

# INSPECTION REPORT

**LEYLAND METHODIST JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119400

Headteacher: Mr. M. J. Graham

Reporting inspector: Mrs. C. A. Field  
9479

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> March 2000

Inspection number: 188974

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 7 to 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Canberra Road  
Leyland  
Preston  
Lancashire

Postcode: PR5 2ET

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Dr. A. Cottam

Date of previous inspection: July 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs. C. A. Field	Registered inspector		The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Teaching and learning
			Key Issues for action
Mrs. J. Butler	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Mr. D. R. Carrington	Team inspector	Information technology	Leadership and management
		Geography	
		History	
		Religious education	
Mrs. M. Spark	Team inspector	Equality of opportunity	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		English	
		Music	
Mr. P. Clarke	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
		Mathematics	
		Art	
		Design and technology	
Mr. E. Hastings	Team inspector	Science	
		Physical education	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated to the east of Leyland and serves its local community. There are 279 pupils on roll: 160 boys and 119 girls aged between seven and eleven years. The profile of pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. Six per cent of pupils are eligible for free-school meals which is well below the national average. Sixty pupils have special educational needs (21.5%); a figure broadly in line with the national average. Seven of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs in place. There are three pupils currently in the school who come from homes where English is not the first language but no special provision is made as all are proficient in the use of English.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Leyland Methodist Junior is an effective school where a very positive ethos encourages successful learning within a happy and caring environment. Most parents are very supportive of the school, and together with teachers form a secure partnership in their children's education. The school's mission which promotes Christian values is very much in evidence in the school's work and very good relationships at all levels underpin the good quality of education provided. Teachers provide interesting lessons for pupils and as a result most pupils make good progress, although too often work prepared for top sets is not demanding enough. The school is very effectively led by the headteacher, has a good track record over recent years for the standards achieved, and there is drive and determination to improve national test results still further. The systems in place to analyse with accuracy what works best in the school to bring about even better performance, are not as effective as they could be. Nevertheless the school has good capacity to make sustained improvements and provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Through good quality teaching, enables pupils to make good progress in science, religious education, history and physical education throughout the school.
- Enables pupils to achieve above average standards in science and religious education, and well above average standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Provides very worthwhile experiences for pupils in mathematics and music so that most make very good progress, and learn with enthusiasm and real enjoyment. These are subject strengths.
- Makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress in learning, especially in their basic skills.
- Makes very good provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Has been successful in building a team of staff and governors effectively led by the headteacher, who are working hard to give a high quality, rounded education to the pupils.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English could be higher, especially in top sets.
- The work set in some lessons is not challenging enough for higher attaining pupils.
- School evaluation and improvement are not underpinned sufficiently well by systematic and rigorous ways of finding out what could be better and what is done well.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

The quality of education is good and the school is a happy place to be. Strengths far outweigh those areas identified above, though the governors will prepare an action plan that focuses on improving the relative weaknesses, and gives attention to some more minor aspects identified in the full report.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since 1996 the school has made sound progress in responding to the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. Good progress has been made in developing science, information technology and design and technology schemes of work. Subject management roles have been re-distributed and clarified. However, the role of co-ordinator still requires developing in terms of monitoring and its impact on improving quality and raising standards. Monitoring work by the subject co-ordinator for mathematics is proving beneficial to school improvement. The school development plan is now a more useful tool for setting out and guiding the priorities of the school. More people need to be involved in its production and in monitoring how successful developments are in terms of the impact they have on improving teaching and learning. A useful start has been made in collecting data to help in forecasting how well pupils are likely to achieve. This information is usefully supporting the targets set for English and mathematics results between now and 2002, although targets should be more challenging.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	C	C	B	B	well above average    A above average        B average                 C below average         D well below average    E
mathematics	C	C	A	A	
science	E	C	C	C	

There was good improvement in national test results last year. Standards in English were above the national average and above average when compared to schools with a similar intake. Standards were well above average in mathematics and average in science on both counts. Findings from inspection judge standards at the end of Key Stage 2 to be average in English, above average in science and religious education and well above average in mathematics. Standards in information technology are average. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy has been very successful in enabling pupils to work with speed and accuracy, and standards are lifting as a result. The good structure and scheme in place to support mathematics teaching, and the insightful leadership of the subject are key reasons why results in mathematics are so much better than in English. The school's strategy for literacy has had a limited impact in raising English standards, particularly writing. Not all classes have introduced the National Literacy Strategy fully. In too many lessons there is a lack of specific objectives for learning that enable precise assessment of individual performance. The pace of work in some lessons is too slow and not enough high quality work is achieved especially in the top set in Year 6.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show enthusiasm for learning and try hard to do their very best work for their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils get on extremely well together and are considerate of the feelings of others. Behaviour is as good at lunch and play as it is in class.
Personal development and relationships	Very Good. The quality of relationships is a strength of the school and are successfully underpinning the good learning taking place. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to take a lead in organising appropriate aspects of school life and this is preparing them well as responsible future citizens.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are happy to come to school and levels of attendance in school are above average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Teaching strengths have been sustained since the time of the previous inspection and continue to have good impact on enabling most pupils to learn successfully. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the 73 lessons observed during this inspection teaching quality was of satisfactory or better quality in 97% and in 3% unsatisfactory. In 63% of lessons teaching was of good or better quality and in 19% of very good quality and in 1% excellent. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and results in these pupils making good progress against individual targets. Teaching is mainly good for pupils throughout the school, but there is potential for it to be better focused on ensuring that all pupils make the maximum amount of progress over their time at school, especially higher attainers. The teaching of music is a strength and results in very good progress in learning. Skills of literacy are given appropriate attention but there are inconsistencies in the way they are taught that leads to pupils making uneven rates of progress. Numeracy skills are consistently well taught and pupils do well in mathematics as a result. The very best practice in teaching and learning in the school has yet to be sufficiently shared to enable the school to capitalise on the talents and expertise of staff.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The pupils benefit from interesting and exciting experiences, however the organisation of the curriculum is not set up to deliver, to best advantage, all of the subjects planned.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Early assessment is thorough and there is good team effort to ensure that individual needs are well responded to, especially in basic skills learning. The accommodation used for giving extra support to pupils out of the classroom is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school is secure, friendly and caring and gives excellent attention to pupils' spiritual growth. Very good attention is paid to pupils' moral and social development, and good opportunities are made available for their cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The procedures in place to monitor and promote good behaviour and pupils' personal development are very effective. Much less effective are the procedures for assessing pupils' academic learning. Insufficient use is made of assessment information to guide curricular planning.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. Very effective links are promoted and most parents support the school well. Communication between school and home is generally of good quality but the school is not always successful in giving parents a clear picture of their children's progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives a strong personal lead to the ethos created in school and the educational direction. Staff are well bonded and the good quality education arises from their desire to give of their best to the pupils. There is a shared determination to strive for improvement but the lack of processes and systems, to ensure the thrust needed is corporate are not yet in place.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. A newly constituted governing body has established itself very effectively. There are clear intentions in their planned future work to move with speed in supporting the management's drive for raised standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Too much is currently left to chance and informal arrangements. There is no systematic way of checking what is working best in the school and why. Work recently begun on tracking individual pupils' performance is a positive step forward.
The strategic use of resources	Good. There is a good sufficiency of staffing, adequate accommodation and a broadly satisfactory level of resourcing. The school is allocated a much lower budget than most primary schools and does very well within tight margins. Space is at a premium in the school and too much teaching takes place in inappropriate locations. There is no resource base to enable pupils to develop their research skills. This is unsatisfactory. The school is making sound progress in its pursuit of Best Value principles.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That children like school and are making good progress</li> <li>• Good standards of behaviour and the way in which pupils are helped to become mature and responsible</li> <li>• Good teaching with high expectations for the standards pupils can achieve</li> <li>• School's approachability</li> <li>• Good leadership and management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• Information about the progress pupils make</li> <li>• Range of extra-curricular opportunities</li> </ul>

