

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RAEBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bromborough, Wirral

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105020

Headteacher: Mr R G Bowen

Lead inspector: Mrs C A Field

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> February 2005

Inspection number: 267535

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	340
School address:	Morland Avenue Bromborough Wirral
Postcode:	CH62 6BD
Telephone number:	(0151) 327 2215
Fax number:	(0151) 327 5674
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Ford
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Raeburn Primary School is bigger than most primary schools and is located on the Bromborough/Eastham border, of the Wirral, Merseyside. The school serves its local neighbourhood and has 340 pupils from the age of four to eleven on roll. The profile of children's attainment when they start in the reception classes is average. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic heritage but a very small number are of African or Asian heritage. There are no pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly similar to that seen in most primary schools. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard times is very low. The school has facilities to provide an education for 15 additional pupils with statements of special educational for moderate learning difficulties; currently only five pupils are on roll. In the main school, an average proportion of pupils have special educational needs that cover a range of learning difficulties. However, seven pupils in total have a statement and this is above average.

The school became a *Health Promoting School* in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship
9428	J Butler	Lay inspector	
4099	R Braithwaite	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education
8710	J Moore	Team inspector	Science History Religious education
32466	J O'Neill	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage
2818	G Warner	Team inspector	English Geography Music
28882	B Jones	Team inspector	The specialist provision made for pupils with moderate learning difficulties- known as <i>The Unit</i> and the provision made for special educational needs in the main school

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is **effective** in enabling pupils to achieve well within a caring and happy learning environment. Teaching and learning are good and the curriculum is rich and exciting. Staff morale is high and all staff and governors work very much in pupils' best interests. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and works in successful partnership with the very able deputy and highly effective senior team in moving the school forward. The school gives **good** value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Current standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average in English, mathematics, religious education, design and technology and physical education.
- The school's very good approach to inclusion enables boys and girls to succeed equally well.
- The children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to their education and make good progress.
- Very good provision is made for pupils in *The Unit* who have special educational needs.
- Very good leadership is undoubtedly behind the school's many strengths.
- Teaching and learning are good and results in pupils' good achievement.
- Systems for assessment, keeping track of progress and the setting of targets are not used consistently to support marking or to involve pupils in reviewing how well they are doing.
- The school gives excellent attention to setting high standards of behaviour and this supports pupils' very good behaviour and their very keen interest in their studies.
- Very supportive and respectful relationships stand out as a key feature of the school's ethos.
- The very good curriculum is enriched by well-chosen visits and very good links with other schools.
- High priority is given to the pupils' health, safety and welfare, and the provision made is very good.
- Very good links with parents give extra value to the pupils' education.
- Management systems are not sharp enough, especially in respect of monitoring and evaluation, and more could be done to identify and share good practice in teaching and learning in the drive for even better effectiveness.

The school has made **good** progress overall in tackling identified weaknesses since the time of the previous inspection. However, the school has yet to establish a high quality outdoor play area for the children in the Foundation Stage.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is **good**. In 2004, pupils in Year 6 attained above average standards in English and science and average standards in mathematics. Standards in English were well above average, below average in science and average in mathematics when compared to those found in similar schools.

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

mathematics	A	B	C	C
science	B	B	B	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.*

Current standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average in English, mathematics, religious education, design and technology and physical education. Standards are average in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design. The children in the Foundation Stage achieve well to reach the goals expected for them, and a significant proportion are on track to exceed them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good overall. Very good attendance is successfully underpinning pupils' good achievement. The **effective** provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enabling them to grow as very responsible future citizens.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are good with many very good features. The strengths identified in the good teaching reported by the previous inspection have been sustained. Teaching and learning were 100 per cent satisfactory or better during this inspection. Teaching in ICT is much improved on that reported five years ago. The quality of assessment is good in English and satisfactory in other subjects, but its use is not sufficiently focused on helping pupils to improve their work and move on a level. The very good curriculum is broad, balanced, rich and exciting. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good in main school and very good in *The Unit*. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, though the playground surface is in bad repair and this space has limited appeal for supporting positive play. Provision for care, guidance and support is very good. Teachers and support staff are kind and conscientious, and know the pupils very well. They place a high priority on the welfare and development of all the pupils, irrespective of gender or ability, and enable them to feel safe in the happy family atmosphere. The links with the parents, external agencies, business and partner schools and colleges are working to the very good advantage of pupils. However, the school's written communication with stakeholders could do with an upgrade.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher provides very good educational direction and plays a pivotal role in promoting the pastoral welfare of the pupils and staff. The leadership partnership of headteacher and deputy works very well. There is a very strong corporate ethos with the senior management team providing very good role models for others. Subject leaders carry out their roles with a high level of commitment but have yet to be given time and opportunity to fully exercise their management roles, especially monitoring and evaluation. The governing body fulfils its roles well, giving good support and challenge as required. The result is a school that is well run with a good level of efficiency and one that provides **good** value for money.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents value highly the quality of care given to their children and the family values the school promotes. Parents say their children are very happy to come to school and enthusiastic to learn. Parents flag the responsiveness of staff to pupil needs as a key strength. Pupils' views are also very positive about their school. Overwhelmingly they like school, especially their teachers and friends, and identify lessons as interesting and fun. However, some say they would like more things to do at lunchtime and find the playground boring and unsafe.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Extend monitoring and evaluation activities so that senior and middle managers have more extensive information about standards, teaching and learning and use it more rigorously.
- Ensure that assessment and target-setting systems are used consistently to plan pupils' next steps in learning, to track their achievement, including marking, and to involve them in reviewing progress.
- Press ahead with the plans to make specific outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage and seek to make the playground a more exciting space for the older pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

Pupils' achievement is **good**. The standards pupils attain in the National tests each year are typically above those found in similar schools.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Current standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average in English, mathematics, religious education, design and technology and physical education.
- Overall achievement is good.
- The children in the Foundation Stage achieve well to reach the goals expected for them, and a significant proportion are on track to exceed them.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well during their time in school.
- The school's systems for monitoring pupils' progress are not yet sharp enough to pick up what is working to best advantage in the drive for raised standards, especially in science.

#### **Commentary**

1. The school has been successful in sustaining good standards overall since the time of the previous inspection. The standards in science have shown improvement, in line with English and mathematics, over the intervening years, but are at the same average level today as then. The standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are much better than at that time and this is due to the school's effective improvement strategies. The school has identified a continuing focus on promoting ICT skills across the curriculum and is right to do so. Pupils' achievement in physical education has been raised from a satisfactory to a effective level because of the good leadership of the subject over recent years. The links with a local specialist sports college are making a positive difference.
2. When children join the school in reception, known as the Foundation Stage, their attainment is broadly average but covers a wide range. They are given good experiences that enable them to make good progress in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical and personal and social development. By the time they are five years of age and ready to transfer to Year 1, the majority are working at average levels, and a significant number are on track to exceed the goals set for children of this age.
3. Current standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average in English, mathematics, religious education, design and technology and physical education. Standards are average in science, ICT and art and design. Pupils of all capabilities achieve well during their time at the school relative to their starting point. A boost is given to the progress made by pupils in the last two years in school by more consistently good or better teaching than in other years. Higher attaining pupils across the school are generally well challenged in their studies. However, more should be reaching higher standards in science, where the lack of rigorous monitoring and sharp focus on assessment inhibit more speedy progress in raising standards. The climate for raising standards in school is good however, and the inspection team has confidence in the school's capacity to do this.

