

INSPECTION REPORT

THE FIRS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sale, Manchester

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106303

Headteacher: Mrs Janet Lakin

Lead inspector: Dennis Maxwell

Dates of inspection: 27th - 29th June 2005

Inspection number: 266825

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 183

School address: Firs Road
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Cheshire
Postcode: M33 5EL

Telephone number: 0161 9737350
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr L Murkin

Date of previous inspection: 17th May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Firs is a Community Primary School. The school is about the same size as other primary schools. There are 183 pupils on roll and nearly all children come from white-British families. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The level of mobility amongst the pupils is a little above average. The social circumstances of the families with children at the school are much less favourable than usual overall. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and the percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs are broadly in line with national averages. Most of the needs relate to specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is a wide range of attainment amongst the children on entry to reception; overall their attainment is well below average. The school is currently involved in the Primary Strategy and network initiatives which are designed to raise standards further. The school gained a School's Achievement Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2002; the Activemark in 2003; and the Healthy Schools, Eco Schools (silver) and the North West Inclusion Award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology (ICT) English as an additional language Music Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship
13395	Mrs Joanne Illingworth	Lay inspector	
15011	Marion Wallace	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Special educational needs
8316	Mrs Jozefa O'Hare	Team inspector	Foundation stage Mathematics Art and design Design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Firs Primary is a very good school with some outstanding features. The headteacher's dynamic vision for the school is based on creating a stimulating yet caring education, and in this she is very successful. Pupils achieve very well because teachers use very good, imaginative methods to encourage confident learning. The curriculum is very good, supported by up-to-date ICT equipment. The school provides a high level of thoughtful and sensitive care for all pupils. Leadership, management and governance are very good, and it gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children have a very good start in the nursery and reception classes.
- The school is involved in several high quality initiatives which improve opportunities for pupils, such as the excellent provision for Year 6 pupils to transfer to the local secondary school.
- Senior members of staff provide high quality direction and support under the excellent leadership of the headteacher.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school.
- Attendance is improving but still well below average, with an adverse effect on pupils' learning.
- The school arranges an excellent choice of additional activities to extend pupils' learning.
- Parents are very satisfied with the school overall, although some find it difficult to help their children with their work at home.

The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection. All the weaknesses identified then have been thoroughly addressed. Standards have improved. There are now schemes of work for science and for ICT. Assessment procedures are very good. In addition the school has gained several nationally recognised awards, such as the School Achievement Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school's approach to inclusion is excellent and the many initiatives are having a significant impact on pupils' learning.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is very good. Pupils' personal development forms a major part of their overall achievement. Children enter nursery with standards which are well below the national average overall and very low in their communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. They make very good progress overall in the nursery and reception classes because provision is very good. Standards, in terms of the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception, are broadly average in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in creative and in physical development; they are above average in their personal, social and emotional development. Many children struggle to make progress in language and mathematical development and standards in these areas of learning are below average.

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

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

Early analysis suggests that the 2005 Year 6 results in English, mathematics and science overall were just below the national and similar schools averages. However, this represents very good achievement overall for these pupils from when they first entered school, since almost half of Year 6 are on the register of special educational needs (SEN), and two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. At Year 2, early analysis indicates that results for reading, writing and mathematics overall are in line with the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The trend in results at both Years 2 and 6 is above the nationally improving trend.

Pupils achieve very well through the impact of very good teaching. Current standards in Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT and close to average in science. Standards in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils demonstrate a better quality of work and skills in their classwork than in the formal national tests because many rely on adult reassurance and support to do their best. For example, pupils produce well-expressed writing in other subjects; higher attaining pupils write confidently with good style. Pupils in Year 5 are on course to further improve national test results when they are in Year 6. Pupils with SEN make very good progress because targeted support is focused accurately on their learning needs.

Pupils’ personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. The school’s high priority in promoting pupils’ personal development is very effective so that they are enabled to learn and this area forms a significant part of their overall achievement. Pupils take great delight in special moments, such as watching a butterfly emerge from its chrysalis. Behaviour is very good and classrooms have a busy working atmosphere. Despite the school’s good efforts, attendance is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Teachers usually engage strongly with the pupils to encourage them to reason and learn new skills, for example in making slippers in Year 6 or observing minibeasts in Year 2. Most questioning is good but some does not extend pupils fully. Lesson planning is good but the intended teaching strategies are not always identified. There is much good quality, sensitive writing through the school as a result of the teachers’ good emphasis on speaking and listening. Assessment procedures are very good and are central to target setting. Basic skills in all subjects are taught very well and the quality of learning, for example, in mathematical investigations is very good.

The quality of the curriculum is very good and there is an excellent selection of activities for enrichment. These enhance pupils’ experiences significantly - in the arts and sport for example. The level of care, welfare and guidance is very good, based on a close knowledge of the children and families, and provides strong motivation for pupils to improve. The partnership with parents is good, although several parents experience difficulty in

supporting their children's education. The partnership with the community and other schools and colleges is excellent. It is having a significant impact on the quality of provision and achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher gives excellent, inspirational leadership. The senior staff ensure that priorities are managed very well and evaluated for their impact on pupils' learning. Leadership of subjects and for SEN is generally very good. Governors support the school very effectively through their informed decisions and ensure that statutory requirements are met. The school manages its finances very well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very good opinion of the school that is well justified. They are pleased with their children's progress. Many parents value the personal support extended to them and their children. The pupils enjoy school, think they are listened to and have trusting relationships with adults.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise the level of attendance.
- Encourage more parents to take an active part in their children's schooling.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good. Standards in reception are below average overall, but by Year 2 they are broadly average although few pupils exceed the national expectations. Standards by Year 6 are also average, but with more pupils demonstrating skills and understanding at the higher levels.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make very good progress in the foundation stage because provision is very good.
- The school's strong emphasis on pupils' speech and language is effective in raising standards.
- Strong subject leadership and very good teaching have a significant impact on pupils' achievement.
- Standards by Year 6 reflect consistently very good achievement as pupils progress through the school.
- Pupils' weak speaking, listening and writing skills, as well as their personal needs, are barriers to learning.

Commentary

1. Children achieve very well in the foundation stage because teaching is very good and centred on rich experiences. Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 - 2 and Years 3 - 6 through the impact of very good teaching. Pupils' personal development forms a significant part of the pupils' overall achievement because many pupils enter school with low self-esteem and come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
2. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected nationally, particularly in their communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development, which are very low. A few higher attaining children are on course to attain the early learning goals in all areas. The children achieve very well overall because in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative and physical development most children reach the appropriate levels for their age. In personal, social and emotional development standards are above average. However, standards are below the expected levels for their age in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development because many children rely on adult support. Nevertheless, this represents very good achievement for these pupils.
3. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make very good progress as they move through the school because close observations and very good targeted support are matched accurately to their learning needs. Children's learning difficulties are identified quickly and very effective support systems are put in place. Assessments provide accurate targets within the education plans and give clear direction. These pupils achieve well for their ability in national tests in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' poor language acts as a barrier to learning in all areas and continues to cause learning difficulties through the school in understanding ideas and using correct English, for

example in reasoning or explaining their work. This is particularly the case when speaking in a large group or writing independently.

- Results in the national tests for 2004 in Year 2 were below the national average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. In relation to similar schools, results were above average in reading and well above in writing and mathematics. The trend in results to 2005 is above the nationally improving trend since early analysis of the results of the 2005 national tests at Year 2 indicates that standards overall have improved further and are in line with the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The results for any single year should be treated with some caution, however, because the year groups are quite small.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.4 (12.1)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.1 (13.3)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.7 (12.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Results in the national tests for 2004 in Year 6 were average in English and mathematics and below average in science, where fewer pupils gained the higher level 5 than nationally. In relation to similar schools, where pupils attained similarly when they were in Year 2, results were average in English, above average in mathematics, and below average in science. Early analysis of the 2005 national tests at Year 6 indicates that results overall are just below the national average and the average for similar schools. However, the 2005 results represent very good achievement overall for these pupils from when they first entered school, since their attainment on entry was well below average, almost half of Year 6 are on the register of SEN, and two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. On average, fewer pupils than nationally gain the higher levels 3 or 5 at Year 2 and Year 6, although these outcomes compare very well against the baseline assessments for pupils in reception. Higher attaining pupils are challenged to succeed. The trend in results is above nationally improving trend. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Year 5 are on course to make further improvements in their Year 6 national test results.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.8 (26.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.7 (26.3)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.9 (29.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards of current work in Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT and close to average in science, where few pupils reach standards above the expectation. Standards of current work in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils' classwork in English and mathematics is better than in formal tests because many rely on adult support to do their best. Pupils' weak language skills are a barrier to learning and limit their progress, particularly where they are expected to work independently or to reason about their

work. Pupils with SEN are supported very well and make the same progress as their peers. Those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress. Standards in speaking and listening are average overall and by Year 2 pupils develop a good range of vocabulary. In reading, standards are average by Years 2 and 6. In mathematics, pupils apply and develop their mathematical skills well in other subjects. In Year 2, for example, the pupils measured the circumference of trees in the school grounds to find the age of each, using a formula to calculate the age from measuring the diameter.