Parents hold mainly very positive views about the school and those in the box above are endorsed by inspection findings. A few parents would like more detailed information about homework and how well their children are doing at school. The inspection team agrees that this would be useful. The range of extra-curricular activities is adequate but the school might like to seek parents' views about how provision could be improved.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Since the time of the previous inspection the good quality of education has been sustained so that most pupils are achieving better than previously. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs who achieve well as a result; this is an advancement. In some lessons the higher attaining older pupils are not challenged enough and make too little progress, especially in English. The school has yet to evaluate the best of what it does to set future targets that show its ambition to be amongst the top performing schools nationally. Most parents hold very positive views about the school's results and achievements.

2. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, indicate that in comparison with all schools and including those with a similar intake, the percentage of pupils reaching expected levels was well above average in mathematics, above average in English and average in science. For the past three years results have been gently rising in the school and keeping pace with national trends in all tested subjects. Last year girls' results in English were much better than boys' results but not to a significant degree when their prior attainment was looked at. When set against the national picture there was no significant variation between the achievement of boys and girls.

3. Findings from inspection judge that standards in the five core subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 are average in English and information technology, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. Standards in religious education are above those expected as set out in the locally agreed syllabus. There was no significant variation between the performance of boys and girls found in the work sampled or in the lessons observed. Through worthwhile experiences, pupils make good progress in science, religious education, history and physical education throughout the school. Pupils make sound progress in learning in English, information technology, art, design and technology and geography. Pupils learn with enthusiasm and enjoyment in mathematics and music so that most make very good progress. These are subject strengths of the school's provision.

4. Standards in mathematics are improving at a very good rate because of insightful leadership and a clear plan of action for future improvement. There is well focused, confident teaching with good expectations for the amount and quality of work expected by the full range of pupils. Setting arrangements have helped teachers to match work to pupils who have different learning needs, and who learn at different rates. Although even more precision is needed in setting objectives for lessons that stimulate the maximum rates of progress for all, if results are to be the best they can be. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy has been very successful in enabling pupils to work with speed and accuracy whilst solving problems, and standards are lifting as a result. Pupils develop a very good understanding of mathematics and its application in practical situations across all aspects of the subject. It is the view of the inspection team that there is potential for results in mathematics to match those found in the top five percent of schools nationally.

5. Standards in English are not as high as they could be, particularly in reading and writing and especially for high attaining pupils. Setting arrangements are a positive feature but insufficient account is taken of how well pupils learn and this weakness in assessment results in too many pupils marking time in lessons, particularly those quite capable of

working faster and achieving at higher levels. The pace of work in some lessons is too slow and not enough high quality work is achieved especially in the top set in Year 6. Not all classes have yet implemented the National Literacy Strategy and so there are inconsistencies in the experiences that pupils have in English lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and low attaining groups generally make good progress in English because work is well targeted to providing additional opportunities for them to develop their language and literacy skills. There is good impact from work set to boost standards for low attaining pupils in Year 6, and the additional literacy strategies implemented throughout the school.

6. Results in science are getting better due to the drive and determination shown by the co-ordinator in developing a useful scheme of work to support teaching and learning. Lessons in science are exciting and promote good opportunities for pupils to “learn by doing”, and this leads to pupils of all attainment levels gaining in their understanding of scientific concepts, developing practical skills through experimentation and increasing their knowledge about a wide range of scientific processes.

7. Standards in information technology have improved considerably since the time of the previous inspection from a below average to average level. Pupils develop appropriate skills in word-processing, modelling and control technology. The development of the suite of computers has been a positive feature even though its cluttered and cramped internal layout mitigates against the best advancement for older pupils. Standards in religious education are better than those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This aspect of school life is central to the very positive Christian ethos promoted.

8. All pupils at the school show great enthusiasm for learning and try hard to do their very best, even when in some lessons the work is not sufficiently stimulating or demanding, especially for higher attainers in English. The school is particularly successful at ensuring that those pupils who are potentially capable of gaining a Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2, do so. A key development has been in enabling pupils with special educational needs to succeed and the good results are testament to the good provision made for these pupils. The school has yet to establish a policy aimed at supporting talented or gifted pupils specifically, but is drawing on voluntary help to extend the key skills of a very able mathematician in Year 4. There is more attention needed to ensure that those pupils capable of achieving higher levels make the very best progress over their time at the school.

9. The quality of teaching is good overall and is a key reason why standards of attainment are rising. There is inconsistent use of targets in lesson planning and in setting targets that pupils can then use to assess their own progress and know clearly what they need to do next to improve. The school has made a useful start on tracking pupils’ progress but has not yet given sufficient emphasis to the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, teaching, and learning to analyse what works best in the school and why. The role of subject co-ordinators and senior managers requires strengthening in this respect. The school has set realistic projections for English, mathematics and science national test results between now and 2002, but they lack challenge and do not take sufficient account of the impact of the value the school adds through additional strategies implemented in teaching and learning.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Strengths in this aspect of school life have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Leyland Methodist Junior school has a very positive ethos very much in evidence the minute you walk through the door. The school is extremely well ordered, friendly and very caring. Pupils like school and are keen to attend. The quality of relationships at all levels is very good and this promotes the feeling of safety and security that helps children to take full advantage of the good quality of education provided. Bullying instances are taken seriously and responded to effectively. There have been no exclusions in the last twelve months. The school is harmonious, and all pupils are valued for being themselves. Parents appreciate the ways in which the school fosters pupils' sense of responsibility and maturity. The school is a happy place to be.

11. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and this is a key reason why learning is successful. Pupils with special educational needs show good levels of interest due to the good support given to them, and because their efforts are praised and recognised. Pupils work with diligence and perseverance; for example, in a very good Year 4 history lesson, following discussion about a Roman town boys and girls both showed immense concentration while producing their own plans incorporating some of the features they had discussed. They recalled key facts about Pompeii and Boudicca's revolt from an earlier lesson that helped them identify some of the detail required. Pupils work with good effort and imagination, for example, when making Mother's Day pop-up cards that are original three-dimensional designs that include marbled techniques created earlier.

12. Pupils show interest in their work and are well motivated even when work is not very stimulating or sufficiently challenging. Pupils co-operate well together, for example when practising the skills of short tennis. The opportunities for older pupils to research information for themselves are currently being limited by the lack of a library or resource base for learning.

13. Behaviour in lessons and at lunch and play is very good. Pupils get on extremely well together. Pupils respond well to the code of conduct and know well the effect their actions have on others. The system of detention is seen to be fair and appropriate. As one boy said, 'I was too slow working in mathematics and didn't get my work finished and need to complete it before going out to play'. Circle time is being used very positively for pupils to think about others' feelings and to give recognition to the positive attributes of everyone in class. Pupils know very clearly what is right and wrong, and show respect for one another and their teachers.

14. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to take a lead in organising appropriate aspects of school life, for example older pupils look after younger pupils at lunch-time. There is a myriad of monitorships available and soon a school council is to be established. Pupils are highly motivated by the headteacher awards, given out weekly to the individual in each class who has tried hard with work or behaviour. Much coveted are the 'Fred awards' given as an accolade by the headteacher. Such opportunities are preparing pupils well as responsible future citizens.

15. Levels of attendance in the school are good and are contributing positively to the good standards achieved. Nevertheless, registers show a high incidence of absence for holidays in term-time. Reporting requirements are met in full.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. Strengths in teaching have been sustained since the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching in the school is good overall and is a key reason why most pupils make good progress in their academic and social development. The staff work as an effective team that support one another well and there is good sharing of resources. Most teachers plan together within year groups to make sure that there is equality of opportunity in the experiences provided for pupils but this is not absolutely the case. There is no whole-school system to support teachers' assessment of how well pupils are doing and this is a key issue for the school to address. Parents, although recognising the high quality work that teachers do, would like more detailed information about their children's progress. Much of the exchange of best teaching practice arises through informal mechanisms and this leaves too much to chance in the drive to raise standards. The school has many talents to draw on to ensure that teaching and learning is the best it can be for pupils of all ages and abilities but is not yet tapping into these to the full.

17. Of the lessons observed the quality of teaching and learning in 1 percent was excellent, in 19 per cent very good, 43 per cent good, 34 per cent satisfactory and 3 per cent unsatisfactory. The overall good quality of teaching is higher than is typically found in primary schools and leads to successful learning for most pupils.

18. Teaching is mainly good for pupils throughout the school, but there is potential for it to be better focused on ensuring that all pupils make the maximum amount of progress over their time at school, especially higher attainers. The teaching of music is a strength and results in very good progress in learning. Skills of literacy are given appropriate attention but there are inconsistencies in the way they are taught that leads to pupils making uneven rates of progress. Numeracy skills are consistently well taught and pupils do well in mathematics as a result. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and enables these pupils to make good progress. The school has identified one gifted pupil and arranges for voluntary help to support mathematics work. Although there is no policy there is clear recognition of the more able who are grouped to work together for some lessons and sometimes given more challenging work to do, especially in mathematics. Although setting operates well enough there is too often too little expected of high attaining pupils in the top sets in English in Years 5 and 6.

19. There were common features in the two unsatisfactory lessons observed in the lower key stage: inattention to the balance of the lesson that gave rise to too much teacher talk at the expense of pupils' learning and too low expectations for what the range of pupils in the class could potentially achieve. On both counts pupils failed to make appropriate gains in their knowledge and understanding of the subjects and standards, although at a reasonable level, could have been much higher.

20. Pupils' personal talents are encouraged, and numerous opportunities are provided for all to show these off to good effect through school concerts, sports days and charitable fund-raising events, for example. The school's practice of ensuring equality of opportunity by enabling all pupils in school to have a go at learning to play the violin is a noteworthy feature. Parents hold very positive views about the quality of teaching, and how it is helping their children do well at school.

21. Teaching is generally good because teachers have good understanding of how pupils learn, and good subject knowledge that ensures pupils at the school have good quality learning opportunities which stimulates very good levels of interest and enthusiasm. They hold high expectations of what pupils can do, and are supported by sound planning, especially for teaching basic skills. This was well demonstrated in an English lesson in Year 4 where pupils were encouraged to produce non-fiction recounts. The lesson was well

planned to stimulate purposeful learning for the range of pupils in the class, some of whom benefited from a writing frame developed by the teacher to help structure their work. The high attaining pupils were enabled to summarise ideas, use dictionaries to check spellings and then draft their own pieces that were exciting and imaginative, drawing well on quite complicated vocabulary. The plenary session was used well to draw together the key points, to give volunteers the chance to read out their work to the class and for them to assess its success in meeting the objectives set. Good use of time targets ensured that learning was brisk and productive; resulting in very good progress for all.

22. Teachers manage behaviour very well, use a good range of interesting materials and largely structure lessons effectively to make best use of time, resources and the accommodation. This results in the right climate set for successful learning and pupils respond very well. Cramped conditions in some classes are a limiting factor on the methods teachers employ and the result of this is for teachers to prepare some aspects of the lesson that pupils might otherwise manage for themselves. Large classes working in the information technology suite are extremely limited by the current internal layout and this was observed to have a negative impact on learning. Very good use is made of homework to support learning, although some parents are clearly not aware of this.

23. Most teachers know full well what they want pupils to achieve but written lesson plans are not always specific enough to ensure that pupils' learning is as well targeted as it could be. There is limited use of time targets to aid the pace of individuals' learning. In some marking the teacher sets clear goals for the pupils to aim for but in others there is too much emphasis on effort and too little on targeting improvements. This means that pupils' knowledge of their own learning is under-developed.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

24. The school provides a good range of worthwhile opportunities within the curriculum, which are relevant to pupils' interests and aptitudes. The curriculum is well balanced and meets the statutory requirements to teach all of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Established schemes of work are in place for each subject, the majority of which are of good quality and give pupils appropriate opportunities to make educational progress. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Very good provision overall is made for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. This shows improvement since the last inspection.

