

INSPECTION REPORT

OVERCHURCH INFANT SCHOOL

Upton, Wirral

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105043

Headteacher: Mrs Miriam Chambers

Lead inspector: Mr David Carrington

Dates of inspection: 12th – 14th October 2004

Inspection number: 267459

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	301
School address:	Moreton Road Upton Wirral
Postcode:	CH49 4NS
Telephone number:	0151 677 3335
Fax number:	0151 678 7301
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Doreen Heraty
Date of previous inspection:	30 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Overchurch Infant School is located a short way from the centre of the village of Upton, which is about five miles east of Birkenhead. A third of pupils come from outside the local area. The school is large for an infant school, with 131 boys and 144 girls in reception and Years 1 and 2. The nursery has 19 boys and 33 girls who attend part-time. There is special provision for four pupils with physical disability. At present there are three such pupils in school, each with a statement. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties and receive specific support. There are relatively few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and are at an early stage of English acquisition. The vast majority of pupils complete all of their infant education at the school and mobility is low.

The school was awarded the *Artsmark* in 2003, The *School Achievement Award* in 2002 and the *Eco School Award* in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, music, physical education, religious education, personal, social and health education and citizenship.
9188	Mrs Jane McHugh	Lay inspector	
22421	Mrs Val McGrath	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage.
2818	Mr Graham Warner	Team inspector	Science, geography, history, special educational needs, English as an additional language.

The inspection contractor was:

TRIO INSPECTIONS Ltd
Unit 2
Barclays Venture Centre
University of Warwick Science Park
Sir William Lyons Road
Coventry
CV6 7EZ

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overchurch Infant School provides an **effective** education for its pupils. Standards are above average overall and achievement is good. Pupils are very well behaved and have very positive attitudes to their work. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils work from a rich and exciting curriculum. The overall quality of leadership and management is very good and the headteacher provides very well focused direction for the school. The school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Inspectors judge standards to be above average in reading, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. They are well above average in art and design and music.
- Achievement is good throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good with some particular strengths.
- There is a very happy atmosphere in school, which enables all pupils to work with confidence and enjoyment from the very good curriculum. Behaviour and attitudes are very good.
- The school is very well led and managed and the headteacher has created an excellent team of staff.
- Standards in writing are average and are not as high as those in other aspects of English or other subjects.
- Pupils are not well enough informed of how well they are learning.

The school has made **good** improvement since it was inspected previously in 1998. Although not so evident in the chart below, standards have, in fact, risen well since the previous inspection. The school has built on the strengths identified then and worked successfully to make improvements to the weaknesses that were identified in teachers' assessment and pupils' independence as they work.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

In 2002, the school earned the School Achievement Award for its effective work to improve standards. As the following table shows, results in the Year 2 national tests in 2003 were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. Results in the science teacher assessments were also average. In comparison with similar schools, results were well above average overall.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	B	C	B	A
Writing	B	C	C	A
Mathematics.	B	C	C	A

Key: A - high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E* - low. Similar schools are those with a similar entitlement to free school meals.*

The evidence from the inspection indicates that this year standards are above average overall and that achievement is **good**. However, standards in writing are average again this year and this subject remains the school's key priority for improvement. Boys have not been as successful as girls in writing for a number of years, though in other subjects there is no significant difference in their

performance. The preliminary results for the Year 2 national tests in 2004 show that standards have risen in school since 2003, notably in mathematics and science. Standards are now back at the level found traditionally in school. The school achieved the Gold Artsmark in 2003 for its sterling work in promoting standards in arts subjects. This strength has been maintained and standards in art and design and music are well above average and achievement is very good.

Children start in the nursery with average levels of skill and knowledge. They achieve well in nursery and reception classes and by the end of their reception year, standards are above average in the six areas of learning.

Pupils have above average attendance levels. They are very keen to come to school and show very positive attitudes. Behaviour is very good because of the very effective and positive management of conduct. Relationships are a strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **very good**, with excellence shown in cultural development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **good**. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' past work both indicate that teaching and learning are **good**. There are particular strengths in teaching; pupils are given very good encouragement to work hard and they respond very well to this. Teaching methods are very good and teachers insist on high standards of behaviour. Assessment is good, though pupils could be provided with more opportunities to discover how well they are learning.

The curriculum is of very good quality. It is rich, relevant and stimulating. The curriculum is very well enhanced by visits and other activities and education in the arts is excellent. Pupils are very well cared for in school and there is a very good partnership with parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **very good**. The headteacher provides strong, committed and very well focused leadership and has created an excellent team of staff. Other key managers, including the deputy headteacher, are also very good leaders. The governors provide very effective support and advice and are very influential in their work for improvement in school. Management is good with some particular strengths. The enhancement of the good quality target setting and sharing process is a current priority in school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils share very positive views of the school. They particularly like the warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere in school and the staff are singled out for praise. Inspectors agree with these views completely.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to work for improved standards in writing, particularly in the presentation of pupils' work and boys' achievement.
- Hone the procedures to keep pupils informed of the progress they make in learning, especially through the consistent sharing of targets, informative comments when marking and by providing more opportunities for pupils to self-evaluate their work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are **above average** and achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the Year 2 national tests in 2003 were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics.
- In comparison with similar schools, results were well above average overall.
- The preliminary results for the Year 2 national tests in 2004 show that standards have improved in school, notably in mathematics and science.
- This year standards are above average overall and that achievement is good overall.
- Children start in the nursery with average standards and they achieve well in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards in writing are average but boys have not been as successful as girls in writing for a number of years.
- Standards in art and design and music are well above average and achievement is very good.

