subject well although they have limited time in which to do this.
- Limited ICT resources hamper the use of computers to support learning in lessons.

Commentary

50. The effective leadership and management of the subject have tackled previous weaknesses in the achievement of higher attaining pupils in the infants in reading and results in national tests reflect improved standards throughout the school. In Year 2, national test results in 2004 were above the national average in reading and writing and in Year 6 were very high and were in the top five per cent in the country. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by all staff and make good progress against the targets set for them. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school has sustained high standards as pupils leave school and also been awarded a Basic Skills Quality Mark for improvement in basic literacy skills.
51. Speaking and listening skills are well above average throughout the school and achievement is good. Teachers often encourage pupils to share their ideas with a partner and so they are sensitive listeners and fully appreciate the need to take turns in conversations. Pupils eagerly ask questions and when the older pupils clarify their understanding or reply to teachers' questions, they are specific and to the point.
52. The school has adapted the National Literacy Strategy so that more time is available for reading outside the literacy hour. As a result, standards in reading are above average in Year 2 with many pupils reading confidently and well able to locate information. However, few are enthusiastic readers and often relate to the school's reading scheme as their favourite stories. This improves in the Juniors and standards are well above average and many pupils in Year 6 are discerning readers. A contributory factor to their enthusiasm is the daily reading session when books are shared so that pupils are gaining pleasure in reading and say they take a good book on holiday.
53. Writing has been a focus for development in the school with attention being given to different styles of writing, planning and drafting work. This training has been effective and examples of pupils' work show an impressive range of writing. In Year 2, pupils confidently write instructions to make a box and recognise the importance of bullet

points and writing in the correct sequence. The effect of the consistent teaching of drafting in the juniors means that pupils in Year 6 structure their work well. Standards of final presentation are high with carefully structured stories showing good progress from the first draft to the final piece of work.

54. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with examples of very good teaching in the mixed age Years 1 and 2 and 5 and 6 classes. In these classes teachers show an enthusiasm for the subject and this shines through and inspires pupils. Planning is good and effective links with other subjects gives a good sense of purpose to writing. Time is used productively and teachers often tell pupils how much time is available to complete a task and this helps pupils to settle quickly and concentrate. As a result of effective training, teachers have good subject knowledge especially in teaching different approaches to reading so pupils have a range of reading strategies to tackle new words. Resources are often stimulating, such as the gas masks used in Year 2, and these improve pupils' desire to write or research for more information. Although ICT is being used in some lessons, a lack of resources hampers the full contribution of ICT to both teaching and learning.
55. Assessment procedures have recently been improved and now provide teachers with a sharper picture of pupils' current standard. This information is not yet being used effectively in all classes and occasionally tasks do not closely match pupils' ability or fully extend learning. Although some teachers are setting pupils' individual targets this is not a regular feature of teaching and, when asked, pupils were unclear about how to improve their standards. Assessment is used effectively to track the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Staff are very aware of their needs and give close attention to them in lessons and in specific individual and group sessions which enable these pupils to play a full part not only in literacy lessons but in other lessons where literacy skills are required.
56. The subject is effectively led and managed. The two co-ordinators are both highly skilled in the teaching of English and have put in place several initiatives to raise the teaching of their colleagues. Unfortunately, time has not been available for them to share their own significant teaching skills through shared lesson observations or monitoring of other teachers. Nevertheless, the co-ordinators have gained an informed picture of standards through detailed analysis of assessment information and review of pupils' work and have responded successfully to their findings.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. Standards in English are a strength in the school and these skills are used effectively to raise standards in other subjects. Pupils are encouraged to write about their feelings and emotions in a diary and some resulting work is of high quality, especially the poetry inspired by the painting *The Scream*. Research skills are a feature of many lessons and are often set as homework which encourages independent research skills, especially for the older pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 are above average and in Year 6 well above average.
- Good teaching with a strong focus on using and applying mathematics enables all pupils to achieve well.

- Leadership and management are good and are instrumental in raising standards.
- Assessment procedures are thorough and comprehensive but few pupils are aware of their personal targets.
- The use of ICT to support learning is developing but more resources are required to extend the use of ICT in mathematics.