25. The school has good strategies for teaching the basic skills of numeracy but has not yet fully implemented the National Literacy Strategy. The national strategy for numeracy is embedded into the school curriculum and the standards of achievement at the end of the key stage are improving in mathematics. This is not mirrored in literacy, and attainment is not as high as it is in mathematics. The school's strategy for literacy has so far had only a limited impact on raising standards. The skills gained by pupils in literacy and numeracy are reinforced successfully in other subject areas, particularly in religious education, history, and science.



26. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities that enrich the pupils' learning. School teams participate in local football and netball competitions and a Karate club meets regularly in the school. Clubs for Computers, First Aid, Science, and Bible Study are organised by staff. This allows pupils to further develop their skills and talents. The extra-curricular provision for music is particularly strong and involves a large number of pupils. Currently the school has a choir of approximately thirty pupils and a large string group that performs regularly in assemblies. There is an annual residential visit to the Isle of Man which is offered to all pupils in Year 6. These activities allow pupils to increase self-esteem, acquire skills, and develop interests for later life. Pupils are able to go to a homework club, where help is available from staff. A significant minority of parents who returned the questionnaires felt there were few extra-curricular activities. The inspection team found no evidence to support parents' views.

27. The curriculum generally provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to make progress. A lack of differentiation in work within sets means that the needs of higher attaining pupils are not always effectively met.

28. There is good provision for pupils' personal and social education. Appropriate consideration is given to the teaching of sex education and drugs awareness within the curriculum. The governors have agreed that sex education will not be taught but drugs education in Year 6 is enhanced by work from members of the "Heartbeat" charity. The school promotes a healthy and safe lifestyle through regular whole school initiatives, targeting topics such as healthy eating, "stranger danger" and road safety. The teaching of these topics gives pupils the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions in later life.

29. The school has good links with the local and wider community, which makes a supportive contribution to pupils' education. Contacts with the local church are particularly strong. The school choir sings in the church periodically and the minister regularly leads stimulating whole school acts of collective worship. There is an annual Service of Carols at Leyland Catholic Church together with several other primary schools in the locality. Visits to other non-Christian places of worship do not currently form part of the curriculum.

30. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development has grown in strength since the previous inspection. The school is very well placed to maintain this provision.

31. Spiritual development is excellent. There has been a remarkable improvement since the last inspection. Acts of collective worship comply fully with statutory requirements and follow planned themes. Whole school assemblies make a very strong contribution towards pupils' spiritual development and the atmosphere created is used very effectively to promote spirituality. Pupils express their hopes for the Millennium through poetry and prose, "*No more pollution, no more wars,*" and Year 4 pupils have written their own "Year of Promises." Pupils gain secure knowledge and understanding of their own and other people's beliefs through religious education and art. They study the lives and example of Anne Frank, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and Aung San Suu Kyi and try hard to apply their example and teaching within their own lives.

32. Provision for moral development is very good. Staff provide a strong moral code based on Christian values. They provide clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour and take opportunities to make pupils aware of the difference between right and wrong. Teachers encourage pupils, as they become older, to discuss wider social and moral issues such as conservation and pollution. The school's behaviour policy, and developing home school

agreement, provides a secure framework of expectations for pupils, parents, teaching, and support staff. The structure for rewarding good behaviour through the Headteacher's Awards and through the merit system is generally liked by parents and makes a positive contribution towards promoting good behaviour. The school's supportive approach is very effective in helping its pupils become self-disciplined with a mature approach to living and learning.

33. Social development is very good. The very good relationships in the school contribute strongly to the pupils' very good attitudes to social behaviour and self-discipline. Staff are very good role models for promoting values such as courtesy and respect for others. They encourage pupils to work together co-operatively and fairly in lessons in subjects such as music and science, and to act on their own initiative. Staff are very successful in promoting pupils' enthusiasm for school. It is a very caring community where all pupils are valued. Consequently pupils' self-esteem is very high. Lunchtime supervisors organise games at dinner times and older pupils play with younger ones. Pupils are involved in fund raising and they undertake a wide range of responsibilities and duties in the classroom and around school. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets for improvement. Pupils from the Bible Club have fasted to raise money for World Vision and Year 6 pupils organise an annual fund-raising fête to supplement funds for their annual visit to Gawthorpe Hall. However, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to voice their opinions through, for example, a School Council, although one is planned.

34. There has been a marked improvement in the schools' provision for the cultural development of pupils since the last report. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are given a worthwhile experience of their own and other cultures through religious education, poetry, music, and art. Music is central to the ethos of the school and pupils experience music from a range of cultures, traditions, and eras. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed studying music from the time of Henry VIII and relating instruments of the time to their modern equivalents. There are strong links within the geography curriculum, and in their study of China pupils in Year 3 have been visited by a member of the local Chinese community who was able to answer their questions and bring the subject to life. The school teaches tolerance and understanding through Assembly themes, and drama by pupils, and this is very effective in raising awareness. Good use is made of visiting artists, such as African musicians and brass ensembles.

35. Mutual benefits have been derived from constructive relationships with partner institutions, especially the local secondary school. Annual induction days are arranged for Year 6 pupils and visiting secondary staff meet and teach pupils prior to the start of the new school year. Additionally, the school receives regular placements for work experience from its "receiving" secondary school and offers training opportunities to students from Edge Hill College. The school has regular contact with the adjacent Infant School and the headteacher of the juniors regularly takes assemblies for the infant children. Year 3 staff meet with pupils in Year 2 on several occasions prior to transfer. The school is well supported by the local education authority's advisory teacher centre.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school has maintained its high standards of care for each individual within the friendly and compassionate Christian ethos. Provision for the personal and social development of pupils is a particular strength. The welfare, health and safety of pupils is a high priority for all teaching and non-teaching staff and the procedures for child protection are thorough and in accordance with local guidelines. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in the support for pupils with special educational needs, who now make good progress. However the academic support and guidance for pupils is an area in need of improvement despite the introduction of personal targets.

37. Assessment procedures throughout the school lack consistency and records tend to concentrate on the infrequent statutory tests in mathematics and English. There is no planned assessment in information technology, religious education or most of the foundation subjects. The transition arrangements from the infant school are very thorough, and assessment information is used to place pupils in sets for mathematics and English. However within the sets pupils' progress is often limited by the failure to use assessment information when planning the next learning steps for an individual. This is particularly so in the higher sets. Similarly, while marking recognises and rewards effort, it does not always clearly show how work may be improved. The good practice seen in the marking of some English work is not sufficiently widespread.