4. The table below shows that in the 2004 National tests for Year 2 pupils standards were well above average in all tested and assessed areas. The standards were much better than in 2003. The performance of boys and girls is equally positive. The results compare as well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics when compared to those in similar schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.7 (15.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	16.7 (14.6)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.5 (17.1)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. The table below shows that in the 2004 National tests for Year 6 pupils standards were above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. The standards were better than in 2003 in English and mathematics but not in science. When compared to the standards in similar schools, they were very high in English, being in the top five per cent seen nationally, average in mathematics, but below average in science. The overall trend in improvement is above that seen nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.9 (28.2)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.5 (27.2)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.2 (29.7)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

6. The standards reached by pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, are generally below average in academic subjects. However, their achievement is good against individual targets. Assessment shows that many of these pupils have limited basic skills, particularly in their ability to decode information when reading. The very effective focus on communication skills is proving highly successful in supporting these pupils to access a full curriculum and make good gains in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled to reach higher standards in practical or creative activities, such as music, art and design and physical education, and here they do as well as others of the same age. For example, in a Year 6 dance lesson, pupils with special educational needs, including those from *The Unit*, made very good progress in building skills and using self-expression as they worked very creatively and achieved very good performances.
7. The school's systems for monitoring pupils' progress are not yet sharp enough to pick up what is working to best advantage in the drive for raised standards. Standards in English have been sustained at high levels for some years, whereas in mathematics and science, the picture, though positive overall, is not as consistent. Target-setting

systems work effectively to support pupils' achievement in English but are less well developed in these other subjects. The targets agreed with the local education authority for Year 6 in the 2005 National tests realistically indicate that the school's results should be similar to that seen in 2004 but with a significantly increased proportion predicted to reach the higher level 5 in mathematics and science. The targets in use in teachers' assessment are not as challenging, and these are due to be reviewed soon to enable a boost to standards in the run up to the tests. The target setting system in place is not sufficiently robust to take account of the improving value being added to pupils' education year-on-year.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance, attitudes to school and their behaviour are all **very good**. Their punctuality is **good** and their personal development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very good and well above the national average.
- Pupils are very happy to come to school, enjoy learning and try very hard in their lessons.
- Pupils are very caring of one another, friendly and very well behaved.
- All staff are entirely consistent in the excellent way they maintain and support the drive for high standards of pupils' personal conduct.
- Pupils' personal development is good with particular strengths in their understanding of right and wrong and in their knowledge of themselves as unique individuals.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to take the lead in making decisions and carrying them out.
- More could be done to help prepare pupils for taking their place in a racially diverse society.

## Commentary

8. The many strengths in this aspect of education flagged last time the school was inspected have been sustained. Parents very much value the school's determination to place the development of the whole child at the centre of its work. The very strong lead given to pastoral matters by the headteacher is at the forefront of this aspect of education. Parents support the school's attendance policies wholeheartedly and, as a result, attendance figures are high, with very low unauthorised absence. Punctuality is good and lessons begin on time. These features are very successfully underpinning pupils' good achievement.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.7	School data	0.1
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.*

9. Pupils, including the youngest children say they are happy to come to school, that they have lots of friends here, and that their learning is fun. Older pupils are particularly proud of the welcoming atmosphere and freedom from bullying. The school code of conduct is clearly followed when visitors, including new friends, are *welcomed with a smile*. Pupils are confident that, should they ever have any concerns, there is always someone to turn to, and they know that the *worry box* is a system which will lead to quick support. Relationships are very good, and pupils show genuine care for one another. Children of all capabilities work and play together harmoniously and there is very effective integration of pupils from the Unit in afternoon classes in school.
10. Behaviour is very good, both at work and at play. Pupils are polite, self-controlled, and trustworthy. They respond well to the systems of rewards which promote very good effort and very positive behaviour. Stickers, house points, smiley faces and certificates

are all earned with pride. The consistent promotion of high standards of personal conduct is excellent. The resulting very good ethos underpins the good learning taking place.

11. Attitudes to school are very good and pupils say they enjoy the challenge provided by the teachers. They participate well in homework projects and try very hard with all their tasks. The after school clubs are popular and well attended. For example a large number of children present at an after-school French club during the inspection showed great enthusiasm in their embrace of another language.
12. There is very good promotion of the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Assemblies are used very well to explain and reflect on moral issues and personal qualities such that pupils demonstrate real strengths in their understanding of right and wrong and in their knowledge of themselves as unique individuals. For example, less desirable human traits like dishonesty were examined in a way which children could understand in infant and junior assemblies to mark the beginning of Lent, and pupils were given the chance to make a personal commitment to reject aspects of their behaviour which they did not like. All this was in an atmosphere where they knew they were valued and cared for, such that self-esteem is nurtured very well.
13. Social and cultural development is good, and reflects the many opportunities provided for pupils to experience the diverse aspects of living in a community, and of their role in the wider world. They are encouraged to help others and do this with commitment, whether it be as register monitors, or in support of charities week. However, pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to take the lead in making decisions and carrying them out. A wide-ranging programme of visits and visitors provide pupils with first-hand experience of life in different cultures, and develops their appreciation of the arts and history of their own but more could be done to help prepare pupils for taking their place in a racially diverse society.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** with many very good features that support pupils' good achievement. The curriculum offers worthwhile experiences for the pupils with some very good enrichment. Pupils receive very good care and support. The school has a very good partnership with parents and has forged strong links with other schools and its community for the benefit of pupils.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching enables boys and girls of different capabilities and ethnic backgrounds to learn successfully.
- Classrooms are lively and purposeful places where the pupils benefit from a good range of exciting experiences that capture their effective learning successfully.
- There are strengths in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution

to supporting learning and are pivotal in helping these pupils to make such good progress.

- Assessment, including marking and target-setting systems, are developed most consistently in English, but whilst satisfactory, are less effective in supporting pupils' achievement in other subjects.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems need now to focus on identifying and widely promoting those features of teaching that result in the most effective learning.

## Commentary

14. The strengths in teaching have been sustained since the previous inspection with good improvement in the teaching of ICT and for pupils with special educational needs. The quality of teaching is good overall, and pupils of all ages and from different backgrounds share in this good teaching. Teaching and learning are more often very good than good in the mixed Years 5/6 classes with excellence observed in the very well planned organisation and extremely pacy delivery of two lesson in English and ICT that enabled the pupils to achieve exceedingly well. Parents are happy with the quality of education provided for their children and identify the rounded education they receive as being very positive. The provision for homework is good and secures parents' positive support for their children's education. Pupils told inspectors that they learn a lot and have good fun.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 67 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (3%)	19 (28%)	37 (55%)	9 (14%)	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.*

15. A much higher proportion of good teaching than is typically found in schools was observed at Raeburn Primary School. There are strengths in teaching amongst staff that include: very supportive and respectful relationships, high expectations, very good methods that encourage and engage pupils, effective use of resources, and very good promotion of equality of opportunity. From the scrutiny of a large sample of pupils' work saved from both last year and this term, it is evident that these strengths are used to positive impact throughout the year. Pupils do well in building their basic skills, especially writing which is lively and interesting. Speaking skills are not as well advanced with the school currently pushing on with promoting richness in pupils' spoken vocabulary. Numeracy skills are well honed, with most of the pupils reaching a better than average standard in their work. In lessons, a sharper focus on promoting pupils' thinking skills through questioning, and their active involvement in managing appropriate aspects of their learning, could support even better achievement.
16. Classrooms are lively and purposeful places where the pupils benefit from a good range of exciting experiences that capture their effective learning. Good teaching across all areas of learning in reception classes ensures that the youngest children in school get off to a good start in their education. The children see themselves as effective learners and are taking full advantage of the exciting learning opportunities being provided because of the emphasis given by staff to promoting confidence and self-esteem. Support staff who work in all years, and specifically in helping those pupils with special educational needs from *The Unit* to integrate into class sessions,

are highly effective. In some instances their input is pivotal to enabling these pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. However, in some aspects of their wider role, for example in supporting learning in the opening sessions to lessons, they could take a more active role. All other characteristics of teaching are at least satisfactory but there are inconsistencies in practice that need to be ironed out. For example, teachers make insufficient use of on-going assessment to feed forward into planning suitably challenging work for all pupils that could accelerate their progress across subjects and years. There are strengths in this in school, for example in the very detailed Year 5/6 lesson plans in one class, on which to build.

17. Throughout the school, pupils are being given some helpful comments when their work is marked in English but marking is not as constructive in other subjects. Targets are used to help pupils focus on the next steps for learning in English with shared reading reviews, for example, a positive feature. However, targets are not used sufficiently well in other subjects and this is a missed opportunity to support even better achievement, especially in science across the school. Most teachers are assessing how well pupils are learning through a variety of methods, but now need to inject more rigour into how they record pupils' achievements and how they target improvement in learning. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation systems need now to focus on developing those features of teaching that result in the most effective learning. The creation of a learning and teaching policy could help in this respect.

## The curriculum

The **very good** curriculum provides a range of worthwhile experiences across subjects and meets statutory requirements. Extra curricular provision is **very good**. The quality and quantity of resources are good but although the accommodation meets the needs of the curriculum satisfactorily there are shortcomings.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very successful in meeting the different needs and aptitudes of the pupils.
- The opportunities for enrichment are very good.
- The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but some rooms are small for the size of the groups who use them, and the playground is not in good repair or of high enough quality to support positive play.
- The school has not yet given sufficient attention to improving outdoor provision for the children in the Foundation Stage.