Commentary

1. When children start in the nursery they have average levels of skill and knowledge in the six areas of learning. They achieve well in the nursery due to the good quality of provision. This good achievement is maintained in the reception classes and by the time the children join Year 1 the vast majority have reached the early learning goals in all six areas. Children are very well prepared for their work in the National Curriculum. Standards are, therefore, above average.
2. The good achievement continues in Years 1 and 2. There is much consistency in the quality of provision in these two years. Most teaching is of good quality and there is some very good and excellent teaching too. This all impacts positively on learning and progress and pupils achieve consistently well through the two years. By the end of Year 2 standards are at above average levels.
3. The 2003 national test results in Year 2 showed that those pupils attained above average standards in reading and average standards in writing and mathematics. These results bore very favourable comparison with schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals and were well above average overall. These results are summarised in the following table.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.9 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (16.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 100 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The table shows that standards in writing in school were lower than those in reading and mathematics in both 2002 and 2003. This trend was similar to that found nationally. The school has identified writing as its key priority for improvement and has introduced a number of

successful measures to raise standards. Early indication from the 2004 national tests¹ suggests that standards in writing were at a similar average level last school year. Current evidence shows writing standards to be average this year. Inspectors judge that there could be more opportunities for writing skills to be promoted in other subjects, such as religious education, and handwriting and presentation could be further improved. The preliminary interpretation of the 2004 national test results shows that standards in mathematics (and in the science teacher assessments) are above those of 2003.

5. Boys have not been as successful as girls in the writing tests for a number of years. The school has identified this trend clearly and is working to raise the standards in writing of the boys. School managers are in the process of evaluating the resources for reading and writing in terms of their interest level for boys and are providing additional boy-friendly materials to encourage improved achievement by them. Inspectors found little evidence of any significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in writing or any other subject. Both boys and girls are well motivated in lessons and they work equally productively.
6. Standards in arts related subjects are a strength of the school. Those in art and design and music are well above average and achievement is very good in these two subjects. The quality of provision is excellent in the arts and the school's effectiveness was recognised clearly in 2003 when it was awarded the gold *Artsmark*. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average and the pupils achieve well. This is the fruit of the very good leadership and management of ICT, which has been successful in improving the curriculum and raising the standard of teaching. The use of ICT across the curriculum has also been improved well and the school continues to investigate ways of broadening such opportunities in order to strengthen pupils' achievement further. In religious education, standards are above average and achievement is good. There is real value attached to work in religious education by both staff and the pupils. Many religious education lessons are special times of reflection and have a considerable spiritual aura. Pupils are keen to learn about other faiths, such as Hinduism and to compare these with their good knowledge of Christianity.
7. There are a small number of pupils in classes throughout the school who speak English as an additional language. Their needs are being met successfully within their classes. The school has a very clear policy of inclusion of all pupils in all of its activities. When outside help is needed, often when children are first admitted to school, it is systematically sought and given. Pupils with English language needs have them met through a well-structured system of in class support. Both class teachers and support staff give support very skilfully. Support is well managed by the headteacher. Class teachers are aware of the pupils' needs from the time that they enter the school and careful attention is given to plan tasks at appropriate levels in order to meet these needs successfully.
8. Children with special educational needs are similarly identified at an early stage after their entry into the school. Outside agency support is only sought after thorough observation and the completion of full assessment of needs. Support is made available according to the outcomes of this assessment. Progress is then closely monitored and measures of pupils' actual achievement are an essential element of the regular reviews. The majority of the pupils achieve well.

¹ There is, as yet, no national data available in order to make reliable comparisons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, and their attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are well behaved, polite and show respect for each other and their teachers.
- Spiritual, moral, social development is very good; cultural awareness is excellent.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and punctuality is very good.

Commentary

9. Observations of pupils at work and play and discussions with them show they respond very well to the consistently high expectations from staff. Almost all pupils work hard and behave very well in lessons and around the school; their personal development is very good. They respond extremely positively to everything the school offers, enjoy the wide range of extra curricular activities ranging from sport and dance activities to educational trips and visiting theatre groups; they are confident learners. Staff work successfully to ensure that the very few pupils with behavioural difficulties are well focused on their work. There have been no exclusions from school for many years.
10. The school pays a great deal of attention to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in all of its activities. Very focused support is given on a full time basis to pupils such as those with statements. This ensures that they play a full part in school life. All pupils are considerate of one another as a result of the good role models provided by adults who work with them. Their input into the life of the school is highly valued. As a result, pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to learning and the school in general.
11. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to assume posts of responsibility such as light monitors, as trained play leaders and as school council members, who proudly wear their purple caps at break times. Holders of these posts are excellent role models for the younger pupils. Children achieve well above average standards in personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage. This is due to the very firm focus on the children initiating and managing their activities themselves.
12. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is very good and promoted across the curriculum, especially through personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons and by participation in their class assemblies. Their cultural awareness is excellent. Pupils have a rich introduction to diverse art forms and develop a very good understanding and respect for other religions and different cultures through the work they do in music and art and design. Very good social awareness is most apparent in the very good working relationships seen across the whole school. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, showing respect for others and valuing cultural and religious diversity. They learn to play an active and responsible part in the life of the school and the wider community and, through the school council, they develop a secure understanding of citizenship.
13. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are fully integrated and there are no incidents of racial disharmony or bullying. Parents and pupils have confidence in their teachers that problems and concerns are dealt with.
14. Attendance is good. The rate is above the national average and shows good improvement since the last inspection. New procedures introduced this academic year, for monitoring attendance, together with good support from families informing the school of any absence due to illness, have resulted in this improvement. Punctuality is very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.8
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.0
National data:	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are of **good** quality and there are particular strengths in teaching. Assessment is also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, with particular strengths across the school.
- Pupils are given very good encouragement to work hard and they respond very well to this.
- Assessment is good overall.
- Pupils have yet to be provided with more opportunities to discover how well they are learning.

Commentary

15. The good quality of teaching across the school has significant impact on the achievement of pupils. There is a consistency of good achievement from the first days in the nursery to the final days in Year 2 that is the result of the good quality of education in all classes. Inspectors found considerable evidence of very good and excellent teaching in parts of the school. This was characterised by high expectations, very motivating methods and a brisk pace to learning. Levels of pupils' productivity in the very good and excellent lessons were a particular strength and pupils built skills and knowledge very effectively. The scrutiny of work completed last year also provided ample evidence of good teaching.
16. As the following table shows, there was a very little teaching of satisfactory quality and none that was below this quality. There is no evidence, in lessons or in the work in pupils' books, of unsatisfactory teaching anywhere in school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 60 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(2%)	20 (33%)	37 (62%)	2 (3%)	0	0	0

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

17. The chief strengths of teaching are to be found in the encouragement given to pupils to work hard, the effective methods used and the staffs' insistence on high standards of behaviour. In turn, these result in very productive learning, active and interesting lessons and very good response by pupils. Teaching assistants are successful in providing good quality support for pupils, whether in lessons or in small withdrawal groups. This support contributes well to the good achievement of pupils in all classes.
18. Teaching and learning are clearly good in the nursery and reception classes. The staff have good knowledge and insights into the learning needs of young children and they provide well-planned lessons and make very effective use of resources. The children in these classes are

well focused on the activities and they work with very good levels of independence and responsibility for their age. They collaborate very effectively with other children and have a confidence and self-assurance in learning that makes a significant contribution to their good achievement.