7. In science, by Year 2 most pupils know the main parts of a plant and have a satisfactory understanding of man-made and natural materials. Pupils in Year 6 took part in a very good 'rocket science' session as part of their excellent transfer programme to the local secondary school. In ICT, pupils in Year 2 have the skills to log on to a computer and have early word-processing skills. Pupils in Year 6 prepared a PowerPoint slide of activities, demonstrating satisfactory skills and using animation, visual effects with titles and importing pictures.
8. Pupils achieve very well in religious education. By Years 2 and 6 standards are in line with those expected for pupils of their age in relation to the locally agreed syllabus. The school has made very good improvements in art and design and standards are now well above average. In design and technology, standards have improved and are above average by Years 2 and 6. Much of the improvement is due to strong leadership and the very good quality of assessment procedures.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and contribute positively to their very good achievement. Their relations with members of staff, and with each other, are excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' punctuality is good, but their attendance is well below the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy learning and are enthusiastic about school activities.
- The quality of relationships is excellent and helps to create a very good climate for learning.
- There are very good procedures for promoting high standards of behaviour.
- The school is very effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and helping them to become more mature and responsible.
- Poor attendance by a significant number of pupils hinders their progress.

Commentary

9. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and are keen to learn and to achieve well. They concentrate well and involve themselves fully in their tasks in lessons. They take pride in their work. Pupils love answering questions and thoroughly enjoy showing their teachers what they know and can do. The majority of pupils are conscientious about presenting their written work neatly. Pupils are also enthusiastic about learning outside ordinary lessons. Educational trips and extra-curricular activities are popular and well attended, for example. Overall, pupils' very good attitudes have a positive impact on their achievement throughout the school.

10. Pupils have excellent relationships with members of staff and with one another. There is a friendly, harmonious atmosphere in lessons. Pupils work well together on group tasks, and enjoy celebrating each other's achievements. They are polite and co-operative, and readily follow instructions. Their relations with their teachers are characterised by warmth, underpinned by trust and respect. Pupils are very appreciative of this. When asked in the pre-inspection questionnaire what they liked best about the school, many of them wrote "the teachers".
11. Behaviour is very good and helps raise standards, even though a significant number of pupils comes from disadvantaged families. The school makes very good arrangements to support these children, and has very effective procedures for promoting good behaviour in general. Its policies and code of conduct ensure that members of staff adopt a consistent approach to discipline, and pupils clearly understand what is expected of them. Teachers handle breaches of class rules calmly, firmly and fairly, and make very good use of rewards to celebrate hard work and good behaviour. The school takes firm action against bullying and harassment. Pupils and parents say that bullying sometimes occurs, but is dealt with very swiftly. Pupils are generally satisfied with standards of behaviour, although in the questionnaire a handful of younger children made negative comments about the actions of some of the juniors. One junior pupil has incurred a lunchtime exclusion this year. The school uses exclusion as a sanction of last resort and for fully justified reasons.
12. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good because the school's provision is very good. The school gives a high priority to fostering positive personal qualities and is very successful in this area of its work. The very good progress that pupils make in becoming more mature and responsible contributes significantly to their overall achievement. Many of them start out with low self-esteem but, thanks to the school's programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), steadily acquire a sense of self-worth and become confident learners.
13. Pupils' spirituality is strongly promoted through assemblies and religious education lessons and through National Curriculum subjects. Assemblies contain an act of worship and offer pupils time for reflection. The school's ethos and stimulating environment greatly enhance spiritual development. The sensory garden and wildlife area are a source of wonder and enjoyment, and displays in classrooms and corridors encourage pupils to value creativity and beauty. Pupils respond enthusiastically to these opportunities. They take great delight in special moments, such as watching a butterfly emerge from its chrysalis.
14. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and a strong sense of justice. They accept the school's code of conduct as fair, and respect members of staff for being good role models of courtesy. The oldest pupils are able to discuss moral issues, such as justice and the rights of others, in a mature way. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson in personal, social and health education in which the class examined the sources of and amicable resolution of conflicts.
15. Pupils' social development is very good. Some of them find teamwork difficult, but learn to share ideas, listen to one another, and understand each other through intensive work in lessons to develop their collaborative skills. Pupils have responsible attitudes to the community and to the environment. They raise money for charities and they strongly support recycling and conservation of resources. Protection of the environment is very strongly promoted via the curriculum of personal, social and health education and citizenship.
16. Provision for cultural education is very good. Pupils get many opportunities to learn about and appreciate their own cultural heritage and the diversity of cultures in the world. This prepares

them well for life in a multi-cultural society. Religious education, music and art make significant contributions in this area, as when pupils learn about Aboriginal culture in their art lessons.

17. Levels of attendance were well below the national average in the year 2003/2004. The school is aware of the problem and has established good systems for recording, monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance. Attendance rates have improved in the current year but remain relatively low. Most parents and carers ensure that their children attend school and are punctual, but a significant minority has a casual attitude to attendance, punctuality and pupils' learning.

18. Pupils with SEN have very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Pupils are happy and secure within their class groups and they relate very well to their classmates and adults. This very good relationship gives pupils the confidence to join in with all school activities. Pupils work well in the classroom; they work with very good levels of concentration and they are keen to learn. There are very good opportunities for pupils with SEN to take responsibility. In a Year 4 religious education lesson a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs confidently answered questions about the Shabbat ceremony. She was interested in the lesson and showed a very good attitude to her work.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.5
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.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
128	2	0
3	1	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education. The ethos is very good and an excellent approach ensures that all pupils are included fully. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The curriculum is very good and provides pupils with rich experiences. The provision for pupils' care, welfare and guidance is very good. The partnership with parents is good, and with the local community and partner schools is excellent.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the foundation stage have stimulating learning experiences as a result of very good teaching.
- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to good effect in promoting pupils' learning.
- Lessons are very well planned and structured with clear learning objectives, although the intended teaching strategies are not usually set out.
- Teachers engage very well with the pupils so that learning is extended

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (9%)	28 (61%)	13 (28%)	1 (2%)	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 rounded percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

19. Teachers in the foundation stage plan very well for a rich selection of opportunities. They encourage children to learn new skills and to talk about their experiences as they explore inside and outside the classroom. Adults manage the children very well in a warm and welcoming environment which encourages independence as well as consideration for others. They use very good strategies to engage with the children, particularly to encourage talk, although this could be extended on occasions, during snack times for example. The very good assessment procedures are based on close

observation of the pupils and provide extensive information about all aspects of children's development. Assessment information is used very well in planning for the next stage of development. The excellent approach to inclusion has a significant impact on the children's learning.