### Commentary

18. The curriculum is in better shape than at the time of the previous inspection. ICT provision has been enhanced, though more work is still required. An increase has been made in the number of teaching assistants to work with pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements of special educational needs. A new building programme has provided improved accommodation for upper juniors and replaced inadequate mobiles. However, The school has not yet given sufficient attention to improving outdoor provision for the children in the Foundation Stage which was raised as a weakness six years ago.
19. The very good curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by well-chosen visits and very good links with other schools. All subjects meet statutory requirements. The good provision made for English is central to pupils' very good achievement during their time at school and the school's strong performance in National tests reflects this. Further use of the library is highlighted for development as funds allow. The school has worked hard to raise the profile of science in the school following disappointing test results last year and its strategies are proving effective with still more improvement work planned to continue this year.
20. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is well planned and delivered. The cross-curricular links between the areas they experience are well made and give a meaningful context that draws well on the children's own experiences, for example when playing in the *Pancake Kitchen* and observing the making of real pancakes in the school kitchen using a mixture which they had made themselves. The curriculum is supporting the youngest children's cultural appreciation well through the super work on Chinese New Year for example, but more multicultural resources, such as dolls from different ethnic backgrounds and a wider range of dressing up clothes would be helpful to supporting this aspect of their education. Outdoor provision to support the children's physical development is in need of more improvement and the school has well advanced plans for this that now need urgent action.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are given full and effective access to the National Curriculum. They take part in school visits, productions and all other chosen

activities. Regular visits from a speech and language therapist for those with language and communication problems are greatly beneficial, as is help with movement programmes by an occupational therapist. Advice from a physiotherapist is sometimes sought. Valuable weekly sessions are run for those needing to improve physical co-ordination and control by a very capable support assistant. The learning support service works with pupils as required. The school has a very good scheme of enabling mainstream pupils to work with *Unit* pupils in their room and benefit from the very good programmes of literacy and numeracy taught there. Their learning is highlighted by this specialist approach known as “reverse integration”.

22. The school has made a useful start in considering the needs of those pupils with special gifts or talents and is responsive in its practice, for example in enabling time for a high performing gymnast to participate in national trials and competitions. The register drawn up by the deputy headteacher shows 21 pupils with gifts and talents that teachers have identified. There are twice as many pupils identified as such in upper juniors than elsewhere and it is not at all clear what criteria have been used. The next step is to tighten up the identification process and to make more consistent provision drawing from the good practice to be found in providing for those pupils with special educational needs.
23. Pupils are provided with a range of good quality experiences in the aesthetic, creative and physical aspects of the curriculum that add considerable enrichment to their academic and social development. There is a range of extra-curricular clubs that includes: French, golf, swimming, judo, rugby, gym, skipping, football and netball. Very effective links with local secondary schools result in specialist input to teaching and learning in the arts, sports and modern foreign language and widen pupils' experiences. Parents give very good support to learning outside the school day. For example, a reading workshop was organised in the summer of 2004 that 70 parents attended with 96 pupils earning a library award during the summer holidays.
24. The accommodation is presented well; it is bright, stimulating and well maintained, though space is at a premium. There is limited storage facility and some rooms are small for the size of the groups who use them, for example in mathematics when 34 pupils are shoehorned into a small room. The playground is not in good repair and there is very limited play equipment. Pupils told inspectors that they would like more things to do at lunchtime and find the playground boring and unsafe. Resources for learning are well chosen and support pupils' learning effectively, though more artefacts would be useful to support history topics.

### **Care, guidance and support**

This is a very caring school in which procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are **very good**. Pupils receive good support and guidance for their academic and personal development. There is good involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Health and safety arrangements are very good.
- Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with adults in the school.
- Staff know the pupils very well and provide a consistent approach to the promotion of personal development.

- Academic support and guidance is effective overall but recording systems and their use lack consistency.
- The school council provides a good springboard for involving the pupils more in decisions which affect daily school life.

### **Commentary**

25. Parents value the conscientious and vigilant way in which all staff ensure the welfare, health and safety of the pupils in their care. Pupils are taught safe practice, and all health and safety issues are monitored very carefully. Healthy lifestyles are being promoted as part of the *Healthy Schools* initiative, and enthusiastic skipping is now a feature of playtimes. A concern remains about the surface of the playground. Pupils, staff and the inspectors feel that the worn tarmac provides a skid hazard which needs to be rectified.
26. Child protection procedures are rigorous and follow local guidelines. The governors are currently exploring ways of promoting safe walking to school. The strength of this aspect is the way in which each pupil and their individual needs are very well-known by staff. Those with special educational needs, especially the pupils in *The Unit*, enjoy the excellent trusting relationships with adults that are a feature of all classrooms.
27. There is a consistent approach to promoting high standards of personal conduct, and very good support is available for those who need it. Emphasis is always placed on positive role models, and praise where justified, such that pupils live in an atmosphere where everyone has high expectations of one another.
28. In areas of academic progress pupils receive good guidance from teachers and support staff, through informal comment, marking and literacy support. There is some room for improvement by the more consistent use of clear written guidance about exactly what a pupil needs to do to improve in other areas of the curriculum.
29. Induction arrangements are good. Pupils are well supported as they enter the Foundation Stage, with good links with the neighbouring pre-school. There is also a good programme of support and guidance to help pupils make the choice of which secondary school to attend.
30. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported throughout the school and there is very good involvement in meeting their needs from all outside agencies. Personnel from the behaviour management team are particularly valued for their prompt and efficient handling of pupils' problems. Staff are encouraged to highlight difficulties with learning and behaviour as early as possible to be dealt with quickly. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Strong links with the local education authority and other agencies enhance provision.
31. Pupils' views are sought regularly through assembly requests, and through the school council. This fledgling democracy does not yet have representation from every year group and opportunities for self-government and taking action are a little underdeveloped.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

There are **very good** links with parents, and with local schools and colleges which have a strong beneficial impact on pupils' education. The quality and impact of links with the community are good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school, and notably the headteacher, place great emphasis on welcoming parents to be equal partners in their children's education.
- Parents are very supportive of the school's policies, particularly regarding attendance.
- Local high schools and colleges provide a wealth of enrichment opportunities for pupils.
- The quality of written information provided for parents is rather dull and out-dated in style, although it covers the essentials.
- There are good links with the community which give pupils a real understanding of ways of life different from their own.

## Commentary

32. The headteacher and staff can be justifiably proud of their success in nurturing very strong mutually supportive links with parents which ensure that pupils receive consistent messages about the value of education. Parents say they feel very welcome to talk over any concerns, and they are very supportive of school policies as well as generous fund-raisers. Their views are sought on a variety of issues, but they say they would like more regular information about their children's progress. The inspection supports their concern, as written information provided by the school is an area for development. The prospectus and governors annual report include the required information but are rather dull and in need of an upgrade. The annual progress report for each pupil is satisfactory, but parents feel that they have to wait too long into the year before they have much idea of how well their children are progressing.
33. Links with parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are strong. The school maintains regular contact with parents, who are invited to meetings and annual reviews and gives encouragement to voice opinions and make suggestions. Most parents' support learning at home very well and a few parents give freely of their time to work alongside their children in *The Unit*. All are concerned for their child's welfare. Close contact is made with other schools, especially at transfer to secondary level, with great care being taken to place a pupil appropriately according to needs. Pupils with special educational needs are involved with all activities in the community undertaken by the rest of the school.
34. Good links with the community help to bring colour and variety into the curriculum, while helping pupils to see the relevance of their learning. The promotion of healthy lifestyles has been boosted by links with commerce and local football clubs, while the police, school nurse and charity representatives give pupils an insight into their roles as responsible young citizens. Pupils benefit from the very good partnerships between the school and its receiving secondary schools and colleges. Several areas of the curriculum are enriched by specialist teachers who bring extra dimensions to subjects like drama, music, art and design and ICT. Pupils have taster sessions in science at a grammar school and a sports college provides coaches in a range of sports. Transfer arrangements into secondary education work well. There is also a strong link with University College, Chester with whom the school supports the initial teacher training scheme.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is **very good** overall. The head teacher and key staff provide very good leadership. Management is good with some aspects that require improvement. The governance of the school is good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher, provides very good leadership.
- Senior leaders are very effective in leading their teams.
- The school has a very good and happy learning ethos.
- The governors are well led and make a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
- Monitoring and evaluation activities are not rigorous enough to enable senior and middle managers to have robust information about standards, teaching and learning in the drive for even better effectiveness.
- School development through financial planning is satisfactory, but lacks clear success criteria.
- The school gives good value for money.