38. The school has introduced several systems of target-setting for individuals, to promote their personal and academic development. These often make attractive and challenging displays, like the 'Going for Gold' target in a Year 6 class, and the 'Year of Promises' display produced by a Year 4 class. Whilst the process of discussing and setting personal targets is very helpful, the targets themselves are often rather vague, or too generalised to be measured. Hence phrases like "to maintain the improvement in colouring" or "to continue to work hard and make good progress" for a year's aim, are not very effective tools for promoting academic progress or the involvement of parents.

39. The procedures for promoting good behaviour and good attitudes to work are very effective. Pupils value the merits, stickers and Headteacher's Awards, and the bonus points awarded to classes are effective in promoting a sense of corporate responsibility. The personal and social development of pupils also benefits from an effective use of assemblies and circle-times, during which self-esteem is nurtured, and opportunities are taken to discuss and attempt to eliminate any instances of anti-social or oppressive behaviour. Lunch-time detentions are used to emphasise the school's refusal to accept inappropriate behaviour, and they are respected by pupils.

40. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory. Although the pupils' record of attendance is good, there is evidence that monitoring levels of absence is not sharp, and that unexplained absences in some classes remain uninvestigated. A significant number of pupils have taken holidays during term-time this year and the school prospectus does not sufficiently reinforce the need for regular, continuous attendance.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

41. Since the last inspection the school has improved its already good links with parents to form an open and constructive partnership which is very effective in supporting pupils' learning. The most notable innovation is the establishment of a Parents' Forum in which all school classes are represented by parents. Whole school issues are discussed at these regular meetings in which parental experiences and expertise enrich the contributions made by senior staff, and the content of the meetings is circulated to all parents. This feature, in addition to the regular headteacher's letters and Friends' Association, and the individual homework diaries, makes for very effective communication between home and school.

42. Parents hold the school in very high regard and are generally very satisfied with the standards achieved, the policies followed and the provision for education. They support the school well, both in active encouragement of their children's homework, and in support of school activities. Several parents provide very effective voluntary help in classrooms, and there is generous support of the school's charitable fund-raising as well as the events run by the Friends' Association to provide additional educational resources.

43. An area which parents and the inspection team feel needs improving is that of providing information about children's progress. Although the school provides three formal opportunities for parents to come in and discuss progress, and has a very welcoming 'open door' policy for parents throughout the year, many parents feel that they do not have a clear idea of how their children are getting on. The pupils' annual progress reports, while informative, do not give sufficient, clear information about levels of attainment in most subjects, and sometimes omit details about progress. The pupils' targets for improvement, which are shared with parents in January and July are often not phrased in such a way that parents can be effective in support of their children towards their goals.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

44. Leyland Methodist Junior School has a history of good management. The strong Christian ethos makes this school a caring and harmonious community where the quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good. The previous inspection identified many strengths of leadership and judged that the school was managed well. There were a number of issues for improvement, including the school development plan, curriculum management and the strategic use of resources. Today, the good qualities of management hold, though again, there are still things that managers have to do.

45. The headteacher is the force behind school management. He leads the school with energy, drive and determination. He also brings good personal traits to his leadership that promote successful team effort, a shared commitment to core priorities and an ethos that values people and their strengths. The headteacher understands his staff well and he motivates them very effectively. The acting deputy headteacher works well in partnership with the headteacher and brings a number of complementary skills to her role. Senior managers are also well involved in the management of the school. Central to the work of all of them are the school's Christian mission, aims and values. Managers promote these goals well and there is a good sense of welcome, care and love in school.

46. Staff work as a good team. Teachers and support staff have a good number of strengths, many of which are capitalised upon. Some strengths, however, go unrecognised and managers do not always identify the best combination of staff skills for particular circumstances. This is largely due to the fact that the introduction of rigorous procedures to

monitor the curriculum, teaching and standards, a key issue last time, remains to be developed fully. Managers at all levels have few opportunities to make the necessary checks that the best is uniform through the school and shortcomings are eliminated. This results in some slack in the rate of progress made by pupils. For example, the efficient management of the information technology suite is weak, its cluttered and congested layout is a distraction to pupils and their progress falters because they are jostled continually by others. More systematic monitoring of teaching and learning would enable managers to know where learning in English is at its best and where it is not providing sufficient challenge.

47. Another issue linked to lack of monitoring is the tracking of actual progress as pupils move from class to class. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and they produce little information that is really useful in progress chasing. Target-setting is rudimentary. The obligatory targets for attainment in core subjects are set, but they do not demand enough of pupils or the staff. The school has met its recent targets, but in order to go all out for A and A\* standards, targets need sharpening. In recent months, a start has been made to improve the information available for staff to check progress and this holds good promise.

48. The school knows and understands these shortcomings, and there is steadfast resolve to put them right. The governors give good backing to key managers' determination. Governors, many of whom are new to their roles, speak with knowledge, insight and understanding of the issues that challenge the school. They carry out their many duties well and they are united in seeking improvement. Governors have good oversight of finances and work to bring good value for the relatively small sums that the school receives to educate the pupils. This includes spending additional grants well for the purpose they were intended. For example, specific funds for pupils with special educational needs are put to good use to ensure effective support and good progress in learning. Governors are increasingly setting the standards achieved against the means and cost of attaining them in a bid to affirm the principle of *Best Value* that those in local government service pursue.

49. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is well managed and this results in good attention being paid to the full implementation of the Code of Practice. Good use is made of specialist support services to extend opportunities for pupils who have special needs. Good liaison with the Infant school from which the great majority of pupils transfer ensures that needs are continued to be met effectively when pupils transfer at aged seven years. There is good involvement of parents in every stage of assessment and this is a positive feature.

50. School development planning has moved ahead since the previous inspection, though not enough people are involved in the process of determining priorities and some of the targets in the plan are vague and not related to crucial criteria. There is currently no systematic way of checking what works best in school and why.

51. The school has made good improvement in the quality of teaching and has eliminated weaknesses in information technology. Day to day administration is good in supporting the tasks managers face in an efficient and practical way. The school also puts new technology to effective use in supporting administration and management.

52. The school has sufficient staff, the majority of whom are experienced teachers with many years of service; all carry curriculum responsibilities and work hard together as a mutually supportive team. All are qualified teachers and since the last inspection have received in-service training that has improved their subject knowledge and increased their

confidence levels particularly in science and information technology. There are effective systems in place for the induction of newly qualified teachers when they are appointed, and for appraisal of teachers using the school's own strategy 'Appraisal Plus' which is a positive feature. There has been limited training to support the development of subject management responsibilities and strengthen monitoring aspects of the role.