20. Throughout the school, teachers have very good subject knowledge. They plan challenging tasks for the pupils to learn a wide range of skills. Teachers adapt the work to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities, although there is scope to clarify their intended teaching methods. Learning objectives are shared with the pupils so that they know what they are expected to learn. Teachers provide very good explanations and demonstrations and frequently use the interactive whiteboard effectively to illustrate ideas, which enables the pupils to make very good gains in their learning. Teachers are careful to identify key vocabulary because pupils generally have weak language skills. Most teachers' questioning is skilled and encourages pupils to explain their ideas, although this is not fully consistent. In one PSHE lesson the teacher applied good behaviour strategies to help one pupil explain her ideas without interruption by others, for example. Teachers sometimes use a problem-solving approach effectively, such as in design and technology or science, which challenges the pupils. Many lessons have a good practical basis to promote secure learning, although in science there is only some evidence of pupils being challenged to set up an investigation independently.
21. Teachers are observant of the pupils and very responsive to them, which encourages them to try hard. Teachers follow the good practice of making an evaluation at the end of each lesson. These thoughts inform further planning and their end-of-unit assessments, which are a part of the very good assessment procedures. Marking is very good and challenges and reinforces learning well. Teachers increasingly provide the pupils with opportunities to evaluate their own learning in line with current school developments. Teaching assistants are very well organized and make a significant and valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who lack self-esteem and skills.
22. The teaching of pupils with SEN is very good overall in small group settings. Pupils receive very good support in class from the very strong team of teaching assistants. Work is closely matched to the needs of pupils and this is reflected in the progress pupils make. Adults know the pupils very well and they have an excellent relationship with them. Procedures to check on progress are very good and the information is extremely well used to plan targets and further work. In a Year 5 English lesson, a group of five pupils with SEN achieved very well in their literacy lesson because excellent teaching inspired them to work with others and contribute to the class debate about whether the wolf in the little pig's story was guilty or not guilty. In a Year 2 lesson excellent teaching ensured pupils with SEN extended their descriptive vocabulary. One pupil suggested 'The old man appeared behind the back of the door; he walked along and his hat started to float.'

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is very good. There are outstanding opportunities for enrichment through carefully planned activities within and outside the school. Resources and accommodation are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very broad and balanced to enable the pupils to achieve very well.
- The curriculum for children in the foundation stage is stimulating and imaginatively planned to promote very good achievement.
- The curriculum is highly innovative, with outstanding opportunities to include all pupils.
- Support for pupils with SEN is very good, both in lessons and in groups for additional support.

Commentary

23. The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection because there are now good schemes of work for all subjects. Resources have been improved and are very well used by staff and pupils for teaching and learning.
24. The curriculum is very broad and very well balanced to enable the pupils to achieve very well in all subjects. The very strong focus on personal development prepares the pupils very well for the next stage of their education. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage provides very many exciting opportunities to explore and to investigate. The youngest children also benefit from a very well designed programme that builds a true foundation upon which they enter into the life of the main school. There are very good arrangements for the smooth transition of children from home to nursery. The induction of children from nursery to reception is sensitively handled and the curriculum is carefully tailored to the needs of young ones.
25. The school fully meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice for pupils identified as having SEN. Provision for SEN is very good and the quality of resources is good. Pupils receive very good support in withdrawal groups and when supported by teaching assistants in lessons.
26. There are excellent opportunities for enrichment within and outside the school day. These include the Eco project, which motivates the pupils to achieve very well in a range of subjects, as well as enabling them to learn about the wider aspects of the world in which they live. The pupils consider recycling and waste, for example, and through practical activities starting from their school as a base, they learn to value their surroundings and beyond. This is excellent preparation for citizenship. A particular strength of these arrangements is the way that all pupils, from the youngest to the oldest, are offered these learning opportunities. Inclusion and equality of opportunity are excellent throughout the school. The Inclusion Award recently given to the school celebrates these achievements. The school has a register for gifted and talented pupils.
27. There are very good links between subjects and areas of learning. These are carefully planned to ensure that the rigour of the National Curriculum is not compromised. Towards this end, each subject is thoroughly monitored by the headteacher and the subject co-ordinators. In addition, the head and her staff plan the curriculum to ensure that there is excellence and enjoyment of learning for their pupils.
28. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from a very wide range of relevant visits and visitors to extend their learning. A World War II veteran gave a presentation which deepened pupils' understanding of that aspect of history. During the inspection, a visitor from Zoolabs brought a number of insects and animals for the pupils to look at and to handle, as part of their study of habitats. There was a sense of awe and wonder

among the pupils on seeing these creatures at first hand. Visits to an outdoor centre for pupils in Year 6 help them to experience outdoor pursuits and to test them physically and mentally. The expertise of secondary school teachers and local sport enthusiasts provides an extension to pupils' learning, as observed during the inspection. Extra-curricular provision covers many areas, such as music, dance, wildlife and numerous sporting activities, and these are very well attended and contribute much to the personal and social development of the pupils, and hence to their achievement. All these opportunities bring learning to life and make a lasting impression in pupils' minds.

29. There is a very good match of teachers and assistants to the needs of the curriculum. The headteacher's outstanding leadership is pivotal in creating a very effective spirit of teamwork among staff, which is a key factor in the school's success. The office staff provide a highly efficient and welcoming image of the school. There is a good range of resources to support learning in most subjects. The accommodation is good and the imaginatively developed outdoor areas all provide effective learning opportunities for all year groups. Currently, the nursery class is separated from the main building, but there are plans in hand to combine it with the reception class to make one foundation stage unit in September. The accommodation is very well maintained by the site manager and staff, and very effectively enhanced by attractive displays that celebrate pupils' success and efforts.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the health and safety and welfare of pupils is very good, as is the quality of care, guidance and support that they receive. Arrangements to involve them the life of the school, and to sound out and act on their views, are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults in the school get to know pupils very well, build up excellent relationships with them, and give them very effective guidance.
- Pupils' overall progress is very closely monitored and very well promoted.
- Pupils with additional special needs get support and guidance that meets their particular needs.
- Pupils have a good understanding of their attainment and of how to improve their work.
- Pupils feel safe, secure and fairly treated, and are therefore able to learn well.
- Members of staff value the achievements of all pupils and respect their ideas.

Commentary

30. The school is an orderly, caring community that creates an environment in which children can learn and flourish. The induction of new pupils of any age is handled very sympathetically so that they rapidly become accustomed to school routines, settle in quickly and make good progress. All year groups get very good guidance on life outside school and receive very good preparation for the next stage of their education. The school's PSHE programme makes a substantial contribution in this area. It helps pupils to develop essential social skills and enhances their understanding of their responsibilities to their community and the wider world. Year 6 receive very good support during their induction into secondary education. There are excellent arrangements to prepare them for the transfer to the local secondary school.

31. The excellent quality of relationships in the school enhances its provision for care and guidance. Members of staff know pupils very well and monitor their progress very closely. They quickly identify anyone who is having problems and ensure that he or she receives appropriate help. The school has very good formal procedures for assessing attainment, and for monitoring and informing pupils of their academic progress, which help inform guidance to the pupils. The school alerts parents to any concerns at an early stage and, in the case of particularly difficult or vulnerable children, uses external agencies to provide support. Pupils are happy with the arrangements for care and guidance. They find members of staff easy to talk to, and have faith in their ability to give helpful advice on problems.
32. The school keeps very good records and documentation on all pupils with SEN. All class teachers have their own information and are responsible for writing individual education plans for pupils. Pupils have their own individual targets that are reviewed regularly. The school maintains very good links with support agencies and this close partnership contributes to the very good care pupils receive.
33. There are very good arrangements to promote pupils' health, safety and well-being. The school site is secure and pupils are well supervised at lunchtime. Child protection has a high profile within the school. The headteacher, who has had relevant training in child protection issues, shares her expertise with other members of staff and inducts new staff into the school's procedures. Pupils receive very good guidance on how to protect themselves via teaching in PSHE lessons on "stranger danger", and drugs and alcohol abuse. The staff and governing body are diligent in matters of health and safety. The school maintains full records on pupils' medical problems and makes very good provision for first aid. It has put in place a system of regular risk assessments, including automatic assessment of all educational visits.
34. Pupils are involved fully in the life of the school, and members of staff regularly seek their opinions by both informal and formal means. Circle time and PSHE lessons give pupils good opportunities to discuss ideas and express their feelings as individuals. The school council acts as an official forum for their collective view, and they also get the chance to complete a questionnaire each year as part of the school's self-evaluation. Pupils are satisfied with the arrangements for consulting them. They feel that their opinions are valued and treated very seriously by members of staff. In the pre-inspection questionnaire more than nine out of ten pupils said that teachers listened to their ideas.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is good, and its links with the community and other schools are excellent. Overall, its partnerships make a very valuable contribution to pupils' opportunities for learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very pleased with the work of the school.
- Parents receive very good information on the curriculum and their children's progress.
- There are very good arrangements for consulting parents and taking their views into account.