### **Commentary**

35. Leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher's leadership is at the heart of the very good ethos in the school. The very good leadership of the deputy headteacher makes an inspirational contribution to the relationships in the school. Senior managers lead their teams very effectively, providing very good role models for others. The governing body is well led and makes a good contribution to the running of the school.
36. The very good leadership of the headteacher is characterised by his high profile in the school, his knowledge of the pupils and their families, his concern for enabling everyone to achieve as well as they can, and his overwhelming pride in the school. He justifiably commands high respect in the local community. His leadership is complemented by the high qualities of the deputy headteacher. His charismatic teaching and presence in so many aspects of school life make him an outstanding role model for pupils and staff alike. There is a danger that, through his desire to take on many new initiatives in the school, he has too many responsibilities and is becoming seriously overloaded. Senior staff also lead their teams very well. A strong feature of leadership within the school is the very good teamwork everywhere, which is sustained through all staff. This has led to very good relationships and a strong feeling of ownership of the school's development by staff, whatever their responsibility. The desire of leaders in the school for a happy school with a high and sustainable set of values is immediately evident to any visitor.
37. The management and leadership of the provision for special educational needs in mainstream is good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, who is only part-time, is experienced and innovative, with a clear sense of purpose to improve provision for these pupils. Test results and records are carefully collated and analysed to inform planning. Careful construction and monitoring of individual education plans (IEPs) shows insight into needs. The co-ordinator has the full co-operation of all staff. Management of special educational needs is good, though there is a need to increase training opportunities for support assistants.
38. The chair of governors has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and works effectively with the headteacher. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well, and like all staff, makes a good contribution to the very effective inclusion and equal opportunities policies which are used consistently throughout the school.

39. Management in the school is good because leaders have a sustained desire to raise standards and achievement, and provide a well-rounded education for all pupils. It could, however, be better if self evaluation was more rigorous, if monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leaders was more frequent and consistent, and if information provided by assessment procedures and data was used more effectively in planning for the needs of all pupils, as it does for those with special educational needs. Monitoring of teaching and learning does take place, usually led by the headteacher, but does not identify clearly enough how learning can be improved. Financial constraints have prevented most subject leaders in the last year from having the time to monitor closely the learning in their subjects. Steps have already been taken to reintroduce these opportunities, which should be linked to training for these duties. Likewise, satisfactory performance management, which is at present linked to the needs of the school and the professional development of staff, can be more specific in relating to staff targets in teaching and learning in their classrooms. The induction of teachers new to the school, especially newly qualified teachers, is good.
40. The school improvement planning has improved since the last inspection. However, there are difficulties in identifying medium and long-term priorities because the school has little room for manoeuvre within its very tight budget. Although plans are in hand for workplace re-modelling and reform, the school is uncertain as to how it will proceed in the near and longer term because of doubts over funding. These continuing doubts hamper financial managers, who although managing the budget satisfactorily are making decisions for short-term expediency. Everyday financial administration by the school secretary is very good, and she reports to the governing body regularly. A 2003 financial audit of the school identified a number of minor aspects for attention, and these have since been dealt with. The use of best value principles in both finance, and comparison of the school's performance is good. Pupils' achievement is good and the school adds clear value to pupils' education. The school gives good value for money.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	765,926
Total expenditure	775,707
Expenditure per pupil	2,255

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	43,174
Balance carried forward to the next year	33,393

## **The specialist provision made for pupils with moderate learning difficulties- known as *The Unit*.**

The effectiveness of the provision made for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in *The Unit* achieve as well as others in school.
- Staff work together exceptionally well to support the pupils.
- Pupils' needs are assessed well to ensure that they receive the help they require and there is very good contact with external specialist support agencies.
- Leadership and management of the Unit are highly effective.

### **Commentary**

41. Provision for pupils in *The Unit* is of a very high standard. *The Unit* has maintained the qualities reported at the last inspection, with the addition of some interesting innovations that have enabled it to move forward.
42. *The Unit* for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is a strong feature of the school. Local authority funding is for fifteen pupils, though only five attend at present - two girls and three boys from Years 3, 4 and 6. The considerable staffing expertise of a part-time teacher and a full-time assistant is shared with main school. Other pupils with learning difficulties from main school attend lessons in *The Unit* for literacy and numeracy to suit needs. This idea of 'reverse integration' works very well from a learning and a social point of view. The exceptionally capable assistant works with *Unit* pupils each afternoon in main school, where they are fully included in the curriculum. *The Unit* class environment is warm, welcoming and stimulating. Relationships are excellent. Pupils here achieve well, often very well. They work very hard to overcome additional problems, such as physical, emotional, autistic, medical or speech and language difficulties, and show a high level of personal development.
43. Standards of work are below or well below the level of national expectation in the core subjects, though there are exceptions. A pupil from the *Unit* last year gained Level 4 in mathematics in Year 6 National tests, and two pupils gained Level 4 in English. This year a Year 6 pupil is on track to gain a Level 4 in English. School assessment and reports, also show success in music, art and design, design and technology, ICT and physical education. *Unit* pupils make good progress against their targets, which often becomes very good over time. They achieve well, often very well during their time at Raeburn primary school
44. Teaching in *The Unit* is skilful and of a constantly high quality, enabling pupils to learn successfully. The focus on literacy is of particular benefit. Pupils are able to build up their skills at a good rate, which stands them in good stead across the curriculum. A firm partnership between teacher and assistant strengthens the teaching and learning. Resources are very good and are very well used, with appropriate emphasis on ICT. Laptops are available to assist learning and one pupil regularly uses *Alpha Smart* to produce his work.
45. Pupils in *the Unit* have full access to all areas of the curriculum and take part in all school activities. They are very well integrated into main school classes each

afternoon. Some attend and greatly benefit from speech and language therapy or movement training classes. All work very hard to improve in different ways.

46. *The Unit* staff works closely with parents. Reports show that parents are very pleased with their children's progress. One parent 'cannot believe' the progress made by her son since coming to the Unit in September (Year 3). Parents attend relevant meetings and annual reviews and are always consulted. *Unit* staff work closely with all relevant agencies and greatly value their input. Very good transfer links to secondary schools ensure that correct placements are made. A Year 4 pupil will transfer back into mainstream in the near future, having shown the necessary improvement. Two of the three current Year 6 pupils are transferring to mainstream Year 7 settings at the end of the year.
47. Leadership and management of *the Unit* are very good. The Unit is very well organised to incorporate all desirable features of education for these pupils and they have every chance to succeed. Careful analysis is made of all test results and reports to establish a correct approach. Assessment is ongoing and relevant. Individual plans and programmes of work are thoroughly prepared to assist the pupils' progress in meeting their specific targets for development. The close working relationship between teacher and assistant in the Unit is a major factor in its success. The cost of *the Unit* is met by the local education authority who are currently in discussion with the school about the need for rationalisation in provision borough-wide. The school adds clear value to these pupils' social and academic education.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The caring ethos and the good relationships underpin the children's good achievement.
- The "open door" policy with parents is supportive in building a good school-home partnership.
- The good liaison between the Foundation Stage staff and "Early Days" Nursery helps the children make a smooth transfer.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and the children make good progress.
- The systems for monitoring and evaluating standards are not yet used sufficiently well to aid the tracking of the children's achievement.
- The shortcomings in the provision for outdoor play, flagged by the previous inspection, have yet to be given sufficient attention.

#### **Commentary**

48. At the time of the inspection there were 50 children in two reception classes, both having mixed ages, ability and gender. All children start school in September and most have average attainment. The well-conceived induction procedures enable children to settle quickly and happily into school. Children with special educational needs receive a very good, fully inclusive education.
49. Children receive a good start to their education. Overall the teaching is never less than good, and at times very good. Relationships between children and adults are supportive and respectful, and the relationships built with parents are a strength. The ethos of the Foundation Stage is caring and children are helped to become confident learners. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of children will attain the goals set for them in all areas of learning and some will exceed them. The preparation for Year 1 is good.
50. Good leadership and management have resulted in productive liaison with the main feeder nursery and this helps the children transfer smoothly. The staff encourage flexibility in timings during the day to suit the learning needs of the children, although the use of time could be sharper. The good curriculum provides a balance between child-initiated learning and adult-directed activities. All staff work very well together in an effective way. The support staff are enthusiastic and effective in their roles. The team have developed shared planning, assessment procedures and joint activities within the Foundation Stage. So far, too few opportunities have been provided for the Foundation Stage manager to monitor teaching and learning and share best practice with her partner in the parallel reception class and in support of transition to Year 1. The accommodation is good. However, although progress has been made in the provision of good outdoor creative activities since the last inspection, management need to press on with the planned improvement for the outdoor area.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff place great emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and it underpins the work of the Foundation Stage.
- Staff provide good role models and are committed to providing mutual respect and secure systems of routine for the children in their care.
- Supportive relationships ensure the children are confident and happy and achieve well.