53. Including the headteacher there are 10.6 teachers for eight classes. There is one teacher without a class responsibility who coordinates English, teaches across the school and releases staff for non-contact time. Release time for all teachers is built into the timetable but there is no agreed guidance on the what this time is for and so there is variable impact on standards of attainment as a result. As the school has to operate on a very stringent budget, a review of the cost-effectiveness of the teaching resource should form part of the governor's pursuit of *Best Value* principles and as part of the developing systems for performance management. The governors will also need to consider their decision to have a deputy head who has been in an acting capacity for three years. Education support staff and parent helpers work very effectively with pupils with special educational needs, and those receiving additional literacy support to enhance their learning make good progress. School administration is handled effectively and lunchtime welfare assistants have a positive effect on pupil behaviour. Football coaches from a local club provide good quality support to the physical education curriculum.

54. The school building comprises eight classrooms and a main hall. The sizes of classrooms are adequate for the number of pupils and good use is made of pupils' work for display purposes both in classrooms and around the school, sharing their curricular experiences and personal targets very effectively in a lively and colourful way. The teaching staff decide informally on display themes for the whole school. The accommodation overall is cramped resulting in special needs pupils working in small groups in corridors outside the toilets. This is clearly unsatisfactory and better alternatives will need to be found. The computer suite which provides good information and communications technology opportunities accessible for all pupils is housed in a portacabin which it shares with the Special Needs team. The room is cramped largely due to the bad organisation of the computers and because it has an excess of furniture some of which is inappropriate to the size and age of pupils using it. A decision upon the wisdom of the shared use of this resource will need to be reviewed if the learning opportunities of pupils as well the learning environment are to be enhanced.

55. The school building is well maintained and kept in a very good state of cleanliness. Outside, the good facilities include spacious grassed areas and two hard play areas, a wild-life site including a pool for environmental studies and scientific investigations that is well used in the spring and summer terms to enhance pupils learning. A quadrangle area is also available which the school has plans to develop further. Classroom furniture is being renewed on a rolling programme to replace some of the old and worn desks and tables. Storage space for large physical education equipment is inadequate.

56. The level and quantity of resources have improved since the last inspection and are satisfactory in most areas except English where they are inadequate. The school still lacks a central resource area where pupils can extend their reading and research skills. There is still a lack of good quality fiction and non-fiction books, especially the big books to support the literacy hours. In many cases the school is reliant upon pupils bringing their own books from home to support reading. There are good resources to support music and all pupils have excellent access to them. The school has addressed the issue of procedures for buying

resources and subject co-ordinators are now allocated an annual budget in the school development plan.

57. For the present, school self-evaluation is not as good as it could be. This is the chief limitation of management. Staff and governors are, however, united in the quest for improvement. The headteacher has the drive and a proven track record to take things forward and the school has good capacity to bring about improvement at the pace required and provides good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. The school is successful in providing for pupils and the good quality education is testament to this. Standards at the end of the key stage although at respectable levels given the point at which most pupils start, are not as good as they could be, especially in English and particularly for higher attaining pupils. Progress will need to be made more consistently good if attainment is to be at the highest level nationally and above that of similar schools. With this in mind the school should:

- (1) Implement the National Literacy Strategy in all classes and ensure that there is consistently good attention paid to providing English lessons that challenge all pupils.  
(Paragraphs: 1, 5, 18, 25, 46, 60, 63-65, 70)
- (2) Extend monitoring and evaluation practices so that more staff have the necessary skills, time and opportunity to undertake classroom observations to check on quality and standards in the subjects they co-ordinate so that they can play a full part in school improvement planning and action.  
(Paragraphs: 1, 8, 16, 18, 40, 46, 50, 64, 70, 81, 88, 93, 100, 114, 120, 133, 140)
- (3) Improve the consistency of lesson planning and assessment by:
  - ensuring that all lesson plans have clear and detailed objectives for the range of pupils in the class, especially higher attaining pupils;
  - setting clear targets for pupils and measurable outcomes for lessons based on accurate assessment of prior learning;
  - ensuring that marking not only recognises effort but shows clearly how work may be improved;
  - reviewing the quality and impact of planning and assessment through regular and systematic monitoring.  
(Paragraphs: 8, 9, 16, 18, 23, 27, 36-38, 43, 47, 64, 65, 70, 80, 81, 85, 87, 93, 100, 103, 105, 111, 130, 132, 140)

Although not identified as separate issues, in preparing their action plan, the Governing Body should also pay attention to the following:

- extending the range of resources available to provide a school library that provides opportunities for personal research and ensure there is a sufficient range of good quality reading material available;
  - reviewing the space available and suitability of using corridor space and the staff room as teaching bases;
  - rationalising space to make more efficient the use of the information technology suite;
  - reviewing staff development in the light of the school's future priorities and to respond to the key issues of this inspection.
- (Paragraphs: 12, 22, 53-56, 62, 64, 69, 118)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	19	43	34	3	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	279
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	60

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	36	33	69

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	31	32
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	57	60	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (73)	87 (61)	88 (72)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	32	32
	Girls	31	31	29
	Total	57	63	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (85)	91 (85)	88 (79)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	272
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.3
Average class size	34.9

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	376 155
Total expenditure	374 445
Expenditure per pupil	1 362
Balance brought forward from previous year	4 848
Balance carried forward to next year	6 558

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	240
Number of questionnaires returned	131

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	43	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	45	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	54	4	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	56	14	1	0
The teaching is good.	47	49	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	48	19	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	37	8	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	37	48	13	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	46	47	1	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	50	5	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	40	29	7	8

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

59. Attainment in English is close to the national averages, although there are fewer pupils attaining the higher level than might be expected. The results of National Curriculum tests for pupils at 1999 showed that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 4 and the higher level 5 was above the national average. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance in English in 1999 was also above average. Over the four years 1996 to 1999, pupils' performance has shown a steady improvement in line with standards nationally. Inspection findings do not confirm an above average level of attainment for the pupils currently in Year 6.

60. Girls do significantly better than boys. The performance of girls was above average for the period covered from 1996 to 1999 but for boys it was close to the national average. Inspection findings indicate that this imbalance is still evident in upper sets towards the end of the key stage. The training undertaken by teachers in the National Literacy Strategies is not yet impacting on attainment in English for higher attaining pupils at the end of the key stage. The National Literacy Strategy is not fully in place throughout the school and is not taught consistently in all classes. This is having a limiting impact on attainment.