- The school's excellent links with the community greatly enrich its curriculum and enhance the quality of support and guidance for pupils.
- Links with other schools are extremely strong and are beneficial to pupils' learning.
- Some parents do not make enough effort to ensure that their children attend school.
- Significant numbers of parents lack the necessary skills to support their children's learning.
- There are very good links with outside support agencies for pupils with SEN.

Commentary

35. Parents are very pleased with the school. The majority of parents is satisfied with all aspects of the school's work, including home-school links, although there is a little dissatisfaction with information on pupils' progress. In the questionnaire, one in ten parents said that they are not well informed about how their child is getting on. Inspectors agree with the majority opinion, including the view on information for parents. In their judgement the school makes very good arrangements to inform parents about their children's learning and progress. There have been improvements since the previous inspection. The omissions from the school prospectus and annual report of the governing body have been addressed. Both documents now meet legal requirements and provide good summaries of the school's work. Similar information is readily available on the school website. Parents receive frequent updates on school events and their children's learning. There are regular newsletters from the headteacher, and each class teacher sends home a letter outlining the class's activities for the term. The school has very good procedures for reporting formally to parents on pupils' progress via regular consultation meetings and annual written reports. The latter provide parents with clear statements of children's levels of attainment in the core subjects of the curriculum, and include targets for improvement in English and mathematics.
36. The school has established good links with parents of pupils who have SEN. They are consulted and involved in regular reviews concerning the pupils' progress. Individual education plans identify clearly how parents can help their children with specific tasks and challenges.
37. The school makes very good arrangements to consult parents and take their views into account. Many of the consultations are informal, but very effective. Pupils' homework diaries can be, and sometimes are, used as the vehicle for a dialogue between parents and teachers. There are plenty of opportunities for informal discussions. The school has an 'open door' policy for parents to visit. Parents are always welcome to come in to talk to members of staff and many of them do so after the end of the school day. The school has good procedures to sound out the views of all parents formally through an annual questionnaire and takes the findings carefully into account when drawing up the school improvement plan.
38. Overall, parents make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home. They are generally supportive of the school, and some of them play an active role in school life. For example, members of the Firs Association organise fund-raising events and every year donate £100 towards the cost of educational trips for each class. In contrast, there are some parents who do not give adequate support to pupils' learning. They do not value education and consequently do not ensure that their children attend school when they should. There are also some families who, although anxious for their children to do well, lack the skills and knowledge to help them with

their learning. The school is aware that it needs to encourage some parents to give more active support to its work and has identified this as an area for improvement.

39. The school's excellent links with the community enhance pupils' learning and personal development. The school makes extremely good use of the local area and local services as educational resources. Representatives of different faiths come in to lead assemblies, which raises pupils' awareness of their own and other people's beliefs. Coaches from local sports associations work with teachers and pupils on a range of sports activities. The school has strong links with a wide variety of local organisations, such as the police, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, The Trafford Centre and Manchester Airport. These contacts enrich pupils' experiences, as when they work with experts from some of these bodies or they go to them for educational visits. The school encourages its pupils to serve the community through charity fund-raising and similar activities. For example, it holds a 'Spring Festival' at which they bring in gifts for elderly people and sick children in local hospitals. This gives pupils a good opportunity to learn about responsibility and citizenship.
40. The school has extremely good links with other schools and is a member of several partnerships that seek to improve pupils' opportunities for learning. For example, it is the lead school in the Primary Strategy Learning Network. It has a strong and very valuable link with a school in Uganda. The Ugandan headteachers' visit to Firs School has greatly increased pupils' understanding of societies that are very different from their own. Firs School has an outstanding partnership with Ashton-on-Mersey School, the nearby secondary school. There are strong links as a result of the latter's status as a specialist sport college, but the greatest strength is the excellent co-operation between the schools over the transfer of pupils. This extends well beyond the usual induction events and discussions between members of staff. Year 6 pupils spend part of the summer term at Ashton-on-Mersey, where they are taught by their class teacher and by secondary staff. Their learning benefits from access to Ashton-on-Mersey's resources, and they receive a very thorough preparation for their transfer to their new school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. The leadership of other key staff, management and governance of the school are very good. Leadership of curriculum subjects and SEN is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The senior management team provides strong direction based on clear educational values.
- Key members of staff provide strong role models in their own professional practice.
- Strategic planning is very good and the school is engaged in many valuable initiatives which enhance pupils' learning.
- The school has very good self-evaluation procedures and a realistic assessment of its strengths and weaknesses.

Commentary

41. The headteacher has excellent leadership qualities. Her far-sighted ambitions for the children, to improve their learning and provision, are expressed through the whole ethos of the school and the many valuable initiatives on which the school has embarked. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and the large number of recent national and regional awards provides clear evidence of sustained effort. The senior management team has very strong characteristics so that innovation, decisions and evaluation come together very successfully. For example, the excellent transfer arrangements for Year 6 pupils with the receiving secondary school provide them with a valuable taste of secondary school life, help resolve anxieties and promote a mutually deeper understanding between the two school staffs. There are similarly active plans to improve provision for nursery and reception children, and to make better ICT provision linked with the secondary school. The strength of the headteacher's skills is also recognised through her position as an LEA Primary Strategy Consultant leader.
42. Curriculum subject leaders and the SEN coordinator are very effective so that there is a strong support system across the school. The subject action plans have clear targets based on detailed evaluations. The very thorough analysis and monitoring of test results, as well as on-going observations of the pupils, inform decisions by the SMT about strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and provision to include in the school improvement plan (SIP). The success criteria in the SIP are generally measurable although not always sharp enough to support the school's self-evaluation. The processes of innovation, action and evaluation are very effective overall and link with the school's very good staff performance management. For example, following a visit to the school by headteachers from Uganda, the school has established a working partnership with a school in Uganda and two teachers have visited this school to gain a first-hand understanding of conditions there. All members of staff have a strong drive to enhance pupils' learning and the management of initiatives and special events is very good, for example of the VE Day celebrations. The school has an excellent approach to including all pupils and ensures that they have a voice to influence improvements. For example, the Year 6 teacher encourages pupils to respond to her marking of their work, and pupils contributed to the design of the sensory garden.
43. Monitoring procedures are generally very thorough. The headteacher and senior staff make lesson observations which inform decisions on the very good emphasis on continuing staff professional development. The subject leaders carry out checks on pupils' work regularly. They sometimes make formal lesson observations or work with a colleague to share expertise, but this good practice could be extended. The headteacher's procedures to track pupils' progress are very good, as are the processes of setting targets which make clear the expectations for the pupils.
44. Leadership and management of SEN are very good. The coordinator has a very good grasp of issues and needs and is very well organised. There is a clear action plan for the development of SEN. All members of staff are deployed very well to support pupils in lessons and withdrawal groups according to their needs.
45. The governing body gives very good oversight and strategic direction. Governors have very good procedures to visit the school and become informed about strengths, weaknesses and planned improvements. They ensure that the school meets statutory requirements and that business and current issues are managed effectively through their good committee structure. Their role as a critical friend is a real strength, based on wide knowledge of the school and high expectations for the pupils. There is good

evidence of continual improvement over many years, despite the need to budget for a falling roll.