### **Commentary**

51. The teaching team have clear expectations of behaviour, courtesy and mutual respect when working together. Children soon realise that they have to treat others fairly and show consideration. A few children have underdeveloped social skills finding it hard to conform to the high expectations set by staff. During the inspection when children sat ready for circle time some ensured everyone was in the circle by spontaneously pointing and making places for others. They showed concern and empathy for each other during this very good session. Children are continually encouraged to feel confident about what they achieve and the majority of them show confidence when they tackle new situations. The children make choices and decisions, but more independent learning is an area for development. The children work well together and listen to the contributions of others and know how to wait their turn. The majority are willing to share with others. Teaching is good and most children achieve well and will reach the early learning goals in this area before entering Year 1.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are consistently good and enable the children to achieve well.
- Good strategies are in place for developing early writing.

### **Commentary**

52. The majority of children are on course to meet the goals set for them in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. Children make good progress as a result of the many opportunities they are given to speak and listen. The staff insist that the children listen to the contributions of others and show respect for the views of others. In an activity when the teachers were cooking pancakes, the staff continually talked to the children, asking them probing questions and encouraging them to think about what they were doing, and why. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the children's learning, but their involvement during lesson introductions to develop language skills and vocabulary could be more focused. During activities and class sessions the staff are genuinely interested in what the children have to say.
53. The children have a good appreciation of books and understand that text conveys meaning. They have their own reading books which they take home regularly, and communication with parents is good. Children like books and listen attentively when a

story is read. In a very good lesson when the teacher was reading a story about “Horsley Bear” the children were hanging on her every word as she read with good expression. She created a spiritual atmosphere as the children experienced the wonder of books. The children handle books with care.

54. The promotion of early writing skills is good and the children are encouraged to “write” in a variety of contexts. During the inspection in the café role-play area, where pancakes were made, pads were available to encouraged writing by both the “waitress” and the “cashier”. Lists of ingredients to make pancakes were written in a teacher-led activity. Children are encouraged to hold their pencils correctly and the standard of writing is good. The writing assessment books are of good, showing progression made, and the comments written by teachers are very constructive.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff develop the children’s mathematical vocabulary well.
- Teaching is of a good standard and places a high emphasis on learning through practical experiences.
- Achievement is good and most children will reach the goals set for them.

### **Commentary**

55. Teaching and learning are good and this leads to the children achieving well in their mathematical development. There is a good focus on helping children to use mathematical language more confidently and develop ideas to solve problems. The good resources impact very positively on children’s achievement.
56. During the inspection the children were keen to do mathematics tasks with the teacher as they felt learning was fun and they were learning effectively through play. Most of the children can count to ten. Some lovely photographic evidence of mathematics in an outdoor activity was seen, where children had made a water slide for the five little ducks from the story they had been reading, and took turns to count the ducks as they slid down the slide.
57. Skilled questioning helps children develop an understanding of number. During one very good session the children were totally absorbed when playing a money game matching coins using real money. The children knew the names of the coins and knew *more than* and *less than*. Simple graphs were being developed well with a link to the choice of pancakes they liked the most. Another good teacher-led activity was enabling the children to use their money to buy real cakes and biscuits. These practical activities seen were preparing the way well for future learning. All the activities were very appropriate for this stage of development, ensuring that children continue to be interested and motivated to learn. Most children will reach the goals set for them and reach the standard of mathematical development expected for their age before they transfer to Year 1.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have good opportunities to explore and experiment with equipment of their choice.
- A wide range of interesting activities are planned to promote learning in this area and the children achieve well.
- More opportunities could be provided for children to experience information and communication technology.

### **Commentary**

58. The vast majority of the children have useful experiences of the world in which they live. Almost all children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1 and a significant number will exceed them.
59. A good range of activities are planned for the children to stimulate their curiosity and enhance their understanding. During the inspection the focus was on Shrove Tuesday and making pancakes. The children had made the mixture and took it to the kitchen to be cooked. The good quality of teachers' questioning made the children think about health and safety issues, what happened to the ingredients whilst mixing and how the mixture changed as a result of cooking. They then tasted the pancakes with several different toppings and enjoyed tasting what they had made. Learning during these activities was good and children's language was enhanced as they learned scientific facts. The children also learned about magnetism during the week, as they tested whether various materials could be drawn by the magnet. One boy showed very good control of a magnet and a paperclip that he made travel around a twisting and turning course. Good questioning helped the children to explain and share their knowledge about magnetism, using vocabulary such as 'attracted to'.
60. Work in books shows that the children learn about the seasons and carry out simple scientific investigations, for example, erecting bird feeders, planting flowers and seeds and observing changes in the weather. One girl wrote " In winter sum birds fli to hot plases"
61. Children know about the main festivals and celebrations of the Christian faith and are familiar with stories from the Bible. They have recently had a visit from a Hindu who came to share their information about her religion and cultural experiences. The curriculum supports the youngest children's multi-cultural understanding through well-chosen topics, for example when they made Native American hats like the Pilgrim Fathers might have worn. Work on China and India extends their knowledge, but there are limited multicultural resources available for the children to choose. Reasonable use is made of computers to develop and support ICT skills. However, more opportunities could be provided for children to experience ICT across the areas they learn.

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good teaching of skills.
- Children achieve well and most will reach the goals set for them by the time they transfer to Year 1.
- Outdoor play facilities do not provide a high quality learning experience.

## Commentary

62. The provision made for children's physical development has improved since the last inspection but more remains to be done. Two hall lessons, outdoor play activities and play times were observed during the inspection. Children have good access to a range of outdoor equipment enabling them to enjoy wheeled toys, which they pedal and steer with confidence but the expanse of hard surface is far too large, being the main playground, and staff have to supervise a huge area to maintain safe play. All children have regular access to the hall where they use a range of climbing equipment to extend their movement skills and develop their hand-eye coordination through use of a range of small apparatus such as bats and balls.
63. Teaching and learning are good and most children will reach the goals set for them by the time they transfer to Year 1. Children are able to run, skip, hop, jump, roll, slide and engage in free play with confidence. In one lesson the practice was very good, when the teacher used a child to demonstrate, other children repeated the action with increasing dexterity and standards were improved. The children are capable of controlling balls of varying sizes with their hands and feet; again, good practice was watched by children to help them improve skills. The children were able to balance bean bags on their heads. The children had the opportunity to climb and balance on large apparatus. They enjoyed the physical exercise and were aware of the effect that this has on their bodies.
64. Children played safely on wheeled toys, which were not available at the last inspection. Care has been taken to provide suitable equipment to support the physical disabilities of children with special educational needs, including the purchase of a special tricycle.
65. The school is aware that further work needs to be done in order to provide a structured outdoor play programme and equipment. An action plan has been written which senior management have yet to implement.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching of direct skills is combined with good opportunities for children to learn through independent activities and to achieve well.
- Good opportunities for extending creativity and imagination are provided through role-play.

## Commentary

66. Teaching and learning are good overall and help the children achieve well in their creative development. Quite a few will exceed the goals set for them by the end of the year.

67. An interesting range of media and experiences enables children to explore and experiment. The creative role play seen during the inspection, as children used the *café* was good and contributed well to other areas of their learning such as literacy and numeracy development. Children develop their control of small manipulative skills well as a result of effective teaching and support. Children can control a pencil, paintbrush, scissors, stick and paste effectively. Good use of music enhances children's creative skills well. They have a good, and increasing repertoire of songs and rhymes, which they sing tunefully and with much enjoyment. They sing with their teacher in short bursts when eating fruit, or answering the register. They enjoy listening to music and have regular access to a good range of un-tuned instruments.
68. The imaginative play area outside the two reception classes is changed regularly. The children talked about previous areas with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. Photographic evidence was shown of other areas, the *hospital* was obviously an exciting one, which the children enjoyed. Children are curious and question their environment. During an outdoor play activity the children were encouraged to take part in pancake races, which they chose to turn into an obstacle course. There was a tent outside which developed the inside "cold cave" theme, which was part of an exploration topic linked to the story, "We're going on a Bear Hunt". This had been read prior to the inspection and the children had obviously enjoyed it.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching and learning are consistently very good throughout the school.
- Pupils achieve very well; they work hard and enjoy completing tasks.
- Pupils' on-going progress is tracked and monitored conscientiously.
- The effective use of targets to support pupils' next steps in learning is much more advanced in English than in any other subject.