19. Science, art and design, music and religious education are very well taught subjects. For example, in an observed Year 1 music lesson the pupils were very well motivated to explore sound patterns that depicted wintry scenes. They composed and performed with flair and were able to talk confidently about their musical creations. English, mathematics and ICT show good quality teaching and learning. There is a need to extend opportunities for the building of writing skills in subjects beyond English.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is consistently good. Needs are specifically targeted after thorough assessments have been completed. A carefully resourced programme of in class and withdrawal support is drawn up. Class teachers and support staff work closely together to provide effective support for pupils' specific needs. Pupils learn at a consistent rate. They are well involved in all of the school's activities in consequence. They learn at a regular, good pace. Pupils with statements for physical difficulties are particularly well supported and they take the fullest part in the activities provided.
21. Effective assessment is in place. There are thorough assessment procedures for each subject or area of learning, and the outcomes of such assessment are used well to extend pupils' subsequent learning. However, the use of comments when marking is not consistent in their focus on ways for pupils to improve their work. Additionally, pupils do not have enough opportunities to discover how well they are learning and the targets set for individuals could be shared more effectively. Thus, pupils' understanding of how well they can improve is a key issue from this inspection.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **very good**, including the range of opportunities to enrich the pupils' learning. The quality of resources and accommodation is **very good** and meet the needs of pupils effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is excellent participation in the arts.
- The exciting and innovative curriculum promotes learning well.
- Very good links between subjects promotes good knowledge and understanding.
- The very good provision for personal, social and emotional development promotes very positive attitudes.
- The school is inclusive and provides good provision for pupils with special needs.
- Accommodation for outdoor learning is very good for nursery children and is satisfactory for those in reception.
- Writing skills could be promoted more consistently across the curriculum.

Commentary

22. The curriculum opportunities are very good. An outstanding feature is the participation in the arts, through the provision for art and design and music. The National Curriculum, and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, have been successfully implemented. However, there is inconsistency in the way in which pupils' writing skills are developed across the curriculum, for example in religious education. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned and takes account of the national guidance and there is good provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language. The overall programme for learning is broad and well balanced and makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

23. Recent changes to the timetable maximises the use of time and enables some flexibility in teachers' planning. This is very effective in enabling teachers to make links between subjects. Another recent curriculum initiative has promoted the use of a wide range of teaching strategies in order to accommodate the different ways in which children learn. Recent developments have improved the balance of adult led and child-initiated activity for reception children. Overall, there has been very good recent curriculum development.
24. The school offers very good curriculum enrichment through the involvement of a wide range of activities, visits and visitors. Additional opportunities to enjoy art, football, music and ICT are provided through after school clubs. Excellent creative opportunities are provided through participation in school festivals and performances. Pupils also work alongside visiting artists, and appreciate performing theatre and music groups.
25. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is a modification of that followed by all pupils and is devised carefully. Pupils with special needs have equal access to the curriculum. The tasks that class teachers prepare in the classrooms are planned at an effective level so that pupils are enabled to work successfully. Support staff make a significant contribution to the success of the pupils learning through their sympathetic, well focused interventions. There is equal care taken with the short, sharply focused withdrawal work. Pupils are withdrawn at different times so that it is not always the same classroom subject that is disrupted. However, not always enough attention is given to the timing at which withdrawal takes place. The school does not monitor the outcomes of this practice stringently enough. Otherwise, needs are being met effectively. The school has identified those pupils with particular gifts and talents, and their needs are met well in lessons.
26. Provision for personal, social and emotional development and citizenship is very good due to the consistently good relationships and care demonstrated by all adults in the school.
27. The accommodation enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. The school uses its gardens and playgrounds well, and these areas enhance learning. There is very good outdoor provision for nursery children but the school has acknowledged the need to further develop a designated outdoor environment for reception children. Support staff make a very positive contribution to curriculum provision. Resources, including the provision of computers, are very good.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. The school provides **good** advice and guidance to pupils and involves them well in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pastoral support system for all pupils, including the monitoring of attendance and child protection procedures, is very good.
- Behaviour support system is very good.
- Assessment to enable each pupil to receive support and guidance appropriate to their needs is good, but the use of targets aimed at helping them improve is inconsistent.

Commentary

28. A school strength is the very good arrangements for pupils' welfare covering all areas. There are sufficient staff trained in first aid and Child Protection procedures are very good. Governors and staff are involved effectively in monitoring health and safety arrangements. Learning support assistants and the special needs coordinator provide good support for pupils with additional needs. The school uses external agencies effectively to help it meet pupils' particular educational needs. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well, for instance through the range of sporting activities and teaching about a healthy diet.

29. Relationships in the school are very good and pupils are confident there is an adult in school they could talk to if they had a problem. Year 2 pupils trained as play leaders are on duty in the playground to organise games for younger children and help mediate in disputes that may occur. Very good behaviour support systems are in place for pupils who find it difficult to conform to the socially acceptable behaviour of the rest of the school.
30. Very good induction procedures to school, including, for those entering the nursery class, attending on a part time basis, helps children settle very quickly into new routines and have a gradual entry into full time education. Pupils are confident and happy in their surroundings. Very good attention is paid to smoothing pupils' transfer into and out of the school at other times of the year. The transition from one stage of their education to the next is seamless.
31. Tracking of pupils' academic progress as they move through the school is good. Pupils receive appropriate support from staff to help them improve. In some subjects, such as English, targets are set showing pupils the level they are working at and what they have to do to reach the next level. The school system does not yet enable staff to set sufficiently sharp focused individual targets in all subjects aimed at raising individual attainment and then checks to see if these targets have been met.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are **very good**, and with other schools and institutions **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with community groups support pupils' development very well.
- Transfer from one stage of education to the next is managed well.
- There are very good communications with parents including good information about pupils' progress through annual reports.