46. The school's financial management is very good and is targeted on identified educational priorities, particularly in maintaining staffing levels and raising standards. The governors set a prudent budget and manage forward planning very well, taking very good account of the principles of obtaining best value, for example in the ICT partnership with the secondary school. Here, technical and curriculum support is set to make significant improvements. The higher than usual carry-forward figure in the table below is appropriately held in reserve for staffing costs and planned building improvements. Daily financial and secretarial business is managed very well by the welcoming staff of the school office. The school site is generally attractive, clean and maintained well and benefits from the good attention of the site manager.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	576 883
Total expenditure	568 995
Expenditure per pupil	3 109

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	49 695
Balance carried forward to the next	57 583

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. Provision for children in the foundation stage is very good. Children enter the nursery class part-time in the morning, in September. They enter the reception class the following year. The children start on the foundation stage curriculum from the beginning of the nursery and make very good progress overall towards achieving the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. When they transfer to Year 1, standards are below the expected levels in language, communication and literacy and in mathematical development. In knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development, the children reach the appropriate levels for their age. In personal, social and emotional development, the children exceed the expected levels. Records show that their attainment overall into the nursery is well below expectations in most areas of learning and very low in their communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development, which matches the inspectors' observations.
48. The previous inspection report judged that the curriculum for children was good. The picture now is even more positive because the curriculum is very good. It is very well planned to make it appropriate for children at this stage of learning, including those with special educational needs, the more able and those who have English as an additional language. There are exciting and imaginative opportunities for the children to explore and to investigate inside and outside the classroom. The children benefit from a carefully planned programme of visits and visitors, which adds a broader dimension to their learning. The very good assessment procedures provide extensive information about all aspects of children's development and are very well used to plan the next step of children's learning. The excellent inclusion of all children is reflected in the impact of the provision on these children's learning and achievement.
49. Leadership and management of the foundation stage are very good. The nursery is separated from the main building, which is not ideal. However, next term, the nursery and reception classes will be combined to form one unit. This move is intended to provide the children with further opportunities for learning through combined activities. This arrangement is in good hands because the co-ordinator for this stage has an outstanding clarity of vision and sense of purpose, resulting in the very good provision for the children. She has excellent plans for continuing development to ensure that the children receive the best on offer to them. She is a very good model for her colleagues. Excellent relationships and the very effective teaching assistants contribute significantly to the very happy atmosphere evident in all classes and to the children's very good progress. Very good induction procedures assist the children in settling very happily into school. Very good links within the school ensure children transfer smoothly into the reception class and later into Year 1. Parents are well informed by regular letters and homework books which show them clearly how they might contribute to their children's learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in children's personal, social and emotional development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve excellently through the impact of the excellent teaching they receive.
- Excellent relationships are established which ensure that children feel secure.
- The members of staff provide a very good balance between child- and adult-initiated activities to promote independent learning.

Commentary

50. Children achieve excellently in their personal, social and emotional development because the provision and teaching are excellent. The members of staff have very high expectations for children's behaviour and responses. Children in the nursery class are very well settled into the expected routines. Daily routines are applied consistently and these help the children to feel happy and secure in a caring environment. In the reception class, the children continue to thrive personally, socially and emotionally because members of staff give a high priority to this crucial area of their development. As a result, children are confident and show respect to adults and to each other, following the very good role models and excellent relationships which members of staff provide. During the inspection, for example, one of the children confidently took a visitor round the reception class, showing her the different areas of their learning on offer. The very good balance between teacher- and child-initiated activities enables the children to make choices and to develop independence. They understand the rules for working and playing together, as observed in the happy learning atmosphere. Personal safety is emphasised. The children are taught how to call emergency numbers through practical activities. The reception teacher, for example, very successfully combined the history of the Great Fire of London with modern fire-fighting arrangements.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because staff are skilled in developing children's language.
- There is very strong focus on language skills in all activities.

Commentary

51. Through very good teaching, children achieve very well in language, communication and literacy. From a very low start, the children's attainment by the end of reception is below that expected for the age. In the nursery, where teaching is good, members of staff provide many opportunities for talk and for modelling sentences. While sitting for a snack, the teacher and her assistant usually, but not always, chat with the children and in all activities they promote good discussion to help increase their language skills. In the reception class, the members of staff provide stimulating and imaginatively planned activities to ensure that children's language skills are successfully consolidated and extended. In a very good lesson, the teacher successfully extended children's vocabulary by asking open-ended questions. This encouraged one child to offer reasons, using full sentences. The guided reading and writing sessions are very well organised to ensure maximum progress for all children. Children read simple

sentences such as 'I can swim' and begin to recognise words in the text. Love of books is strongly emphasised by both adults, who are very skilful in teaching reading. The classroom assistant, for example, enthusiastically discussed the books which different groups of children were reading, reminding them of the 'safari' they made and all the animals they saw. As a result of all these arrangements, children were often seen choosing a book on their own initiative.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of mathematical language and ideas is very good, resulting in children's very good achievement.
- Children learn very well through practical and play activities.

Commentary

52. The very good teaching results in children's very good achievement. From a very low start, attainment is below that expected by the end of reception. In the nursery, with guidance from the co-ordinator, the members of staff plan a very good range of practical activities to give the children hands-on experiences which lead them to understand shape, size, weight and capacity. The members of staff stress the importance of correct vocabulary. When one of the children, who was identified as having SEN, explored how the scales worked, the teacher helped him by discussing about 'the scale-pan going down' when too many items were placed at one end. The ice ball dropped into water provided the children with opportunities to compare size. In reception, members of staff build on children's knowledge and skills of mathematics by providing numerous activities to extend learning. The teacher seizes opportunities to consolidate counting, for example in illustrations to ask the children how many people are skipping. There are plentiful first-hand experiences for the children to learn to build on their mathematical skills, as in the Bus Stop play. The children used real coins of 50p or 20p, depending on the lengths of the journey. In small group activities, the members of staff consolidated children's understanding by providing them with activities which were adapted to meet their differing abilities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well through the very good teaching they receive.
- Teachers and learning assistants create a lively learning environment to stimulate children's learning.

Commentary

53. Children are provided with a wide range of experiences to stimulate their curiosity. In the nursery, for example, while the teacher was showing them an ice ball, which was beginning to melt in the water, she asked the children 'Do you know what makes these patterns?' One of the children suggested 'trapped air'. The teacher took this opportunity to talk about the ice ball melting, introducing the word 'floating' when one of the children said 'bobbing'. As a result, the children are beginning to acquire early scientific knowledge. In the reception class, the children learn about magnets and delight to see magic marbles move with the magnet. The children explore movement in historical and scientific contexts. When the teacher showed them illustrations of different bicycles, the children remembered how the first bicycle was ridden. This led to a greater understanding of change in transport, with the teacher adding different vocabulary such as 'caterpillar tracks' on a tank to extend learning. The investigation of cars on different surfaces led the children to an early understanding of friction. All

these first-hand experiences encourage the children to explore, to observe, to predict, to make decisions and to discuss. As a result, attainment is in line with that expected by the end of reception. The members of staff lay a very good foundation for problem solving, which is a very strong feature of all teaching and learning throughout the school.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Through very good teaching, children achieve very well.
- Very good links are made to other areas of children's learning.

Commentary

54. Teaching and learning are very good in both year groups, resulting in very good achievement for the children. Children are on course to reach the standard expected by the end of reception. Nursery children show increasing control when playing with large apparatus by means of pushing and pulling in the outdoor area. Most children shape malleable materials confidently by rolling and manipulating. They are developing the skills to build simple structures with construction kits and are improving their skills of cutting and sticking. In the reception class, the members of staff plan exciting activities where children can respond imaginatively, such as in creative dance, making 'sunbeams and rainbows'. Outdoors, the children confidently use wheeled toys and manoeuvre them skilfully without bumping into one another. It was not possible to observe any physical activities in the hall.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide children with very good opportunities to develop creativity.
- Children achieve very well because of the very good teaching they receive.

Commentary

55. Children are provided with a very good range of stimulating activities which enable them to develop their imagination. As a result, children are on course to reach the standard expected by the end of reception. In the nursery, children explore musical instruments and the sounds that these make. 'Under the Sea' exploration offers many opportunities for creative role play, providing many links with other areas of children's learning. In the reception class, the teacher inspires the children to use their own ideas for creative expression. In this class, there are very good examples of this development, such as in computer pictures, role play in Granny's Cottage or outdoors, exploring clay and using different materials such as torn paper to create a modern picture. There are very good links with other areas of children's learning, such as experimenting with wheels in paint and making tracks, creating very effective paintings.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good, ensuring clear priorities for raising standards further.
- Both infant and junior libraries are used well so that pupils develop a genuine interest in books.
- Literacy skills are used extremely well to enhance learning in other subjects.