### **Commentary**

69. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This reflects a similar picture to that reported when the school was last inspected. Results in English in National tests present an equally favourable picture, with higher attaining pupils doing well by comparison with their counterparts nationally and in similar schools. Overall, the inspection teams' scrutiny of pupils' work shows clearly that pupils are making very good progress throughout the school. Teachers in infant and junior classes are building successfully on the work in the Foundation Stage classes. As a result boys and girls are achieving equally very well. Pupils with special educational needs are given good quality support by class teachers and support staff. This helps them to achieve well and make the small but certain steps, in building confident literacy skills. The school continually reviews its provision and seeks to improve all aspects of English in a thoughtfully prioritised action plan. The capacity for sustained improvement in English is good.
70. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average in most years. The school is to review its provision as its next priority in order to improve this aspect of English. In most lessons

teachers structure opening discussions carefully. They give opportunities for pupils to draw out their thoughts with confidence. However, at times the pupils' oral contributions are restricted to one word or short phrase answers to open ended questions. When pupils have a more complex focus in their work they respond well. In a Year 2 lesson they had to compare the story of "Alex and the glass slipper" with the more familiar story of "Cinderella". They were able to do so well, with some using good quality vocabulary because the teacher expected this of them. In Year 5/6 classes the pupils have their skills boosted as they study a variety of interesting texts. Books such as "Grandpa Chatterjee" and poems such as "The Highwayman" capture their interest. Pupils are keen to contribute to the shared discussion about these texts. Speaking and listening skills in Year 6 are further well supported in the drama club. This is perceptively led by a Year 5/6 teacher.

71. Standards in reading are above average overall. Higher attaining readers read with fluency and expression. The less skilled readers benefit from the school's systematic approach to developing reading. They have regular opportunities to read in school to teachers and support staff. They have reading diaries that go between home and school with pupils' books so that progress is being continually checked. Special needs pupils often work in smaller groups with support staff so that more focus is given to their skills in reading. All pupils benefit from the guided reading lessons where specific focus is given to the acquisition of skills and good reading habits. This process is continued throughout the school. In a particularly well-focused lesson with a group of Year 6 boys the class teacher made extremely perceptive interventions at just the right moments. Good use of questioning about the reading matter helped these pupils to deepen their comprehension. Pupils borrow books from an adequately stocked school library that encourages the development of reading throughout the school. However, the library is not well laid out and does not attract the reader to stay and enjoy books. The school is aware of the need to improve this key resource. The careful tracking of progress underpins the good reading standards being achieved.
72. Standards of writing are above average. This was evidenced in the lessons observed as well as in the scrutiny of work. Throughout the school, teachers plan interesting opportunities for pupils to write in a variety of ways. There is a particular strength developed in writing for different audiences as pupils compose poetry, make diary entries and become skilled as imaginative narrative writers. Standards are carefully boosted in Year 5/6 classes. In these classes the pupils respond positively to a wide range of stimuli and take pride in their writing. Writing is well supported by the sympathetic marking completed by teachers. This gives clear indications to pupils about what they need to do in order to improve their work. This is a consistent process throughout the school. The careful tracking of progress helps teachers to set appropriate targets. It also aids pupils' understanding. Pupils' knowledge about how to become very good writers is being continually enhanced by the schools' approaches. Handwriting and spelling are being taught as discrete skills in most classes but the quality of this lacks consistency and this shows up in presentation that is not always up to the mark.
73. Teachers pay appropriate levels of attention to national initiatives in their lesson planning. Most lessons are planned effectively. However, there is some lack of attention to detail in some plans in Year 3/4 classes. Teaching assistants are well deployed once the pupils begin group work but are not always sufficiently well involved in opening discussion times. They work with thought and care with special needs pupils. The sustained imaginative teaching throughout the school ensures that by Year

6 pupils achieve very well. As a result pupils have very positive attitudes and work enthusiastically.

74. The two subject leaders work well together. They have clear goals for continuous improvement in standards. They have a systematic approach to developing the necessary skills with the pupils. They give effective leadership to their colleagues ensuring a whole school approach to the development of pupils' skills.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

75. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is well developed. In subjects such as science and history, independence in recording is being successfully encouraged. However, in geography too many work sheets are limiting more creative writing. In ICT when pupils are given the opportunity in Year 6 to use their skills, they do so with care and thought. However, there is too little evidence of the use of ICT skills to support literacy. The school recognises the need to give more time to the development of speaking and listening skills. It is already identified as the next area for development in English.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in mathematics are above average throughout the school, and the achievement of all groups of pupils is good.
- Numeracy skills are developed well across the curriculum.
- Teaching and learning are good, and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Some mathematics sets are too large for a satisfactory learning environment to be created.
- The leadership of the subject is good.
- Management is satisfactory, but monitoring of teaching and learning and the use of assessment information could be improved.

### **Commentary**

76. Standards in mathematics are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In the last four years standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 have been at least above average and occasionally well above national standards. When compared with similar schools, standards have usually been above average. The school enables a significant number of Year 6 pupils to attain the higher Level 5 in annual National tests. Current standards in Year 2 are similar to those reported by the previous inspection. Standards are better overall in Year 6 than those reported in the previous inspection. The achievement of all pupils in the school, including those with special educational needs is good.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall but better than this in Year 5 and Year 6 where it is frequently very good. Lessons are carefully planned, work is matched to different ability groups, and teachers draw well upon the general enthusiasm pupils' show for mathematics. Higher attaining pupils are challenged consistently and most teachers set specific time targets for completion of work. The

high expectation of teachers in the top two years is very obvious, never more so when in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher expressed huge disappointment that the pupils had not done as well as expected. Teaching assistants effectively help pupils with special educational needs because they work well with teachers in following individual pupil targets. Teachers have good class management skills, and as a result, behaviour in lessons is almost always very good. Most pupils are careful and accurate in their presentation of work, which teachers mark satisfactorily although there is variation in the quality of guidance given to pupils.

78. Learning could be even better if some sets in the junior stage were not so big. Classrooms are not large and setting arrangements that typically involve splitting the year group into 2, results in classes of 36 and 34 in a very cramped environment. Occasionally, teachers also keep their pupils too long on the carpet when they are bursting to get into their activities. The school has not yet evaluated thoroughly whether the setting arrangements are the best organisation to raise standards in mathematics. There is limited use of teachers' assessment or managers' tracking data that could usefully support such a review.
79. The leadership of mathematics by the two subject leaders is good. They are both good teaching role models. Their management, although satisfactory, could be improved if they had more time to monitor teaching and learning in the school in order to further improve standards and consistency in teaching.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

80. The basic skills of numeracy are being well developed in several areas of the curriculum, notably science, ICT and design technology. Teachers are good at seizing opportunities in other curricular areas to promote pupils' mathematical development.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have improved significantly over the course of this school year. They are now broadly average across the school.
- Pupils' achievement is good and this is the result of good teaching.
- The lack of individual targets means that pupils have a limited understanding of what they need to do in order to improve; this has a limiting impact on potentially higher attainers in particular.
- The systems for assessing and tracking how well pupils are doing are cumbersome and require review.
- The subject is led soundly but there are shortcomings in the way that standards, achievement, teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated.

## **Commentary**

81. Standards dipped significantly in the 2004 National tests for Year 6 pupils to an unprecedented below average level. Due to the school's effective improvement strategies they are improving this year and standards are now broadly average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Progress and achievement speed up for pupils in Years 5 and 6

where there is a good consistency to teaching and learning for pupils of all capabilities that is not apparent in some other classes and year groups. Boys and girls achieve equally well in lessons. There have been satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection but the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation limits more speedy progress in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for. They achieve well because they have good support from their teachers and teaching assistants.