Commentary

58. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good and high standards in national test results have been maintained in Year 2 and improved in Year 6. In Year 2, there was a dip in the results of statutory tests in 2004. This was due to the nature of the cohort. The school's careful tracking system shows clearly that despite the lower standards reached, these pupils achieved well over Years 1 to 2. Current standards in Year 2 have returned to the high standards reached in 2003 and are above average. In Year 6, standards are well above average.
59. Whilst test results over time have compared favourably with the national average, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6 was consistently lower than that in similar schools. The trend in results has been below the national trend. In response to this the school has successfully developed the curriculum to meet more closely the needs of the higher attainers. Clear, strong focus on applying and using mathematics to challenge pupils in a problem solving approach has been especially effective in raising standards, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Careful monitoring of individual progress through on-going assessment is also enabling teachers to plan work which is usually closely matched to pupils' needs. As a result of these measures, the achievement of pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, is now good throughout the school. A greater percentage of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are now working at the higher levels.
60. Teaching and learning are good with the best teaching seen in the mixed age Years 5 and 6 class where lessons are particularly challenging and brisk. Effective leadership and management have ensured a consistent approach to the development of thoughtful problem solving strategies across the school. In junior classes, extra *mathematics challenge* sessions are well planned and provide short, sharp activities which are successful in making pupils think for themselves. In Years 1 and 2, the skilled use of focused mathematical games, as well as practical work, provides a useful challenge and makes learning fun. All teachers have good understanding of the subject and know their pupils well. They plan work carefully to meet the often wide range of ability in the mixed age classes. This is usually successful but occasionally there is insufficient adult support for each group and the pace of learning slows when pupils do not receive the help they need. In some classes, not enough use is made of assessment data to make sure that personal pupil targets are sufficiently sharply defined so that pupils themselves are aware of what they need to do to improve. Teachers are skilled in questioning techniques which help pupils extend their own ideas. The use of subject specific vocabulary is fostered effectively so that pupils learn how to discuss their work and explain their methods. Teaching assistants are efficiently deployed and make a significant contribution to learning. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are well organised to consolidate concepts and to check on what pupils have learnt. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support learning in mathematics. Computers in classrooms were rarely in use during the inspection.
61. The role of the subject leader has been well developed in implementing change. There is now a need for further development in order to monitor the effect of recent curriculum changes, to contribute to the school's self evaluation, and set new priorities for the long term strategic plan.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects because of the integrated topic approach throughout the school. Particularly good links exist in science and in design and technology. A good example is in Year 1 and 2 where pupils collect evidence for a survey of favourite cereals by tallying responses and then collating them in a block graph.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well above the level expected for this age.
- Pupils' achievement in science throughout the school is good.
- There is a high emphasis on investigation and experimental science.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- There are insufficient resources for ICT and the subject is not being used well enough to support science.

Commentary

63. Improvement since the last inspection is good. This can be seen in the 2004 teacher assessments in Year 2 when every pupil reached the expected level and this was well above the national average and the average for similar schools. The results of national tests in Year 6 were well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. This shows a significant improvement from the previous year when results were well below average. The change has been brought about by more challenging teaching and improved planning, which have increased the number of pupils working at above average levels. The high emphasis on improving opportunities for pupils to become involved in investigation and experimentation is also having a positive impact on standards. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys.
64. Current standards in Year 2 are above average and achievement is good. Standards are high because pupils are given many opportunities to develop their skills of observation. Year 2 pupils successfully investigate which drinks cause the least harm to teeth. They test out their predictions and show growing understanding of what is meant by a fair test. By Year 6 pupils have covered a wide range of scientific enquiry and this has led to good achievement and current standards are well above average with an increasing number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. Pupils confidently carry out investigations. For example, they have successfully designed and made a parachute to carry a given weight and provided detailed recording of results. Pupils make thoughtful predictions and describe their methods, results and conclusions using appropriate scientific language and technical terms. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate very good knowledge of how day and night are related to the spin of the earth on its own axis and others understand that the sun, earth and moon are approximately spherical. Pupils confidently record their findings in a variety of ways including tables, graphs and charts. Accuracy in their measurements and recording is evident in their recordings of the effect of exercise and rest on pulse rate. Pupils are beginning to make more use of ICT to research information and record their findings, one example being a Year 6 pupil's detailed portfolio about space. However, the planned use of computers is still limited, often because of the lack of resources.