Commentary

32. Very good links with the local community help pupils to appreciate and develop the skills to enable them to become good citizens. For example pupils regularly visit local care homes to entertain residents in addition to supporting charities at home and abroad. An impressive amount of food was recently collected by the school to be distributed by the *Charles Thompson Mission* and pupils sponsor the education of a child in Brazil. These wide ranging links are of mutual benefit to the community and the school and contribute positively to pupils' learning.
33. The school takes great care to involve the parents of pupils with special needs in all decisions made about the provision to meet those needs. Parents make a positive response in consequence. Parents attend the majority of reviews of needs. Their input is valued by the school and by any outside agencies if they are involved. Some pupils with special educational needs attend off-site provision, which supports their needs effectively. An example of this is the visits made to the *Stick 'n' Steps* provision for pupils with cerebral palsy. There is an equal amount of support provided within the school by external agencies. The educational psychologist gives regular, well-informed support. This is well received by both school and parents.
34. Good links with the neighbouring junior school to which the majority of pupils transfer ensure a smooth transition from Year 2 enabling pupils to settle quickly into new routines.
35. Parents and pupils share very positive views of the school. They appreciate the warm, friendly atmosphere and feel welcomed whenever they cross the threshold. Helpful staff and friendly newsletters keep them well informed of day-to-day matters and parents feel comfortable approaching staff when there is a problem. Parents' opinions are sought both formally and informally. There are daily opportunities for parents to leave messages to be passed on to

particular members of staff or make appointments to see them. Regular parents evenings are held each year where parents and staff can review pupils' progress. Written reports about pupils' progress fulfil legal requirements and are good.

36. The effectiveness of the partnerships between home and school and the positive support of the local community makes a very effective contribution to supporting children's personal development and raising their self-esteem.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is **very good**, as is governance of the school. Management is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision and leads an excellent team of staff and governors in raising standards very effectively.
- The school has high aspirations and a very good quality of strategic planning that clearly establishes its priorities.
- Governance of the school is very effective because governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- All leaders act as very good role models in a highly inclusive school that meets the needs of all its pupils.
- Finance is used very well in order to support the school's development priorities.

Commentary

37. The school is very well led by the headteacher, who has very clear vision for what the school should achieve. She holds high expectations of pupils and staff and has built a very good team of staff and governors. Together, they work very effectively to ensure there is good quality educational provision and the hard work of all staff and commitment of governors ensures that the work of the school is managed well at all levels.

38. The sense of vision shown by the headteacher underpins the general drive and commitment to raise achievement in school. She has identified entirely appropriate priorities to ensure that the school continues to improve its performance. The headteacher has built an effective partnership with the recently appointed deputy headteacher who is very supportive in the quest to reach the school's goals. The school is highly inclusive and ensures that the needs of all of its pupils are being met effectively. The governors, headteacher and staff ensure that all statutory requirements are being met. At the same time they innovate and work creatively so that pupils benefit from a wide-ranging number of learning opportunities.

39. The very good leadership of the headteacher has created an excellent team ethos. As a result, leadership is very good overall. There is a good sense of purpose in school, which is reflected in a curriculum that develops pupils' achievement systematically. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have good data analysis skills. They have begun to include all staff in making skilful use of data to present a clear picture of how the school needs to move forward. This is supporting the school's aspirations appropriately, though some further work has to be done to make the target setting and tracking system a rigorous means of ensuring all pupils achieve consistently at best levels. There is a clear commitment from all staff towards the school's priorities. Performance management is used as a very helpful tool in assisting the school to achieve its goals. Teachers and support staff are involved in appraising their work, so that there is continual improvement of educational provision. Effective systems to support staff new to the school are a further factor in the creation of a united team response.

40. The leadership of the provision for special educational needs and for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Individual needs are identified clearly at an early stage of the

pupils' time in school. Targets are based upon clear knowledge and understanding of needs as a result of evidence that is systematically gathered. The targets are shared with pupils and parents and reviewed regularly. This ensures that support staff are enabled to work effectively with pupils and become part of a whole spectrum of support that is given to pupils.

41. The governing body is fully committed to the school. They are very capably led and have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have formed very good working relationships with the headteacher and all staff. They share the aspirations of the school and are instrumental in ensuring that the headteacher and all staff are appropriately challenged in their work. Governors' oversight of the budget is very effective.
42. The school's priorities are clearly identified in its well-structured improvement plan. Staff and governors collaborate efficiently and very effectively in the consultation exercise that takes place in order to formulate the plan. This very good level of strategic planning is securely focused as a result of the on-going self-evaluation carried out by staff and governors.
43. Day-to-day management and administrative work helps to ensure that the school runs smoothly. The very capable administrative staff have a very clear view of their roles. They give very good levels of support to the headteacher and governors. They form a highly respected integral part of the school team.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	800 128	Balance from previous year	33 310
Total expenditure	761 797	Balance carried forward to the next year	38 331
Expenditure per pupil	2 531		

44. Finance has been used effectively to resource the school successfully. Spending is very firmly anchored to the school improvement plan. Governors carry out their role as financial overseers with skill because they are very well informed members of the school team. There is prudent management and control of finances. In all, the principles of best value are upheld effectively.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**, with some very good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership has led to good improvement since the last inspection.
- Emotional security is promoted very well by very good relationships and induction.

Commentary

45. Currently reception children are in their third week of full-time education, following a very good induction programme. Nursery children attend part-time for three terms. On entry to the nursery children's competencies are in line with those expected for their age. Children receive a good start and achieve well. Very positive relationships, between staff and children, and a stimulating curriculum promote very good attitudes to learning. The staff systematically share information with parents about the curriculum and children's progress. Assessment procedures are very good. There has been very good improvement in the curriculum for the reception children. The indoor accommodation and resources are very good, as is the outdoor environment in the nursery. The school acknowledges the need to improve the reception children's access to a designated outdoor learning environment in order to allow children to initiate their learning outdoors, and engage in more frequent physical activity.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The personal, social and emotional development of children is very good and they achieve well above average standards.
- Clear expectations and very good relationships lead to very good behaviour and collaboration.
- Children initiate and manage their activities, promoting very good independence and concentration.