Commentary

56. Achievement is very good and all pupils make significant gains in their learning. From a very low attainment on entry pupils build consistently on their prior attainment. In the 2004 national tests, pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieved standards in line with those expected nationally. Standards were well above average at Year 2 and above average at Year 6 in relation to similar schools. Current standards in Year 2 and 6 are broadly average in all aspects. This is a notable achievement as almost half of the current Year 6 pupils are on the register of special educational needs. These pupils make very good progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make the same progress as their peers. There is no significant difference between boys and girls. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the standards pupils achieve, the progress pupils make from the time they enter the school and the overall quality of teaching and learning, which has improved from good to very good.
57. Standards observed in speaking and listening are in line with what you would expect for pupils of this age. Pupils experience regular opportunities to talk to a partner or to contribute to small group work discussions in response to the task. A very good level of support is given to pupils with SEN so that they are helped to understand and participate. Excellent teaching in Year 2 ensures pupils develop the range of vocabulary they use and gain confidence in their speaking skills. After seeing a film clip about ghosts pupils were challenged to use description well. For example, they wrote 'One terrifying pitch black night.' Excellent challenge ensures pupils were able to describe their feelings with words such as 'petrified.' This high standard of motivation continues as pupils progress through the school. Pupils in Year 5 learnt about court procedures from a visit from a magistrate. Excellent teaching enthused pupils to prepare and conduct a trial of the wolf in the three pigs story.
58. Pupils achieve well in their reading and standards are typical for their age in Year 2 and Year 6. Strategies to help pupils read are taught very well. Those with SEN are given additional help through carefully planned programmes. The two libraries are placed and used well. Older pupils read an appropriate range of books and knowledge of a range of authors and styles is typical for pupils of their age. All pupils have a reading record book and targets for developing their skill of reading ensure they understand what to do to improve.

59. Pupils achieve very well in their writing. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to develop the basic skills of well-formed handwriting, both to improve spelling and punctuation and to develop neat presentation of work. They are provided with very good and appropriate examples of writing which are demonstrated well by teachers so that pupils are well prepared to write effectively. The school has correctly identified punctuation as a whole-school focus. Pupils learn to write in a range of forms and Year 4 pupils show empathy in their poems about Africa, for example. A pupil with SEN wrote in a poem about Africa, 'The beaming sun blinds the people of Africa...The intense heat of the desert .. Tribes of Africa dance all night.' The teachers set clear guidelines and expectations and consequently pupils have learnt to evaluate their work.
60. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, with instances of excellent teaching in Year 2 and 5. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and teach all aspects progressively. Marking is very good and challenges and reinforces learning well. Teachers adapt the work to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. All pupils have literacy targets. Procedures to check on pupils' progress are very good. The use of ICT to enhance literacy skills is developed very well. Teaching assistants are very well organized and make a valuable contribution to learning. In an excellent lesson, highly imaginative and stimulating teaching resulted in very enthusiastic responses from pupils, who showed sustained concentration and interest. Pupils in Year 4 were able to identify persuasive language in advertisements because they were interested in the task and because the teacher used questions very well.
61. The co-ordinator for English is experienced and knowledgeable. She provides very good leadership and management. She has contributed significantly to the standards achieved and works closely with the headteacher to inspire and motivate staff. Standards, teaching and learning are monitored closely. Strengths and areas to develop are identified very effectively. Measures are put in place to make continual improvements in the quality of the provision. Resources and accommodation are good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Literacy skills are used very effectively throughout the school in many subjects. Pupils' writing and reading skills and vocabulary are extended very well. The use of ICT is very good. Pupils use the computer to type out their work, for example in history, geography and science, where there are plentiful opportunities for them to write about findings and experiences. Year 3 pupils used the computer to prepare a weather report and Year 2 pupils wrote about the Great Fire of London.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in the subject because of very good teaching.
- Pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes contribute greatly to their overall achievements.
- There are very good assessment procedures and target setting.
- The leadership of mathematics is very good and has a strong impact on standards.

- Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects.

Commentary

63. The pupils achieve very well from their very low attainment when they enter the school. Very good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute well to this very good achievement. Pupils with SEN receive effective assistance from their teachers and teaching assistants, and consequently they achieve very well. The school's provision is fully inclusive. Pupils who are more able are provided with consistently challenging work, resulting in very good achievement for them. They attain standards that are above average. Standards in Year 2 are average and this represents very good achievement. Standards in the current Year 6 are average; nearly half of these pupils are on the register of SEN.
64. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are very well planned and structured, with clear learning objectives. These are shared with the pupils so that they know what they are expected to learn. A particular strength of these arrangements is the way teachers provide the pupils with opportunities to evaluate their own learning. Teachers provide very good explanations and demonstrations in mathematics, which enable the pupils to make very good gains in their learning. Pupils are attentive and work hard in lessons. Teachers identify key vocabulary for lessons and ensure that the pupils learn and use these with understanding. A very good example was observed in Year 4, when the teacher asked the pupils to describe triangles. They offered scalene and isosceles triangles with confidence and understanding. The very strong focus on speaking and listening across all subjects is paying dividends in raising standards.
65. The classroom assistants support pupils' learning very effectively. This is achieved through the excellent leadership of the headteacher, who ensures that all staff are involved in her drive for excellence. The impact of their assistance is seen in the interaction with the pupils, challenging them to greater endeavours. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the classroom assistant unobtrusively supported the pupils in learning about co-ordinates, using the facilities of ICT. She then worked with different groups, skilfully asking questions and providing clear explanations as necessary. As a result, the pupils made very good learning gains. In lessons, teachers were observed using interactive whiteboards to enhance learning very effectively. Very good use is made of ICT as a learning tool in lessons to consolidate mathematical skills and understanding.
66. Scrutiny of work and lesson observations shows that tasks are very well matched to pupils' attainment and needs, because pupils of all abilities are set consistently challenging tasks. There are very effective systems for assessing pupils' individual progress, and tracking is in place throughout the school. Very good use is made of assessment information to set individual learning targets. Marking is meaningful, particularly when it is diagnostic and developmental. Pupils are given praise for good work and comments to help improvement are provided. In Year 6, for example, the teacher ensures that a dialogue is established between her and the pupils, who then correct their work, making further learning gains.
67. Leadership and management of mathematics are very good. The very high quality of investigative mathematics and the very strong links between all aspects of the subject throughout the school are helping to raise standards. All staff understand that enquiry skills lie at the heart of good teaching and learning. Towards this end, every lesson has an investigative element in it. The co-ordinator leads by example in the quality of her teaching. She provides practical activities to deepen pupils' understanding. The human

graph in the playground, using pupils to demonstrate data handling, very effectively summarised at first hand how to collect data and to record them. Through effective monitoring and evaluation, the school has a clear overview of standards and provision. Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection with respect to investigative mathematics, and resources are sufficient now for teaching and learning in the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Pupils apply and develop their mathematical skills well in other subjects. In Year 2, for example, in a combined science and Eco lesson, the pupils measured the circumference of trees in the school grounds to find the age of each, using their calculators. In Year 6, the pupils use their mathematical skills in history and geography. ICT features strongly in every year group as a tool for teaching and learning, such as traffic surveys. During breaks, Year 2 pupils sell breadsticks and low fat crisps for snacks, consolidating their counting skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because teaching and provision are very good.
- Teachers choose stimulating and challenging activities.
- There is a good emphasis on practical work, although there is less evidence of pupils carrying out investigations independently.

Commentary

69. Pupils generally enter the foundation stage with very limited experience of the world around them. The stimulating provision in the foundation stage provides experiences in many areas of scientific knowledge but as pupils enter Year 1 their knowledge and skills are close to average. Standards of the work seen are below average overall by Year 2 because few pupils reach standards that are above the national expectation. Standards are broadly average by Year 6 and pupils' achievement is very good. This represents an improvement in standards at Year 6 since the last inspection. Early analysis of the 2005 Year 6 national test results in science indicates that they are at the national average and above the average for similar schools, and that half the pupils gained the higher level 5. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when some higher attaining pupils were judged to be underachieving. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make the same progress as their peers. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

70. By Year 2, most pupils know the main parts of a plant and the life cycle from a seed. They have a satisfactory understanding of man-made and natural materials and recognise the properties used in making articles. They have also made measurements to determine the rough ages of different trees in the grounds, recording their results in a table. Pupils have developed a high level of respect for living things in their environment. This was shown in a very good lesson which took place in the school's wild area. Pupils lifted wooden logs so carefully to see the minibeasts beneath, taking great delight and interest in what they found, although they did not recognise several of

the animals. Pupils' previous work indicates a good range of practical work, although there is less evidence of controlled investigations. They apply several mathematical skills by taking measurements and making calculations but their literacy skills are not extended since many of the tasks only require brief answers to be completed on a worksheet.