65. Teaching is good and leads to effective learning. Teachers use a practical approach and make learning fun. They use questions effectively and make pupils think and provide explanations. In a Year 6 lesson, the use of imaginative resources and the opportunities to debate were particularly effective in bringing about understanding of the earth and beyond. Lessons are planned in good detail to match the age and ability of pupils, including those with particular special educational needs. These pupils are well supported and make good progress relevant to their prior attainment. This is because teachers take time to explain technical terms to enable pupils of all abilities to be fully included in discussions. As a result, pupils throughout the school are beginning to think as young scientists, to ask their own, searching questions and devise a means of finding the answers.

66. Leadership and management are good. Thorough analysis of test results and rigorous monitoring of pupils' work ensures the subject leader has a good knowledge of the standards in the school and the areas for development. There has been some monitoring of teaching and adjustments to practice put in place although limited time is available for this aspect of management. Assessment is satisfactory and is about to be reviewed to make it more manageable and to set pupils' individual targets. Much thought has been given to the rolling programme of work to ensure pupils' access the curriculum at the correct level and topics are not missed or repeated. Very good links have been made with the local secondary school to improve the progress of those pupils identified as academically gifted in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching when pupils are withdrawn for group work is very good.
- Laptop computers are used well.
- The plan to improve provision and the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- There are insufficient resources to enable teachers to teach all aspects of the subject and for pupils to have regular access to computers.
- The current timetable means pupils have insufficient time to develop fully their skills.

Commentary

67. Information and computer technology was an area for development at the time of the previous inspection and this continues to be the case. Although improvement has been satisfactory it has not been fast enough to keep abreast with changes in the subject and the school still identifies ICT as needing attention and this was a focus for the inspection. Although the school has a room for the computers, it has weaknesses in that it is too small for a whole class to be taught and so pupils have to be taught in small groups. This means pupils only have a lesson every two weeks and this does not lead to the effective development of ICT skills. The school has fallen behind in the acquisition of up to date resources. The major resource is the lap top computers and these are generally used well but they are not available in the afternoon because they are used for group sessions. Recently, under the leadership of the newly appointed headteacher, there have been some significant improvements, especially in assessment procedures that have improved the quality of teaching and learning. Since September the school has had access to the Internet. Very recently the school has acquired technical help.

68. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are satisfactory and overtime achievement is satisfactory. Year 2 pupils confidently use a computer graphics package to create pictures. They select the appropriate tools and show sound understanding of technical language such as icons and text. Year 5 and 6 pupils copy and paste from the Internet into a word processing program for publication. Higher and average attaining pupils quickly learn new skills and provide help to others who find the work more difficult. Pupils have used the Internet to research such information as the biography of the author

Michael Morpurgo. They have also used a digital camera to put pictures on the computer when they were developing the school magazine. Lack of resources means that pupils have limited experience of the modelling and control aspects of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and higher attaining pupils are provided with more challenging tasks to match their needs and they also make satisfactory progress.

69. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The computers in class are not used often enough to support work in other subjects and to rehearse newly acquired skills. Sometimes this is linked to the inadequate computers available in class. However, when pupils are withdrawn for short intensive teaching of skills, the quality of teaching is very good and the teaching assistant has a very secure knowledge of the subject. Pupils want to learn because they really enjoy their ICT lessons and many enhance their progress by practising these new skills at home. The school makes computers available at lunchtime for pupils who do not have access to a computer at home. At times when the laptop computers are taken into classrooms, the good quality teaching assistants enables pupils to extend their learning. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson, where pupils worked diligently, developing their word processing skills as they produced an introduction to their work on Anderson shelters.
70. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Changes have been introduced but too slowly to enable the school to keep abreast of national changes in the subject. The subject leader was absent during the inspection. The headteacher, who is covering for the subject leader has only been in post for a matter of weeks. However, he has quickly audited the needs of the subject and has a clear vision and high aspiration for development of the subject. A detailed action plan includes staff training, including for teaching assistants, in preparation for the rolling programme of refurbishment and the expansion of resources.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. Information and communication technology is not yet used well enough to support learning across the curriculum. Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' skills and the lack of resources does not help to raise standards. However, there are signs of improvement and word processing is used in English to present work attractively or to redraft writing. At times, ICT is used well to present tables and graphs and recently pupils have successfully used the Internet for research.