Commentary

46. Very good leadership of the curriculum has led to very good improvement in the reception curriculum since the last inspection. There are now more opportunities for child led activity. There is very good engagement in activities across the Foundation Stage because children concentrate and persevere well. At this early stage in the school year more time is allocated to child-initiated activities, which is effective in promoting good learning and very good attitudes. The staff place a high priority on promoting social development, and set clear expectations for behaviour and collaboration. Children frequently share equipment and take account of the needs of each other. Adults and children clearly enjoy each other's company and this, combined with the good use of praise and encouragement, leads to very good levels of self-esteem in children. This leads to well above average standards in personal, social and emotional development, and shows very good achievement.
47. The outdoor environment for reception children does not provide the same potential for self-selecting resources and activities as the classroom. There are missed opportunities for children to exercise independence and collaboration in outdoor challenges such as constructing on a larger scale and independently creating imaginary worlds.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good assessment leads to good levels of challenge for all children and they achieve well.
- Well-managed resources and parental involvement contributes to above average standards in reading, writing and communication skills.
- Last year boys did not achieve as well as girls in developing their communication, language and literacy skills.

Commentary

48. Assessments completed in July 2004, show that reception children attained standards above the Wirral average in early reading, writing and communication skills. However, there were differences in the achievement of boys and girls, with girls attaining above the Wirral average and boys attaining below this level. Nonetheless, achievement is good and standards are above those found nationally.
49. The teaching of reading is good and includes the systematic teaching of letters and sounds and the use of large books to promote an enjoyment of stories. Books are well organised, enabling children to enjoy texts which are well matched to their competencies. Children share a wide range of texts with parents, and this contributes to their good achievement. The teaching of writing is also good. Nursery children are given a wide range of opportunities to control their mark making as they draw, paint, and use malleable materials. Children are encouraged to use their knowledge of sounds and letters to build words and sentences. By the end of the last reception year, the majority were able to write, using plausible spelling and simple punctuation. This shows good achievement in writing, and competencies in line with expectations for their age for the majority children. Children respond well to questions, and express their views and feelings well. Children's talk is promoted well through regular engagement in role-play, class discussions and paired talk.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned activities in small groups leads to good achievement in lessons.
- Standards are being raised effectively.
- Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to teaching and learning.

Commentary

50. The analysis of assessments completed in July 2004, shows that children did not achieve as well in mathematics as the other areas of learning, and their attainment was below the Wirral average. The Foundation Stage leader and teachers have recognised this shortcoming and have begun to give mathematics a higher priority in the curriculum. However, evidence from the inspection shows that, this year, children are achieving well in their mathematical development as a consequence of good teaching. Reception children are able to count accurately in ones to ten, to complete simple calculations by adding one more and demonstrate a good understanding of shape, pattern and positional language. These skills match those expected for their age, and indicates the majority of children are likely to attain the early learning goals for mathematics by the end of the Foundation Stage.
51. In the nursery children learn effectively as they use mathematical vocabulary to describe the position of a teddy. Good teaching is exemplified by the use of a stimulating range of activities to

maintain children's interest. Good teaching in the reception year includes the effective use of practical tasks to consolidate learning. For example, children use candles on a cake to count accurately and calculate *one more* and *one less*. Very effective use is made of teaching assistants who use questioning well to promote children's mathematical understanding.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

It is not possible to make a judgement of provision in this area of learning because no teaching was observed.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good and standards are above average in this area.
- There are very effective opportunities for children to exercise their imagination.
- The opportunities for children to select materials and tools as they respond creatively are very good.

Commentary

52. Children show very good achievement and reach levels above those expected for their age in creativity. Teachers give this area of learning a high priority in the curriculum and it features strongly in the choices children make when they undertake child-initiated activities. The successes of provision for children's creative development in the Foundation Stage is the platform for the school's overall success in arts education. Children engage purposefully in imaginative play in the home corner and the *dark wood*. They sing enthusiastically and tunefully and respond well to rhythm. Nursery children confidently selected percussion instruments to accompany taped music, and spontaneously danced rhythmically.
53. Throughout the Foundation Stage children are encouraged to select from a stimulating range of art materials and demonstrate very good levels of independence as they use them. They paint, draw, model, stick collage materials and print with confidence and enjoyment. Learning is consistently good, and is sometimes very good. It is enriched by the quality and range of materials used, and the good stimuli provided for creative responses. For example, stories, visits and visitors, as well as the work of other artists are regularly used as starting points. Children's work is highly valued and displayed very attractively. Another strong feature is the level of collaboration shown by children as they work on group projects. This is a consequence of the children's clear sense of purpose as well as their ability to express themselves confidently. Teaching is consistently good, and is sometimes very good.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement in the range and quality of movements they use is good.
- Most children reach the early learning goals before the end of the reception year.
- Daily opportunities are offered for physical development in a very well planned and resourced outdoor learning environment for nursery children.
- The outdoor learning environment is inadequate to promote good physical development for reception children.

Commentary

54. Nursery children have access to a well planned and stimulating outdoor learning environment for physical activity, and to the hall for dance. This provision for structured and spontaneous physical activity is good. The outdoor environment is used well on a daily basis for adult led activities and it is planned that children will progress to using it for spontaneous play when they are fully familiar with nursery routine and resources. Very good teaching of dance to nursery children was observed, providing very good opportunities for imaginative responses. There are very good levels of challenge in the range of movement expected from children in their first term.
55. Reception children use the hall, and access the nursery outdoor environment once per week. They also work at adult led activities in the playground and garden. However, there are not yet sufficient opportunities to promote physical development in the reception year, which the school recognises. The Foundation Stage leader has identified this as an aspect needing improvement. She has worked hard to develop outdoor learning resource boxes, particularly for reception children. Teachers are making much increased use of the facilities available to them in programme of work for this area.
56. Children develop manipulative skills well as they play with a wide range of malleable materials and construction toys. They use a range of tools confidently for cutting, joining, sticking and painting. Good planning contributes to good teaching, learning and achievement in physical development overall. Most children will achieve the early learning goals for physical development by the time they leave reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in reading, speaking and listening, attaining above average standards.
- Pupils behave very well and show very good attitudes to learning.
- There are very good opportunities to use literacy skills in other subjects.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls in writing.
- Pupils have yet to be given sufficient support to help them understand how they can improve their writing.