71. By Year 6 most pupils reach the standard expected nationally and around half exceed it, indicating broadly average standards overall. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate good understanding and some present their work very well. Pupils make very good progress through the impact of stimulating and challenging experiences in the context of very good teaching. In addition, the classroom assistants support pupils' learning very effectively. In Year 4, a visiting teacher representing 'Zoolab' brought a selection of contrasting animals to help pupils learn about differing habitats. Pupils demonstrated very good attitudes, sitting alertly, as they learnt how a giant African land snail eats by rasping with its 3000 teeth on its tongue. In Year 5 pupils took their pulse after six forms of exercise, although some were not accurate in this, later transferring their results to an ICT graphical representation. Pupils in Year 6 took part in a very good 'rocket science' session as part of their excellent transfer programme to the local secondary school. This highly practical session enabled pupils to make and trial first a straw rocket propelled by their puff, then a rocket fuelled by the gas pressure gained by mixing baking powder with water and sealed in a film case. The pupils were highly motivated by the need to analyse the problems and apply their skills in order to be successful. Pupils' previous work shows developing understanding and skills across the topics.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Teachers plan tasks to challenge the pupils and develop their scientific skills. There is a very good basis of practical work but only limited evidence of pupils carrying out more independent investigation. Teachers engage very well with the pupils so that learning is extended, usually asking pupils to explain or reason about their ideas, although some opportunities are missed. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards very effectively so that, for example, pupils' learning about pulse rates is consolidated. Teachers are observant of the pupils and very responsive to them, which encourages them to try hard. The marking of pupils' books in Year 6 is very good, and interactive with the pupils. Assessment procedures are very thorough.
73. The subject coordinator provides very good leadership and there is evidence of continuing improvement. She carries out regular monitoring and provides much informal support to colleagues. The science curriculum is fully established and adapted for the pupils in the school. The teachers take full advantage of the opportunities provided in the school grounds - pupils plant and eat potatoes grown in their 'allotment'; they helped design the sensory garden; and the wild area is respected as providing habitats for a range of animals. Resources are satisfactory overall but are enhanced by a shared facility.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well overall because teachers use the ICT facilities imaginatively to promote their learning.
- Pupils take a very good interest in the tasks set, and sustain concentration very well.
- The subject coordinator is very knowledgeable and provides a strong lead.

Commentary

74. Pupils' achievement is very good overall through the school. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make the same progress as their peers. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Standards in ICT are broadly average by Year 2 although many pupils hesitate while finding letters on the keyboard or in entering commands using the mouse. In Year 1 pupils have selected pictures of fruit and labelled them. By Year 2 pupils have the skills to log on to a computer and find their own file. They have early word-processing skills to change the colour or font and were motivated well to compose alliterative or rhyming phrases. In a very good lesson on finding information most pupils followed the steps to locate information about a parrot or tiger, following a lively demonstration of the commands. The higher attaining pupils understood and carried out more than one way of finding the same information confidently.
75. Standards are average by Year 6 and several pupils are producing work at the higher level 5. Pupils in Year 3 entered data they had collected about local shops satisfactorily into an information package by entering commands using the mouse. They also have the skills to search the Internet for world weather forecasts. Pupils in Year 4 have produced satisfactory diagrams to show the answers to questions in a branching database. Following a very good introduction to spreadsheets, pupils in Year 5 collected their pulse rates following various forms of exercise and entered the data with satisfactory skill into a spreadsheet. Most pupils understood how to set up the table and how to produce a bar chart or line graph of their results.
76. Pupils in Year 6 were on a week's programme in the local secondary school in preparation for transfer in September. They demonstrated good adaptation in transferring their skills to the ICT suite in the secondary school. Each pupil prepared a PowerPoint slide of each day's activities, demonstrating satisfactory skills and using animation, visual effects with titles and importing pictures. Pupils' previous work shows good developing skills and application of ICT through the years. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6, for example, have used a spreadsheet to produce a budget sheet with formulae to make calculations for given cells.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers use the facilities of ICT very effectively for presentations and to provide challenging tasks for the pupils. The subject coordinator provides very good leadership and management. He has established a good system whereby all pupils have their own folder of work and access it using their password. He monitors a sample of pupils' work regularly and annotates them with a National Curriculum level to provide support to colleagues. His subject action plan is very thorough and gives good direction for improvement. The subject now has a scheme of work which provides progression through the school. The assessment procedures are very good. The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards imaginatively and to good effect in other subjects. In physical education for example, the teacher in Year 5 took a video of the children as they danced the cha-cha-cha then provided immediate feedback by replaying it through the whiteboard to promote evaluation and improvement. In mathematics, the Year 3 teacher set up a screen where pupils dragged shapes together according to a common criterion, such as the colour or number of sides. In Year 2, the class teacher took a video shot at five-second intervals of a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis, then played it back to the children, who were completely taken by the wonder of it. Teachers often encourage the pupils to enter commands on the whiteboards during lessons, tapping on the icon to locate data, for example.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported in detail below. Geography and history were sampled.

79. Observation of pupils' work in **history** suggests that standards are broadly average by Year 2. As they move through the school pupils progress through a carefully planned curriculum, which enables them to learn about significant people, places and events from both recent and more distant past and to use different sources of information to help them investigate the past. There are very good links with mathematics, for example Year 2 pupils used surveys and picture graphs to show how people travelled to school years ago. Literacy skills are used well to describe the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale, Mary Seole and Grace Darling. Pupils in Year 2 write diaries and about the Great Fire of London. Evidence suggests that history is fun and is enjoyed and appreciated by all. Photographic evidence shows the whole school taking part in a party to celebrate VE Day. Older pupils take part in a medieval ball and dress up in Tudor costumes. Year 3 pupils use Viking handwriting. Both geography and history have a high focus around the school. Very good use is made of the local area. The work planned for pupils is varied and interesting. Very strong links with other subject areas and the rich and well-planned range of visits and visitors enhance learning for all pupils.
80. Only two lessons were seen in **geography** and in both lessons the quality of teaching and learning was judged to be very good. In the Year 6 lesson pupils were taught geography during their excellent transition visit to the local high school. Pupils demonstrated a sound understanding of how leisure activities differed in a mountainous area between winter and summer. Very good teaching was observed in a Year 2 class and all pupils built very effectively on their prior attainment. Most pupils were able to identify the difference between physical and human features on the Isle of Coll and Ashton-on-Mersey. They showed a sound understanding of the different features on the island and mainland regions. The teacher used computers very well to help pupils learn and identify differences. Observations of pupils' work and displays showed very good use of other subject areas to enhance learning. Year 1 pupils use skills gained in design and technology and art well to create an attractive display of the North Pole. They made their own penguins and used literacy skills well to describe the conditions: 'Polar bears walk easily because they have hairy soles on their feet.' 'Polar bears are furry white and they can be dangerous.' Exciting work was observed in a Year 4 display about pollution. Computers and literacy were used extremely well to write poems about pollution. The poems showed empathy and understanding. The school link with Naranbhai helps pupils develop awareness and knowledge of the

world. Younger pupils develop awareness of the wider world following the travels of Barnaby Bear.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and build effectively on their previous learning.
- Pupils show respect for other religions.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall.
- The leadership and management are very good and have a strong impact on learning.

Commentary

81. Pupils achieve very well in religious education and build effectively on their prior attainment. By Years 2 and 6 standards are in line with those expected for pupils of their age in relation to the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with SEN are supported very well and make the same progress as their peers. Those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching and learning has improved from satisfactory to very good overall.
82. Pupils make very good progress as they move through the school because the overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Scrutiny shows an appropriate balance of learning about Christianity and other major faiths. Older pupils have an awareness and sensitivity to different religious beliefs and they show respect for other people's religions. Pupils in Year 4 have sound knowledge about the Jewish faith and the teachers plan interesting activities that help pupils learn and understand. Year 4 pupils learn about the story of Shabbat. They make Challah bread and can talk about why it is different and why it is special. Pupils demonstrated very good empathy and respect during a class ceremony of Shabbat.
83. Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of the Christian church and the life of Jesus. They know a cross is significant to Christians because Jesus died on the cross. In an excellent lesson pupils listened spellbound as the teacher shared photographs, artefacts and talked about why and how Christians pray and the significance of music. There were very good opportunities for pupils to reflect as they listened to two different styles of music used for worship. They used literacy skills well as they compared the two styles of music and talked openly about how the music made them feel. Pupils described the Marian music as solemn and mournful. They contrasted it with celebratory music. They were eager to express their feelings and talked about being exhilarated, powerful, joyful, and delighted.
84. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has developed the range of artefacts and resources.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and design and technology were inspected in full and are reported in detail below. Music and physical education were sampled.