HUMANITIES

72. No judgement is made on the overall provision in **history and geography**, as only one lesson was seen in each subject. Judgements are based on the work displayed, a review of work and discussion with the subject leader.
73. Leadership and management of geography and history are satisfactory. Planning and pupils' work are monitored but there is not yet sufficient time for the subject leader to monitor teaching and learning within classes. The rolling programme of topics takes good account of the mixed aged classes to ensure the development of skills and to check that pupils do not miss or repeat topics. Good use is made of fieldwork and educational visits to enable pupils to learn through first hand experience. There are examples of computers being used satisfactorily to support work in these subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils have researched the rivers Mersey and Nile from the Internet. However, the use of ICT is restricted by resources and is an area for development.
74. In the lesson seen in **geography** in the mixed age Year 5 and 6 class, teaching and learning were very good and the above average standards identified in the previous

inspection have been sustained. Pupils were challenged and the stimulating teaching led to very effective learning about life in India. The use of high quality resources enabled pupils to think like geographers. They raised questions and successfully compared life in an Indian village with their own experiences. The high level of discussion deepened the understanding of physical and human features and enabled pupils to understand how cultural factors influence daily life. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported. The work in this lesson was effective in extending pupils' literacy skills.

75. In the **history** lesson observed in the mixed age Year 1 and 2 class, standards were above the level expected for this age. Teaching was good and led to effective learning. Pupils were eager learners because of the good opportunities to take part in role-play activities, for example, to experience a Victorian washday using original resources. Their enthusiasm was infectious and pupils were eager to participate and very soon could explain their experiences to their classmates using the appropriate names for the implements. By the end of the lesson pupils had a good understanding of how these domestic implements were used in the past and how they were harder to use than today's appliances. Support staff are used effectively and encourage pupils to discuss their work. In this lesson, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved well and extended their historical knowledge and understanding of the hardship of life for some people in Victorian times.
76. Although it was not possible to see history being taught in other classes, planning documents show that this good practice seen in the infants is developed throughout the school. For example, in Year 3 where pupils are studying life during World War Two. The teacher provided rationing tokens and real food and pupils were eager to talk about the effect of rationing on everyday life. The classroom stimulated pupils' interest with a good range of artefacts including a realistic Anderson shelter and this increased pupils' knowledge well.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and above those expectations in Year 6.
- Planning covers all elements of the subject and includes a good emphasis on world religions.
- The assessment and recording of pupils' progress is not yet sufficiently developed.
- There is not enough use of ICT in the subject.

Commentary

77. The curriculum meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Improvement since the previous inspection is good and standards in Year 6 are now above those expected in the agreed syllabus and achievement is good. The school has maintained satisfactory standards and achievement in Year 2.
78. Across the age groups, pupils have a sound understanding of Bible stories. Year 2 pupils retell and correctly sequence the events of the story of Jonah. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 understand that religious belief often influences people's ways of life. The good emphasis on learning about world religions ensures pupils are knowledgeable about the main leaders, festivals and important events in different faiths. In Year 6, pupils show a good understanding of the Hindu faith. In conversations with pupils it is apparent that they have a good respect for other people's beliefs and this represents an improvement since the last inspection.