Commentary

57. Pupils attained above average standards in reading in the 2003 national tests. In writing girls achieved above average standards, but boys attained below average standards, leading to average standards in writing overall. The same pattern is predicted from the national tests completed in 2004. This year, standards in reading, and speaking and listening are above average and in writing they are average.
58. Teaching is good overall, and some is of very good quality. Lessons are well structured, building on previous understanding. In most lessons tasks are adapted, enabling pupils of different abilities to undertake them successfully. Very good use is made of resources in lessons. Teachers have a good understanding of the various ways in which pupils learn and have worked hard to broaden their range of teaching strategies. These include some useful opportunities to be physically active, for example in drama and role-play.
59. Good teaching and very good attitudes support the good learning in most aspects of English. Pupils listen very well. There are good opportunities for the development of speaking skills in lessons, which promotes increased fluency and confidence effectively. For example, pupils share their views and ideas well in pairs and groups. Pupils are able to make fluent contributions when sequencing events in stories, and when reflecting on their feelings.
60. Pupils are encouraged to write in a range of styles. Opportunities for writing for different purposes have been carefully identified in the planned curriculum. Pupils write reports, stories, instructions, and write creatively in English lessons and other subjects. Pupils use increasingly complex vocabulary in their writing. For example, in Year 2 pupils found words to define time, in a shared story, and then used them to enrich their own writing. There is good attention to teaching letter sounds, spelling and simple punctuation. There has been improvement in the quality of handwriting since the previous inspection, though there is room for further improvement to presentation.
61. Higher attaining pupils learn well, often showing good levels of independence and concentration. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They are frequently withdrawn from literacy lessons for effective additional support. Occasionally, because of the point in the lesson at which they are withdrawn, this interrupts their learning about letters and sounds in the class lesson.
62. Whilst girls progress well in writing, not all boys do this, showing satisfactory progress for boys overall in writing. The school identified this trend promptly and has put in place a number of effective strategies to improve the achievement of boys, including the provision of boy-friendly resources. There has been good improvement in the standards achieved by boys in reading. Broadening the range of books and encouraging reading for information have addressed the underachievement of some boys. Pupils regularly take books home, and the range of texts

extends to non-fiction and self selected texts. Reading diaries involve parents well and promote very good attitudes to reading.

63. Assessment information is used effectively to track pupils' progress and to identify pupils who are not progressing well enough. They are given well-targeted additional support. The use made of assessment in lessons is satisfactory. Gradually pupils are being given targets for improvement, although these are not always based on the assessed needs of individual pupils. Marking does not always show pupils how effectively they have learned new skills and knowledge. Consequently pupils do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve, particularly in their writing.
64. The curriculum leadership is very good. This subject leader is a very good role model and has very good vision for improvement. She has identified the need to bring more consistency to the use of individual targets and assessment in lessons. Management is good. It has led to the good use of self-evaluation to initiate strategies for improving reading. However, there is still some way to go in managing the implementation of whole school strategies for improving writing, especially for boys.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. The school has worked well to develop English skills more widely across the curriculum. However there is inconsistent development of writing skills in some subjects. The school is alert to this situation and firm plans are in evidence to broaden the opportunities to promote a wider range of writing. There are some good, and sometimes very good opportunities for pupils to use spoken language in other subjects. ICT is used well to broaden pupils' experiences, especially in reading, as observed in a withdrawal group lesson for Year 2 pupils with special educational needs. The school makes very good use of theatre groups, arts events and visitors to enrich the curriculum for English.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and achievement is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, with strengths.
- Mathematics is very well led and managed.
- The curriculum is very good, with some very effective problem solving and investigation activities.
- There is insufficient sharing of targets, informative comments when marking and opportunities for pupils to self-evaluate their work in mathematics.

Commentary

66. Standards were average in the 2003 national tests in mathematics but look likely to be above average in 2004, judging from the early indicators for the subject. Standards are also above average this year. Achievement is good overall. The pattern of standards and achievement is consistent across the different aspects of mathematics. The curriculum is very good, with some useful opportunities to use ICT in learning. There is some particularly good achievement in problem solving and investigation in Year 2, as shown in the lesson observed where pupils were striving to identify strategies that resulted in a win every time when they played a game of removing one or two counters from an odd number of them, such as 13 or 15. The highest attaining pupils in this lesson went on to investigate the effect of substituting an even number of counters and what happened when one was removed every time, then two, then a regular pattern of one or two.

67. Mathematics is well taught throughout Years 1 and 2. There is some very good and excellent teaching of mathematics, such as the Year 2 lesson highlighted above. Teachers use very good methods, they provide very effective encouragement for the pupils to work hard and their expectation and insistence on outstanding behaviour is consistently very good. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning in mathematics, particularly for the statemented pupils and for other pupils with special educational needs. Learning is, accordingly, good. Pupils build skills and knowledge well and show good skills of independent work and effective collaboration. Assessment is good in mathematics, but like other subjects, an enhancement of marking, target sharing and opportunities for pupils to self-evaluate their work are aspects for further improvement.
68. The quality of leadership and management in mathematics is very good. The subject leader is very well informed of the subject's performance and is very influential in bringing improvement. She gives a very effective steer to the subject and has made very good use of the opportunities to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of provision. The subject leader has created an excellent team of mathematics teachers in school. Mathematics is now a popular and enjoyed subject amongst pupils and staff. Pupils' attitudes are very good and mathematics lessons are busy, lively and very well focused learning opportunities.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. The use and development of mathematics knowledge and skills across the curriculum is good. Pupils are given ample opportunities to work with number, arithmetic and data presentation in a number of subjects, especially science and ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average throughout the school.
- Teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils talk in an informed scientific language.
- Marking of work needs to identify more clearly how work can be improved.