82. Science lessons are interesting and informative, with a strong emphasis on pupils working as potential scientists. Teaching is good, as the quality of learning, and the strong emphasis on science investigations means that most of the older pupils are secure in their understanding of 'fair testing'<sup>1</sup>. Across the school, pupils plan and organise their science investigations well. For example, in a Year 3/4 class the pupils were investigating which materials conduct electricity and which do not. Each group eagerly set about their investigation, gathering their equipment and deciding how they were going to record their findings. Pupils of all capabilities made good gains in their learning and their achievement was good. In this lesson ICT was used well to support learning. A group of pupils worked on an appropriate program that reinforced their understanding of conductors and insulators. In some other classes, pupils' work indicates that ICT is not used enough to support learning in science and this needs to be tackled.
83. Pupils' science work in books begun in September shows that some topics are covered in greater depth than others in parallel classes as for example, with work on plant growth in Year 4. Similarly, some of the work that inspectors sampled shows that knowledge and understanding is being promoted far more consistently than the investigative aspects of the subject. However, the work in books, and in some years, folders, shows a good impetus to this aspect of the subject in recent weeks. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is generally good. Some of the pupils' work is marked very well, for example in one of the three classes in Year 6, giving them clear pointers about what needs to be done in order to improve. However, this is not consistent across the school, and at its weakest, pupils' work has just a tick with no indication about how to improve. This limits achievement, particularly for the higher attainers. The lack of targets means that pupils are not clear about what they are aiming to achieve and this does not benefit their learning. Systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress and achievement are detailed but they lack the sharpness that is needed if gaps in learning are to be pinpointed and tackled early on.
84. The subject is led soundly and the subject leader has worked very hard to put in place a curriculum that is challenging and exciting. She has succeeded, but the lack of planned time to monitor achievement, teaching and learning has a detrimental effect on the drive for raised standards.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

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<sup>1</sup> When pupils set up a 'fair test' they decide how they are going to make it fair by changing one or more factors and recording the result.

- Standards in ICT have improved throughout the school since the last inspection and are now average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well and have very good attitudes to their learning.
- Teaching and learning are good, as is the leadership of the subject.
- Progress in better learning is held back by some deficiencies and malfunctions in resources.

## Commentary

85. Standards in ICT are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The achievement of nearly all pupils is good. At the time of the previous inspection, standards throughout the school were below average, so there has been considerable improvement in a subject where the national pace of change is at a permanently high level. Each class has regular opportunities to develop skills in ICT in the computer suite, as well as opportunities to support different curriculum areas such as history, geography and numeracy. However, opportunities to use class-based computers are often missed. In many lessons during the inspection computers were not used as much as they could have been. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and their support assistants and make good progress towards their learning targets but they too have only limited access to class computers to support their studies.
86. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning, and are continually gaining confidence in their use of ICT equipment. From Year 1 onwards pupils open, work and close a suitable range of programs. They identify different icons on the screen and use addresses for research in history on the Internet. By Year 6 pupils are adding to, amending and combining a range of information from different resources, and learning how to present the results for different audiences.
87. Since the last inspection, training and in-school support have given teachers much greater confidence in guiding the learning of their pupils, although there are still variations in teaching competency across the school. However, the school has employed a knowledgeable and effective support assistant who is present in almost all ICT lessons in the suite and makes a good contribution to learning. Teachers' planning has improved, and now gives pupils suitable learning opportunities to develop the skills of accessing different programmes and to understand how technology can help them in and out of school. Pupils work hard in lessons, concentrate well and listen carefully. Occasionally they have to listen too long when they are eager to get on with their practical work. Teachers make conspicuous and successful efforts to enable many pupils, especially in Year 5 and Year 6, to work independently.
88. The leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader has been very active in developing the skills of teachers and in ensuring that resource provision keeps up with national trends. However, in spite of her best endeavours, the school still does not have resources in regular use which would enable learning to be accelerated at a higher rate. This is due to a very tight budget, and to the fact that a very expensive mobile unit containing fifteen laptop computers has not worked properly since its purchase last September. This failure of a well-planned innovation has hindered pupils' learning throughout the school. The management of ICT is satisfactory. Although the subject leader has monitored teachers' planning and pupils' work, she has not had time to observe work in classes to monitor the quality of teaching and

learning. This is planned for the near future as is the introduction shortly of a suitable assessment system to monitor pupil progress and plan for their needs.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

89. ICT is now linked satisfactorily to other subjects of the curriculum, which is an improvement on the last inspection. In most ICT lessons teachers emphasise aspects of literacy and numeracy. Pupils also use ICT to aid their research in subjects such as history, and in environmental studies, although more opportunities to use ICT could be given in English and science. Opportunities are also missed for pupils to use computers in classrooms to support what they have learned in different lessons.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above those set out in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 6 and achievement is good.
- The curriculum for religious education is interesting and exciting.
- Teaching is good, with very good features that capture pupils' good learning.
- Subject leadership is good, but the lack of planned time to monitor what is happening in religious education limits how far the subject can progress.

### **Commentary**

90. Standards are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus throughout the school, as they were at the previous inspection. Younger pupils have a secure understanding of the main traditions and festivals of the Christian church, as well as a developing understanding of the traditions and faiths in other world religions such as Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. Older pupils, in Years 3 to 6, successfully build on and extend this earlier learning. Their understanding of the importance of religious symbolism is good, as demonstrated in a Year 5 / 6 lesson on Hindu traditions when the pupils dramatised a Hindu marriage ceremony. Some thoughtful responses ensued as the pupils identified seven promises they felt were important for two people to make to each other at a marriage ceremony, all of which were relevant to the way in which they relate to others in their class and at home.
91. The curriculum is successfully enhanced in many ways. Visitors to school, who belong to different faiths, enhance all pupils' understanding of different religious beliefs very well. Older pupils, working with the *Bible Explorer* group, are developing their own understanding of the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, and the tenets and beliefs of Christianity. This works well, and pupils of all capabilities are interested and involved in their tasks, explaining clearly why they enjoy working with the *Bible Explorer* group – '*Because it is fun*'.
92. Teaching is good. Teachers are keen to ensure that their pupils have first hand experiences of the traditions and customs in a range of world faiths. Year 3 and 4 pupils really enjoyed their special Sikh meal together, giving them a greater understanding of the meaning that underpins this custom. Learning is good throughout the school, as is pupils' achievement. Systems for assessing pupils' progress and

achievement are at an early stage and the subject leader has identified this as her next area for development.

93. The subject leadership is good and the leader has a clear grasp of what needs to be done to move the subject forward. Strengths and weaknesses are identified, but the lack of planned time to monitor and evaluate developments in the subject holds back further improvement.

## **Geography**

94. This subject was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision.
95. The subject leader is a firm advocate of geography and she works hard to ensure that pupils have access to a broad range of worthwhile experiences within the subject. The curriculum is suitably planned and geography is well resourced. A new system of assessment is being trialled. In the infants the pupils are involved in finding out about Katie Morag's Isle of Struay and in active research about different countries. In the junior years they learn about weather in various climates, and in Year 3/4 classes send home postcards that show the diversity. Older pupils develop their knowledge and understanding about suitable range of topics that includes local environmental work and comparisons between Wirral life and that in the Indian village of Chembakoli.
96. Although pupils' geographic knowledge is well addressed, the focus on the development of skills could be sharpened. An overuse of worksheets in some years is a constraint to promoting pupils' personal enquiry skills. Opportunities for extended writing are limited in this subject. The subject leader is committed to continued improvement in the provision for geography but has yet to have sufficient monitoring opportunities. The subject action plan shows time is to be given for this in 2005-6.

## **History**

97. This subject was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Scrutiny of pupils' past work, alongside discussions, indicates that the history curriculum is firmly in place throughout the school, as it was at the time of the last inspection, although it is low status in the current school improvement plan. A newly introduced system of assessment has potential for aiding the charting of pupils' progress in history.
98. Standards are above average by the time the pupils are eleven. They use their research skills effectively as they research aspects of Victorian times, for example when they wanted to find out differences between the social classes in lifestyle, education and health. Year 6 pupils demonstrate their ICT skills well as they successfully use their word processing skills by integrating text and pictures into their topic folders on the Victorians. The choice of topics, for example those about the Egyptians and Greeks, extend pupils' cultural development.
99. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic as they discuss their work. Topics are covered in depth so that pupils' knowledge base and understanding are secure. Regular weekly homework effectively supports the work undertaken in lessons. Literacy skills are used very well to support learning in history. For example, work is well presented with due attention to spelling, presentation and grammar. This subject has a high profile in display around the school and it is clearly enjoyed. Learning is productive and

achievement is good. Visits to places such as Port Sunlight and Croxteth Hall add extra enrichment to pupils' good learning experiences.

100. The subject leadership is effective and within the well conceived action plan it is apparent that there is a clear view of future improvement, For example, time is now required for more rigorous monitoring and the range and use of artefacts needs to be increased.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision of an *Arts Day* enabled pupils time to work in the style of various artists, and to create good quality artwork.
- An art exhibition of pupils' work was much acclaimed and enjoyed by members of the school's community.
- Extra-curricular links are very good.