79. Teaching and learning are good. Work is thoroughly planned to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Skilful questioning encourages pupils to think about the reasons for Christian celebration. Good explanation clarifies the meaning of religious terms and effective use of resources makes learning interesting and enjoyable. Content of lessons supports effectively pupils' spiritual moral and cultural development. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included and higher attaining pupils fully challenged.
80. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has reviewed planning to check on standards and ensure the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Insufficient time has been made available to check that the planning is being implemented in class. Assessment

procedures are in the early stages of development and this does not enable the co-ordinator to gain a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The use of ICT is variable between classes and at times opportunities are missed to make use of this and at other times resources are not available. Visits to local churches and a cathedral as well as visitors to the school have successfully brought about a deeper understanding of other faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology, art and design, music, physical education

81. These subjects were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. No lessons were seen in music, and only one lesson in each of art and design, design and technology and in physical education. Evidence from teachers' planning and from samples of work indicates that topic work is interesting and challenging. The curriculum follows national guidance and statutory requirements are met. Leadership and management by subject leaders are satisfactory but opportunities for monitoring what is happening in lessons are limited. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and check on pupils' progress at the end of topics.
82. In **art and design**, the standard of work on display in Year 2 and Year 6 is higher than in most schools. Carefully presented pieces of individual and collaborative two and three-dimensional work add greatly to the attractive learning environment. Techniques are developed successfully and used to good effect, for instance, marbling with inks for book covers, and collage designs to make a play den. The curriculum is frequently enhanced by the contributions of visiting artists and by visits including residential workshops for talented pupils. In Year 2, pupils make careful observational drawings of different kinds of houses with great attention to detail and careful control. In Year 6, pupils' experience of Indian art is meticulously mirrored in their own intricate patterns. In the lesson seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Objectives were clear and shared and resources of good quality well prepared. However, the lesson lasting almost a whole afternoon was too long and the pace of learning was slow. Opportunities were missed to share examples of pupils' work to encourage critical evaluation and reflection.
83. In **design and technology** the standard of work sampled in Year 2 and Year 6 is higher than in most schools and reflects a broad and interesting curriculum. Work throughout the school this term has focused on food technology. In Year 2, pupils designed their own breakfast cereal by selecting from a range of ingredients. They evaluated their products by taste and texture and made suitable containers in which to store cereal. In Year 6, pupils carried out a product analysis on various Indian snacks and dips using a range of relevant criteria. They designed, created and evaluated a product of their own, rating their success, choosing a class favourite and suggesting improvements. In the lesson seen in the juniors teaching and learning were good. There was clear focus on skills to be learnt, and groupwork was organised efficiently so that all pupils were purposefully engaged. Literacy and numeracy skills were promoted but opportunities were missed to use ICT.

84. In **music** no lessons were seen because the school employs a specialist teacher on a day when inspectors were not in school. The school does not have a choir but groups of pupils perform on special occasions. Their performance was appreciated by the elderly in the village when they sang a collection of popular wartime songs at their Golden Club.
85. In the lesson seen in **physical education** in the infants teaching and learning were good and enabled pupils to dance at standards higher than usually seen for this age. Pupils interpret the music well and combine different shapes and steps into short sequences. They work well with a partner reviewing and suggesting improvements to their movements. All understand how feelings can be represented in movements. A brief observation of gymnastics identified the

large apparatus put out before the lesson and this leaves limited space in an already small hall for pupils to carryout activities before moving on to the large apparatus. No lessons were formally observed in the juniors. However, the Year 5 and 6 pupils playing hockey showed great enthusiasm, good basic skills, understanding of the rules of a game and the importance of team work. Pupils go swimming and records show many are confident swimmers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and so it would not be appropriate to make an overall judgment on teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the range of evidence in pupils' books and on display indicates that provision is good and the school gives good attention to this aspect of pupils' development. Lessons start for the youngest pupils with Circle Time⁶ and progress to a specific lesson in personal, social, emotional and health education as they get older. As part of the school's involvement in the organic learning project pupils have been involved in some imaginative work. This includes keeping a feelings diary which has enabled them to discuss their emotions and how their actions can affect others. The younger pupils have made a large class compliment book which shows how they know how to make other pupils happy.
87. The school organises whole school activities to encourage pupils' personal development. Pupils appreciate how they can help those less fortunate than themselves and often raise funds for local and national charities. They have been involved in designing the sculptures in the school grounds and show an appreciation of their natural surroundings. Older pupils learn how to represent others as members of the Children's Committee and many carry out most diligently important responsibilities in the daily life of the school. As a result of these activities pupils in Year 6 are mature, sensible and eager to talk about the experiences that have prepared them well for their next stage of education.

⁶ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk free from any interruption by other children.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	1
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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