Commentary

70. The school has a very clear scheme of work that ensures all aspects of science are well covered. Much of the thrust of work in science is appropriately centred on an investigative approach to learning. The sample of work confirms the school's investment in recording learning independently supports the pupils' knowledge and understanding very effectively. The on-going nature of this was found in lesson observations. Independent recording was consistently being completed throughout the school. This supports the development of literacy skills but also develops clear understanding and use of the language of science. The positive impact of this is found in the confident way that all pupils, especially those with special and additional language needs, talk knowledgeably in informed scientific language.
71. Teaching is very good throughout the school. Teachers plan with care and they ensure that ICT is used effectively to enhance learning in science. Staff devise different levels of tasks that ensure that all pupils can work successfully. The pupils are knowledgeable scientists by the end of Year 2. This very good level of progress is made consistently in all classes and year groups. Higher attaining pupils are being as equally well challenged as those with special needs because of the variety in the levels of work.
72. Pupils are achieving very well throughout the school. In the best lessons observed all pupils achieved very well because they were building learning very effectively on the foundations of

well-established knowledge and understanding. The practical nature of their investigations made learning very meaningful for the pupils. Teachers resource activities thoughtfully and the focus of learning is introduced clearly. In Year 2, where the focus in the observed lesson was on reflective and non-reflective materials, pupils used reflector testers made from boxes to extend their understanding and share their findings very confidently and accurately. A real buzz and sense of purposefulness created significant depth to pupils' learning. Across the school, boys and girls work very well together in mixed ability groups. They interact very effectively with teachers and support staff who constantly move learning forward by their very well judged interventions. However, pupils are less well supported by the quality of marking, which does not always give a clear indication of how pupils can improve their work.

73. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader has created a team approach very skilfully, which ensures consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. This is a cornerstone in the development of the subject. Priorities have been clearly established that help to make teaching and learning in science a strength of the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision and standards have been improved well in ICT; standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and achievement is good through the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Leadership and management are very good; resources have been improved substantially and staff expertise has been raised very successfully.
- The curriculum for ICT is very good and there are good opportunities for pupils to develop skills and knowledge when working in other subjects.

Commentary

74. Leadership and management of ICT are conspicuous by their effectiveness. This has resulted in good improvement to the subject since the 1998 inspection, especially the major developments in resourcing, staff confidence and knowledge, the curriculum, and the quality of teaching. ICT provision is good; there is a very good curriculum that allows the development of a good platform of skills and knowledge and includes good opportunities for their consolidation and extension through work in other subjects.
75. Standards are above average in Years 1 and 2. Pupils have good confidence in their ICT work and they achieve well. There are instances of well above average standards, such as in the Year 2 lesson observed where the pupils were sequencing the story of *Rama and Sita* that they had learned in their earlier religious education lessons. In this ICT lesson, all pupils handled the word processing software with skill and dexterity and were able to mix text and images and present their work in an interesting way.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff make effective use of the resources. The very good quality computer suite is put to very effective use and is hardly ever empty. Teaching assistants play a good role in the development of pupils' skills and knowledge, especially for pupils with special educational needs. The achievement of all pupils, regardless of background, is good because the teaching methods place emphasis on practical learning. Pupils collaborate well, their behaviour and attitudes are very good and they achieve very good levels of productivity. Assessment is good and is used well in the identification of the next steps in learning. Pupils could have more opportunities to self-evaluate their work, however.

77. There is good potential to build on the improvements made to ICT since 1998. The subject leader has ensured that there is an excellent team spirit to the provision for the subject and that the evaluation of subject performance is very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. The use of ICT across the curriculum has been, and is an ongoing, priority for the school. There has been much success in embedding work in ICT in subjects such as English, mathematics, science, art and design and music. There could, however, be further opportunities for ICT use in some subjects, which school leaders recognise. Pupils are given ample opportunities to consolidate and extend their ICT skills and knowledge in these subjects. Pupils work enthusiastically when using computers as part of their work in other subjects and this makes a significant contribution to their good achievement.

HUMANITIES²

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and achievement is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very effective.
- Religious education is very well led and managed.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes and the subject makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The development of writing skills in religious education is inconsistent.

Commentary

79. The subject leader has done a very good job of improving and continuously promoting provision in religious education. She is hard working, influential and knowledgeable about the quality of provision across the school. This energy and commitment has led to very good provision in religious education and above average standards and very good achievement.

80. Teaching and learning are very good. The teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning and expectations are very good amongst all staff. Pupils are consistently encouraged to work hard and behave well and the very good quality resources are used very effectively to attract and hold pupils' concentration. Pupils consolidate and extend their knowledge and skills very effectively, though there could be more consistent emphasis on the development of writing skills in religious education and an increased use of ICT. However, in other respects, knowledge, skills and understanding are very good. The assessment of pupils' achievement is good and the use of the information provided is instrumental in the good quality of planning in place.

81. The very good quality of provision in religious education is has an excellent impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop great empathy with different faiths whilst developing a firm knowledge and understanding of the major stories, celebrations and symbols of Christianity. There are very good links with local churches and people from other faiths visit the school to share their beliefs and practices. Pupils' different ethnic backgrounds are recognised and celebrated thoroughly. There were many occasions when pupils were

² It is not possible to report in full for some humanities, and creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects because there is less evidence available. Thus, design and technology, geography and physical education are only reported briefly.

observed to reflect deeply on the meaning of what they had heard or seen, as in the very good Year 2 lesson on the similarities and differences of Christian and Hindu wedding ceremonies.

82. The curriculum for religious education has a richness and quality that is very good. It is evident that there are very good prospects for the very good quality of provision to be maintained in the future.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average at the end of Year 2.
- Teaching, learning and achievement are good.
- History is identified in other subjects in order to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Marking could be sharper in order to inform pupils how they could improve their work.