85. In **music**, one lesson was observed, in Year 2. Very good teaching provided stimulation and high interest for the pupils as they were encouraged to select from a range of kitchen utensils those that could make a certain sound - scrape a potato skin, for example. Most pupils followed the rhythm reasonably as the class sang the melody. They responded well to the challenge to make up a new verse and improved their style following the teacher's strong lead. A few pupils learn instruments and there are several opportunities for pupils to sing and perform in a choir or productions during the year. The quality of singing in assemblies is good as pupils respond to the very good lead of a teacher. Musical appreciation is encouraged through assemblies and in several special events.
86. In **physical education** one lesson was observed in Year 5 and a selection of other activities. Pupils benefit from the skills and experience of sports specialists who visit. These teachers offer a very good variety of different sports and promote considerable enthusiasm and improvement of skills in the pupils. Sports include cricket, tag rugby, football and golf. In Year 2, pupils were seen developing ball control and games skills with a tennis racket and ball, for example to bounce the ball five times on the racket then catch it. The higher attaining pupils demonstrated good coordination although many pupils found bouncing the ball straight up difficult. In Year 5 pupils followed the teacher's good lead of a cha-cha-cha sequence. All pupils worked happily in mixed pairs, put in good effort and slowly improved their steps, although the girls tended to be neater and to provide a lead for the boys. Physical activity linked to a science lesson where pupils' measured their pulses showed satisfactory levels of fitness and coordination, although a few pupils do not have the stamina to sustain effort for long.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in art are well above average.
- Teaching is excellent, resulting in pupils' excellent achievement.
- The subject is very well enriched.
- Leadership and management are outstanding.

Commentary

87. The previous inspection report judged that standards in the subject were average by the end of Year 2 and 6. Since then, the school has made very good improvements because now, standards are well above average. There are three main reasons for these high standards, namely the enthusiastic co-ordination and leadership of the subject, the excellent quality of teaching supported by a very effective and knowledgeable teaching assistant, and the vibrant curriculum that has been successfully developed. As a result, pupils of all abilities make excellent achievement.
88. Art and design is very effectively enriched through liaison with the secondary school teachers who offer regular help with expertise such as clay modelling. Visits to art galleries and participation in an after-school art club all contribute to the wealth of creative expression. Around the school, there are very good examples of work covering the six areas of art and design, such as weaving, painting after the styles of

different painters, chalk and pastel drawings, batik work. In addition, the pupils use ICT to generate pictures after the style of Mondrian. The school is justly proud of the success of a Year 1 pupil who entered a competition organised by the Royal College of Sculptors. 'The Fancy Runner' sculpture won a third place in the finals in London.

89. The pupils are developing the necessary skills very well through the use of sketchbooks, where they can make visual notes and annotate sketches before making a final picture. In Year 5 there are some very good observational drawings linked to Patrick Caulfield's work, following a visit to a gallery. During the inspection, Year 1 pupils were inspired to make artistic arrangements using natural materials, following their study of work by Andy Goldsworthy. They were delighted to take digital photographs, which their teacher displayed in a class album the same night. The subject contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In the Aboriginal bark paintings, for example, Year 3 pupils used natural colours to paint cards very effectively.
90. Leadership and management of the subject are outstanding, resulting in these high standards. The co-ordinator's infectious enthusiasm inspires the pupils to give of their best. In her class, reception children have created an outstanding three-dimensional Mondrian sculpture. She has successfully developed thorough assessments, which are used to inform the next step of pupils' learning.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Pupils achieve very well across all aspects of the subject.
- Pupils' very good attitudes help their learning.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Effective leadership leads to continuing improvements.

Commentary

91. Standards are above average in Years 2 and 6. This constitutes an improvement on the previous inspection, when standards were average. Pupils achieve very well in their development of designing, making and evaluating skills. This very good achievement is due to the very effective teaching, pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and the very good quality of assessment procedures. Scrutiny of work shows that pupils in Year 1 design and make houses out of fruit cartons. Pupils learn to plan a design, evaluate it and make improvements before proceeding with making the model. In this class, the pupils plan a three-dimensional home and consider where they will put furniture and provide reasons for their choices. There are very good links with speaking and listening and with literacy. Throughout the school, there is a very strong emphasis on healthy eating and living and the subject is used well to enable the pupils to learn the importance of eating more fruit and vegetables, for example.
92. Lessons are very well planned, with interesting activities provided. In an effective lesson in Year 3, the teacher linked the project of making photo frames with a scientific exploration of structures. Through problem solving, the pupils considered how to

strengthen their structures to support weight. A display of mechanical components in the class shows how the pupils use their well-developing skills to make moving monsters, explaining how a pneumatic system works. In a very good lesson in Year 4, the pupils drew designs to make a bug catcher. They took into consideration the type of bug, its habitat and the conditions. They evaluated their designs, considering safety of their animal, purpose of the container, materials and tools. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work in the subject.

93. The co-ordinator is leading the subject well. In conjunction with the headteacher and staff, she has developed very good systems for assessment, which are used effectively to inform planning. There is consistency of approach throughout the school. The cross-curricular links are strongly emphasised to make learning relevant across all year groups.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education, and citizenship (PSHE&C) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well overall because most teaching is very good.
- The school gives a very strong emphasis to pupils' personal education.
- Special arrangements and visitors provide very good opportunities for older pupils to understand responsibilities in society.

Commentary

94. The promotion of pupils' self-esteem and of understanding about how they may take responsibility in society are key elements of the school's philosophy. Many decisions about how the school runs relate to living in a community and taking account of others.
95. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 1, pupils were helped to understand the importance of trees in the environment and to think about the effects of destruction of trees, where the teacher used a poem effectively to bring out points. No formal sessions were observed in Year 2 but the class teacher uses consistent strategies to help pupils be considerate to others and to learn to love and respect all forms of life. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate good development in their personal and social education.
96. In Year 3, the teacher's warm relationships helped establish good interest and attention on how to deal with a problem in their lives. She intervened sensitively to help pupils interpret their task and most began to take account of others in their discussion groups, showing satisfactory understanding of how another child would be feeling. In Year 4, the teacher tackled the difficult issue of what makes us angry and how we deal with anger. Many pupils showed very good progress in being able to voice their feelings and to say how they are learning to cope. As pupils round the class showed an 'angry' face there was much fun and recognition of them, demonstrating very good feelings and relationships amongst the pupils.
97. A very good special event in Year 5 entailed two magistrates visiting for the morning to discuss the work of a magistrate's court. Many pupils considered that a girl's shop-lifting was planned although several did not want to think she would be found guilty. Several pupils showed a good depth of understanding, for example by asking if a

sentence was changed if someone pleaded guilty. Overall the session provided very good experiences for the pupils so that they achieved very well. In Year 5, the teacher combined PSHE&C with science to help pupils take account of the need for considerate behaviour and sustained effort in raising their pulse rates. Most pupils took on the activities well and were responsible. Pupils in Year 6, at their receiving secondary school, were challenged to follow instructions and listen to others as part of a team building exercise. Most pupils cooperated well although a few found this a challenge. The pupils improved their understanding about how or why conflicts occur between different cultural backgrounds, and demonstrated very good learning through the impact of varied teaching methods, for example role play.

98. The quality of teaching is very good overall, although better with the older pupils in the lessons observed. Teachers are very sensitive to the pupils' needs and demonstrate very good understanding of them. The tasks are relevant and provide many good opportunities to reflect on their behaviour, how to resolve conflict and the responsibilities of living in a diverse society. Teachers generally use a good variety of skills and strategies to help pupils listen, as for example in Year 4 when only the child with the pebble should speak; or in Year 6 prompting pupils to think through the use of role play. The subject coordinator gives very good attention to managing and developing PSHE&C. He has ensured that the teachers work from a well-structured scheme and he monitors provision carefully. He has been influential in the creation of the sensory garden and in widening the use of the wild area outdoor classroom. The school ensures there are strong links between English and PSHE&C, and that there is a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' self-esteem, which underpins their learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	6
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	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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