61. Attainment in speaking and listening is above the national average. This mirrors the judgement from the last inspection. Pupils talk confidently and listen attentively in a wide range of situations. A mature command of language and an extensive vocabulary is evident in discussions in subjects across the curriculum. Both boys and girls reach a high standard. They listen carefully to others in discussions and reveal their understanding of important details by the answers they give to questions. Lower attaining pupils speak clearly and with a growing vocabulary in all subjects of the curriculum. They show confidence when talking and listening, particularly when topics capture their interest.

62. Attainment in reading is in line with national averages. Most pupils read fluently and competently, and show a good understanding of what they read. Their reading covers a wide variety of fiction by new and established authors but the majority of the books they read are brought from home in order to augment the meagre supply within the school. Pupils understand the ideas, characters, and main events of texts and make reference to the text when explaining their ideas. Younger pupils use a good range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words and to make sense of a range of texts. They show their understanding of stories by expressing opinions about the books they read, and use the events in stories to predict what might happen next. Higher attaining pupils read effortlessly. They have no difficulty in selecting the key points in information books and works of fiction, or in explaining how they research information and use library classification systems. Pupils locate and make use of information from reference books within the classroom, but there are no library facilities within the school in order that older pupils may carry out independent research, and those skills that have been learned have been acquired at home. This results in an inequality of opportunity for those pupils who do not have access and support at home for this facility. The report of 1996 described many of the school's reading books as "old and shabby" and there seems to have been very little improvement.

63. Pupils achieve standards in writing that are in line with national averages. In their writing, most pupils use a quick and effective style of joined handwriting and their grammar, punctuation, and spelling are usually accurate. Higher attaining pupils organise their writing

into paragraphs well. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils produce varied and interesting writing for different audiences in a wide range of forms. Their imaginative use of language is particularly evident in their poetry. Higher attaining pupils punctuate their work to a high level with commas, apostrophes, speech, exclamation, and question marks. High and average attainers' spelling is mainly accurate. Lower attainers work below the expected level for their age. They punctuate sentences correctly, produce many accurate spellings and choose words for variety and interest. Handwriting, for these pupils, is often uneven and lacks fluency. Many higher attaining pupils in Year 4 produce fluent, joined handwriting. Some of the punctuation used by pupils in Year 6 appears regularly in Year 4 class work and shows lack of progress. Many accurate spellings are used, as is interesting and suitable vocabulary. These pupils are working at a higher level than would be expected for their age.

64. The school has maintained the overall good teaching that was observed in the 1996 inspection. The quality of teaching in English is mainly good, with nearly 25% of the teaching being very good. There are, however, clear inconsistencies across year groups and sets, with much of the less effective teaching being matched to the higher attaining pupils towards the end of the key stage. A strength of the teaching, which underlies the very good progress pupils make in some classes, comes from teachers' strong subject knowledge which enables them to stimulate, challenge and even inspire pupils to strive for higher and higher levels of attainment. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were so enthralled by the teacher's excellent dramatic reading of prose with an American accent that they themselves aspired to the same levels. The encouragement the best teachers give through praise and feedback produces in children confident awareness of their own strengths and of areas of their work in need of improvement.

65. Setting is used effectively, but differentiation of work within the sets is dependent on individual teachers and is not consistently used throughout the school. This means that work is not always effectively matched to the abilities and needs of the pupils. Pupils make good progress in learning in English generally, and in many lessons observed they were making very good progress. There is, however, a variation in the rate of progress, which is contingent upon the quality of the teaching, and particularly upon the expectations of the teachers and the match of work to prior attainment of the pupils. By the time they are in Year 4, higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand many of the features of language used in Year 6. Accuracy in spelling develops at a rapid rate from the extensive early work teachers provide in phonics, consistent and regular homework in spelling, and skilled teaching of the use of strategies to improve pupils' accuracy. The school's implementation of the additional literacy strategy is effectively raising the attainment of lower achieving pupils through focused, structured teaching in group tasks. Pupils whose attainments in reading and writing are slightly below those expected for their age, make good progress because work is planned to match their abilities through the use of the additional literacy strategy. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with appropriate work in withdrawal groups and make good progress as a result. This work is effectively matched to identified targets within their individual education plans. Work within the classroom is not always appropriately differentiated to effectively meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils within the national curriculum.

66. The planning of tasks to meet the needs of pupils of different ability is not consistent within or across year groups and this sometimes results in inappropriate work being given to pupils. The best lessons proceed at a brisk pace and a variety of texts is provided to interest pupils and involve them in the work. This was seen in a Year 6 set 2 lesson where pupils examined e-mails, faxes, and hand-written notes in their work on unambiguous text. They then modelled their own work on the examples provided to give them a clear

understanding of the concept.

67. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to read and write in other subjects. They write accounts of historical events, interview characters from the past, and present their findings in religious education to peers. This cross-curricular work is having a very positive impact on learning. Pupils' use of word-processing to present their work is developing well, although the use of information technology routinely for work during the literacy hour, and word-processors to draft their writing is not well established. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to practise the skills of writing in a wide range of forms and styles in other areas of the curriculum, and through the use of homework, and this is having a positive impact on learning. Pupils in Year 4, for example, have written letters home from their posting as Legionnaires in Britain, applying their skills in letter-writing in a meaningful way.

68. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils work hard, maintain high levels of interest, and produce good amounts of finished work. All pupils take responsibility for their own learning. Homework in reading and spelling involves parents in their children's learning and supports pupils' work in the classroom to a good degree.

69. Resources are inadequate and this is impacting on attainment. There are insufficient books to support guided reading effectively within the literacy hours and there is a need for more appropriate texts for whole class work. There has been no improvement in library provision since 1996. The library is effectively non-existent and this is having a serious impact on attainment. There are very few non-fiction texts available except within classrooms for topic work, and whilst topic work is effective for the younger pupils it provides insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils at the end of the key stage. Pupils bring their own fiction texts into school from home and pupils who do not have books of their own ask peers if they may borrow one of their books. This is limiting the rates of progress some pupils make.

70. The management of English is ineffective in moving the subject forward. There is a lack of focus or direction to the subject in the school development plan and no clear link to the raising of standards. There is no monitoring of either planning or teaching and learning in the classroom to ensure that provision and challenge are appropriate in all lessons. There is insufficient monitoring of the different levels of work set within the classroom and an over-reliance on the use of setting to provide sufficiently focused teaching. This results in a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils, particularly towards the end of the key stage.