### **Commentary**

101. Standards in art and design are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is sound throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated and achieve as well as other pupils of their age in art and design. Art and design planning shows a two-year rolling programme of experiences. A review of the programme of study is currently on-going in all years.
102. The pupils in Year 1 have been encouraged to look closely at flowers as a stimulus for their own detailed observational drawings. In Year 3 and 4, pupils have studied the art of Paul Kelly, and created very colourful pieces in the same style. The use of sketchbooks in all years is a positive feature. In Years 5 and 6 some of the free choice sketches and shading are good. However, some work lacks good scale and accurate proportion and standards could be better. In a lesson observed during the inspection the pupils achieved well because of the teacher's high expectations. Their work on developing paisley patterns showed the pupils combining visual and tactile materials. In this lesson the cross-curricular links to history and geography were good. The pupils were knowledgeable about their work and able to talk about their original designs and how they had developed their work. This depth of self-evaluation is not always built sufficiently well into pupils' art and design experiences.
103. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic. Sketch books are used satisfactorily overall to explore different techniques and experiment with different media but in some classes use of sketch books could be improved, particularly to develop observational drawing skills. Art and design is used effectively across the curriculum, with links to literacy, history, geography and religious education seen. An art exhibition was held last year to celebrate the standard of art and design throughout the school. A range of large-scale work in the style of famous artists such as: Matisse, Klee, Mondrian and Kelly, all in shades of mauve and pinks, produced for the exhibition is on display in the hall.

Governors wrote to parents in their annual report that the exhibition was worthy of the Tate! The displays on India and the Chinese “Wishing Tree” are usefully extending pupils’ multi-cultural experiences. The displays in Year 5 and 6 classrooms that link litter in the environment to art, are interesting and lively. In Year 6 a professional artist has been working with the pupils on making three-dimensional models and the standard of work here is good. The designs for the thrones made by junior-age pupils on display in the foyer entitled “Fit For a King” were created in art and design lessons initially and then developed through design and technology lessons. The thrones are of a good standards and show individuality in the finished pieces.

104. Since the previous inspection there has been a change in leadership of the subject. The position is now a job share that is working well. Recently new assessment procedures have been introduced and these show positive potential for charting pupils’ progression. There is a need for the leaders to have time and opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and standards throughout the school. The subject leaders have included target setting as a next step for improvement in the action plan.

### **Design and technology**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in design and technology are above average and pupils’ achievement is good.
- The work focuses equally well on planning and evaluation as it does on designing and making products.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

### **Commentary**

105. There is good provision and coverage of all aspects of design and technology throughout the school. The topics chosen stimulate the pupils’ desire for learning and the outcomes of their work are of good quality. This good standard of work in design and technology has been maintained since the previous inspection. Teachers and pupils alike enjoy design and technology, and the work in display reflects confident teaching and learning throughout the school and very worthwhile experiences.
106. Pupils are enthusiastic about design and technology. In discussion with inspectors, Year 6 pupils recalled all the objects they had made from Year 1. They talked of choice of materials and tools and the freedom to do what they wanted within health and safety restrictions. Pupils are able to evaluate their work and comment on how to make it better. A unit of work in Years 3 and 4 on designing and making a throne “Fit for a King” as part of their history study on the Tudors, is of a high standard. The work had been carried out in three ability groups with blocked time for the subject. Pupils talked about making money containers whilst on a residential course. They described work carried out when in Year 5, designing, making and controlling cars, with great excitement giving details of the designs and plans. Evidence of ICT being used to support pupils’ research and designs was shown in photographic evidence showing modelling and control, as part of a fairground rides theme.

107. In a good lesson in Year 3/4, the pupils were investigating the sensory qualities of biscuits. As a result of the teacher's good subject knowledge and questioning skills, the pupils were motivated to learn and were using good vocabulary when answering questions. The pupils tasted, smelt and handled the biscuits and then drew sketches which were labelled well. The pupils made good progress and were evaluating real products and working well within a higher than expected level for their age.
108. The subject leader is enthusiastic about her area of responsibility and is knowledgeable in what is taking place throughout the school. Recently new assessment procedures have been introduced. The portfolio of the whole school gave a good overview on the outcomes of what is delivered. The subject would benefit and develop from a process of systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The subject leader is keen to promote risk assessments more rigorously across the subject and is actively working on these for each unit of work.

## **Music**

109. This subject was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. In a lesson observed in Year 2 the pupils learnt how to use parts of their bodies as musical instruments and to keep a steady beat, replicating long and short notes. Good encouragement by the teacher enabled the pupils to play with confidence and increasing accuracy. From discussions with Year 6 pupils it is clear that they are enthusiastic about the musical experiences they receive in the school. The opportunities for peripatetic music tuition in brass and wind is a positive feature in provision. For some pupils, joining the school choir and singing in festivals and to local senior citizens, for example, is much enjoyed. Singing in assemblies is enthusiastic and enjoyed, with teachers acting as good role models for the pupils. Singing skills are of better quality when accompanied by the piano as opposed to taped music. In one assembly led by the deputy there was a useful focus on skills that aided the pupils' performance. The small sample of work in pupils' current music books includes notation and learning about musical instruments and the orchestra's composition in Years 3 and 4. Videos of school concerts and the recent Gospel show, watched by inspectors demonstrate clearly the school's commitment to developing the pupils' musical appreciation and performance. Visitors such as the Police Band add very good enrichment to the curriculum.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils reach above average standards across the school and achieve well, which is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection.
- Pupils' attitudes to physical education are very good.
- Extra curricular opportunities are very good.
- The quality of leadership and management is good.

## **Commentary**

110. Standards in physical education are above average in Years 2 and 6. The achievement of all pupils is good, including pupils with special educational needs, who are well supported by teachers and support assistants. This is a good improvement on standards seen at the last two inspections. The school's recent attention to the provision for gifted pupils has identified the needs of those with sporting skills.

Currently a very gifted gymnast receives specialist coaching during school time to help her training for national trials and competitions.

111. Improvement has taken place because all teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, and there is continuity across the school in the development of pupils' skills. This applies equally to games, gymnastics and dance. In gymnastics for example, the standards of a few pupils are well above average, with one girl showing exceptional talent. In Year 3 and in Year 4, pupils have opportunities to learn to swim at a local pool. Consequently most pupils can swim at least 25 metres by Year 6. Any that cannot are given further opportunities to learn. Pupils throughout the school show great enthusiasm for physical education and particularly enjoy competitive games, as they get older. They also behave responsibly and with a good regard for safety. This was seen both in Year 3 when pupils quickly put equipment out for their lesson, and in Year 6 when pupils umpired their own games of netball without fuss or argument.
112. Another strength in physical education is the good number of opportunities pupils are given to join extra-curricular clubs. The clubs are well organised by teachers and outside coaches. The school is benefiting especially well from its developing links with the local sports college. Recent financial initiatives are also helping the provision for physical education in the school. The introduction of a skills ladder that pupils use to log their progress is a recent and potentially valuable tool for assessment.
113. Considerable credit for the improvement in the subject is due to the good leadership and management of the subject leader. In the last three years through her single-minded pursuit of opportunities for the school and her vision for the future, physical education has developed into a strength of the school. Learning resources are good and the hall and outside areas are of a good quality and effectively used. One exception is the playground, which several pupils complained about as being 'gravelly', and difficult to run on and play games. The school is aware that this needs improving.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

The provision for pupils' personal and social development, and their health and citizenship education (PSHCE), is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The development of the whole child is central to the school's philosophy.
- The programme of study is very broad and is delivered across the curriculum.
- Healthy lifestyles are the focus of current initiatives.
- All aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are emphasised well.

### **Commentary**

114. Pupils' personal development is central to the school's ethos and all staff are dedicated to maintaining consistent messages and high standards. The policy is to deliver PSHCE across the whole curriculum, often with specialist input from a range of visitors. Personal and social skills are supported and challenged by the positive emphasis on very good role models, and by providing pupils with various positions of responsibility. In this area the school council has made a good start but its remit is now ready to be increased. Teachers take the opportunity to relate aspects of PSHCE

whenever an occasion presents itself, and assemblies are very well used to introduce, or to reinforce, messages. Residential opportunities give pupils the chance to develop their social skills and independence still further.

115. Citizenship topics are delivered by teachers and by visitors and reach a peak in charities week in which the school focuses all its leisure time on fund-raising for a group of charities about which they hear from invited speakers.
116. Health promotion has been a focus in recent months, with pupils made aware of the importance of healthy eating at lunch and at break. Skipping has been a success story, with more pupils taking up physical activity in their playtimes. The governors are now promoting the walk-to-school initiative. Pupils learn about the dangers of drug misuse, and they receive sex and relationships education, particularly from the visiting life education bus. Supermarket staff have been in to school to share information about healthy eating. The school became a *Health Promoting School* in 2004.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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