Commentary

83. In both the sample of work and lessons observed it is clear that the pupils are reaching average standards by the end of Year 2. They are achieving well because of the innovative way that many of their lessons are developed. Opportunities are created for learning to be made as meaningful as possible for pupils. Aspects of history are included in other lessons such as the drama lesson in Year 2 when the coming of the plague to Eyam is re-enacted thoughtfully. This is an effective follow-up to a detailed examination of this in a well-structured classroom activity.
84. Teachers plan lessons with care. Good attention is paid to the detail of history. Pupils are encouraged to consider the passage of time through use of time lines and the sequence of events are clearly established. Pupils continually build learning on previous learning. As a result pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of history. Much of the work is related to visits into the community and visitors, such as drama groups, coming into the school. History develops the speaking and listening skills of all pupils, including those with special needs and additional language needs, particularly well. This supports this aspect of their literacy skills effectively. The writing skills of pupils are less well supported because of the less frequent written recording. The marking is less sharp than it should be in order to give pupils a clear understanding of how to go about improving their work further.
85. The staff have an effective team approach to developing the history learning skills. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader. In turn this not only supports colleagues but also enthuses them in their teaching of the subject. Budget has been spent wisely in order to resource the work throughout the school appropriately.

Geography

86. Although it was not possible to observe any lessons in geography this is because the subject is blocked on a half termly basis with history. History is the focus subject for this half term. It is not possible to make secure judgements upon the current year's provision in geography. However, the work completed previously in the subject confirms that an appropriate amount of attention is given to it. Scrutiny of the work shows an appropriate amount of work being completed. The skills of the subject are clearly being covered adequately. There is a good variety of work being covered, including mapping skills and studies of different environments. Pupils have obviously responded positively to the learning opportunities given to them. This is clearly confirmed in the attractive displays around the school. Teachers have obviously built on the work completed with the children in the Foundation Stage classes.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision is **very good**, and contributes to the pupils' **excellent** participation in the arts.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management has given the subject high status in the school.
- Pupils show very good levels of enthusiasm and confidence.
- The appreciation of other cultures is very good.
- A wide range of stimuli enriches a very well planned curriculum.

Commentary

87. Teachers have high expectations and the pupils are very enthusiastic about art and design. They are very confident, well behaved and highly motivated to learn. They listen attentively and work very well together, sharing resources and ideas sensibly. Their concentration and perseverance in art activities is very good. These very good features of learning lead to very good achievement and standards well above average by the age of seven.
88. Teaching is very good overall. Lessons are well planned and the stimuli for designing and making are well matched to pupils' understanding and interests. There are very good links to learning in other subjects. For example, during this term pupils are participating in a whole school topic on Indian art. They effectively draw on their learning in geography and religious education as they study Hindu patterns and festivals in their art and design lessons. There are similarly effective links to ICT, with computers used extensively for good quality drawing, design and image making projects.
89. In Years 1 and 2 pupils successfully design and make saris, Diwali cards and lamps, Mendhi and Rangoli patterns and flower garlands. Their observational skills are promoted well as they use magnifiers to study patterns on Indian clothes. They experiment with line as they design and make a tile for printed repeating patterns. Good attention is given to experimentation with colour, as pupils blend of shades of colour to create a background prior to printing. Skills and techniques are taught systematically, as pupils design and refine their work with confidence.
90. The subject is very well led. Pupils' imaginative artwork is displayed very effectively. A wide range of materials and resources are well managed. A very well planned curriculum is enriched by visits, visiting artists and the study of other artists' work, such as Klimt and Matisse. The school has received an Artsmark Gold award in recognition of the rich and challenging opportunities for experiencing art and design. This is a well-deserved acknowledgement of the high status given to the subject within the curriculum.

Design and technology

91. No lessons were observed in design and technology so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision or the standards attained. Planning indicates the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Within a well-planned curriculum good links are made with other subjects, particularly science.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are well above average and achievement is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Music is very well led and managed.
- The curriculum is excellent and music makes an outstanding contribution to arts education in school.
- There is an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

Commentary

92. Music is seen as a strength of the school by the parents and they are right in holding this opinion. There is an excellent curriculum that is promoted very successfully by all staff and the subject makes an excellent contribution to the outstanding provision for arts education in school and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
93. The subject is very well led and managed by the hard-working, knowledgeable and influential leader. She is a very good role model for pupils and staff alike in the way that she works for ever-improving provision. Standards are well above average. Pupils sing very well. They are enthusiastic but also very mindful of the need to make every word heard, and to create expressive interpretation of the song through the very good observation of dynamics and rhythm. Pupils are also adept at music composition. Year 1 pupils were observed to think very carefully of the pattern of sounds they were creating to illustrate the theme of winter. The group working on snow flurries made a decidedly different interpretation to the group working on the blizzard, for example. All pupils have ample opportunities to listen to and appreciate a wide range of music, including some excellent use of music from other cultures, as seen in Year 2 work focused on the Hindi celebration of Diwali. Overall, achievement is very good in music.
94. The quality of teaching and learning is also very good. All staff are firmly committed to the teaching of music, they have very good expertise and provide very good levels of challenge in the work. Teaching methods are very effective and there is very good use made of the high quality resources for music. In return, pupils build skills and knowledge very well and they work hard and productively. They too are very committed to their studies of music and their attitudes are excellent.

Physical education

95. From the limited evidence available, it is clear that pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop skills and knowledge in dance, games and gymnastics. In the single dance and games lessons observed, skills were developed well, pupils enjoyed the challenges set and they worked energetically. Standards were above average and achievement good overall in these two lessons. Curriculum and lesson planning is of good quality and the accommodation and resources are very good. The subject is well led and managed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

96. Pupils are provided with very good quality personal, social, health and citizenship education. This includes regular lessons in these aspects, including circle time. Assemblies, particularly the class assemblies, make a particularly valuable contribution to pupils' all-round development as people. The school council is a successful means of discovering pupils' views and these are followed up very effectively, as for example in the creation of the two theme gardens in the inner courtyards. Health issues are dealt with well and appropriate work for the pupils' ages is undertaken regarding sex education and the misuse of drugs. All staff take a great interest in the

personal, social, health and citizenship education of individuals and groups of pupils and they promote them most successfully.

97. Pupils' understanding of environmental issues, the need to keep the school tidy and free of litter and the necessity of recycling has been promoted effectively by initiative such as the work undertaken in order to earn the *Eco School Award* in 2004. This is indicative of the importance the school attaches to the wider development of the pupils. The pupils greet such initiatives enthusiastically. They enjoy working with people who come into the school, such as the Indian dancer who visited them during the week prior to the inspection. Such broadly based experiences contribute much to the very good relationships that are found in school. Overall, the pupils develop as friendly, confident and willing ambassadors for the school and themselves.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