71. Pupils are tested on a regular basis to check their progress against national targets but this information is only used to set pupils across year groups and is not used for differentiation within those sets. The school does not use optional statutory assessment tasks and there are limited effective systems in place to track pupils' progress in either reading or writing. Reading records are brief and lack a diagnostic element with no indication of progress towards higher order reading skills. The targets set for pupils' performance in English between now and 2002 are achievable but lack ambition.

## MATHEMATICS

72. Since the previous inspection standards in mathematics have continued to rise from above national averages to well above the national average. The quality of learning has also risen from good to very good throughout the school. This upward trend of standards has been achieved through pupils' performance in investigating mathematics and solving problems receiving a high managerial profile. The provision for mathematics is a strength of the school. However the consistent use of information technology to underpin skills in mathematics remains relatively under-developed.

73. The results of the National Curriculum tests in 1999 for pupils aged 11 at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that pupils' attainment was well above the national average when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools having the same percentage of free meals per school population. The percentage of pupils achieving the target level for their age (Level 4) was well above the national average and the number of pupils achieving above the expected level (Level 5) was also well above the national average. National comparative figures indicate the performance of boys in mathematics is close to the national average. However, the performance of girls is above the national average. During the inspection no discernible trends were identified, although the present Year 6 has a number of pupils in receipt of additional educational support, most of whom are boys.

74. Standards achieved in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have continued to improve significantly. The school's participation in the National Numeracy Strategy and its very good implementation has been very successful in enabling pupils to work with speed and accuracy. Class grouping by ability benefits most pupils, however there is a need to challenge higher attaining pupils still further to increase the proportion of pupils achieving higher targets for their age. Learning for higher attaining pupils is best in the Year 5 higher group where some very good teaching of demanding work constantly challenges pupils to improve on their individual skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported by good teaching in smaller lower attaining groups. Realistic targets set by the school to raise attainment between now and 2002 should be more challenging to support the already positive upward trend in mathematics standards.

75. Pupils enter school with sound mathematical skills and develop a very good understanding of number and mental facility by Year 6. Pupils learn to apply their knowledge to a range of problems, for example the cost of a school trip including the percentage reductions and value added tax. Year 3 pupils work confidently with fractions, identifying halves and quarters of shapes. Year 4 pupils confidently use sums of money and, by adding using two places of decimals, give change from £1 that includes several items. Pupils in Year 4 use a ready reckoner accurately when reviewing the cost of items to be purchased in a café. By Year 6, pupils round numbers up to the nearest hundred and thousand with great ease. Pupils know their tables and have a quick recall of multiplication facts to a hundred. They understand decimal fractions and effectively calculate percentage discounts on a variety of money problems. Pupils use co-ordinates very well with positive numbers, placing points and giving co-ordinates accurately as observed in Year 4.

76. Pupils' learning in their knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measure is very good. Pupils in Year 3 name a good range of solid shapes, identifying corners, edges and faces accurately. They use measure in practical situations. For example in Year 5, pupils accurately recognised a variety of angles, including acute and obtuse, measuring sides during an extension task. By Year 6 pupils understand reflective and rotational symmetry, accurately translating shapes into enlargements and reductions. Pupils understand what parallel lines are and some of the resulting properties in respect to sides



and angles. Pupils have developed a very good understanding of bearings and understand about angles to 360 degrees.

77. Pupils' learning in data handling is good. They use tally marks to record their house totals and read and draw simple charts, extracting information from them. In Year 4 pupils have the skill to undertake a survey to find the class's favourite book, recording their findings accurately. Pupils in Year 5 carry out simple statistical work as seen in a homework task. Pupils have a confident understanding of probability, for example whether something is certain to happen or there is no chance of it happening. Pupils in Year 6 confidently understand statistical vocabulary such as 'range', 'mode' and 'mean' and use this knowledge accurately to calculate the median of a set of numbers up to four digits. However, the opportunity to use information technology to support skills in data collection and interpreting findings is at an early stage of development and at present insufficient to enhance this area of mathematics.

78. Throughout the key stage pupils develop their investigational skills very well and they look carefully at the information given and confidently investigate a range of mathematical situations very well. Pupils are proficient in their use of mathematical language and are able to use a range of mental strategies accurately and quickly. Pupils are proficient at reading tables and charts for information, putting the information gained to good use. Levels of attainment in using and applying mathematics are very good by the end of Key Stage 2.

79. Pupils' response is very good and they show enthusiasm for learning, trying hard to do their best work for their teachers. This has a positive impact on their learning. Pupils are very keen learners, willing to answer questions during mental mathematics sessions, and listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils work well in groups and pairs with some very good examples of collaborative work seen during the period of the inspection when pupils shared and compared their methods of solving mathematical problems. Pupils stay on task during mental mathematics sessions and during individual work sessions. Behaviour is very good and pupils display very good levels of motivation and confidence. Most pupils take pride in presenting their work well and accurately.

80. The quality of teaching is good overall. Some very good teaching was observed in the Year 5 upper set. In these lessons, teachers make their high expectations clear to the pupils and explain clearly and logically at the beginning of the lesson what pupils are going to learn. This clear understanding motivates and challenges pupils very effectively, having a positive impact on the quality of learning for all pupils. Their understanding of mathematics is very good, thus enabling challenging questions to be directed at higher attaining pupils to extend learning at an accelerated rate. Overall, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the basic skills in mathematics are good. Planning for mathematics is satisfactory and lessons mostly follow the recommended structure of the National Numeracy Strategy well. Teachers' methods and organisation are good however, within the grouping situation there is a need to devise work at an appropriate level for different groups of pupils, and work is not sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils in upper Key Stage 2. Teachers' relationships with pupils are good and their very good management of pupils enables them to maintain very good levels of behaviour. Lessons usually start on time and all mental mathematics sessions proceed at a quick pace and interest. Teachers use day to day assessment satisfactorily, however the marking of pupils' books is inconsistent, not always helpful in indicating what a pupil needs to know to improve learning.

81. The management of mathematics is insightful and influential and has been a determined force in lifting standards. Monitoring and evaluation work although only spasmodic, has clearly proved beneficial. The school's strategy for the development of the subject is well focused and appropriate. There is potential for results to lift to a level that compares with the best found in primary schools nationally. There are developing procedures for the assessment of standards but the school has yet to develop systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the subject so that staff are given opportunity to review quality and standards throughout the school thus further improving the consistency of the very best teaching. The school has yet to refine ways to use assessment data to ensure teachers' lesson planning results in activities that are appropriate to challenge higher attaining pupils, move learning forward at a brisk pace and thus ensure the highest attainment.

## **SCIENCE**

82. Standards in science have risen since the last inspection and are now above average. The school has raised the focus of the subject through the work of the recently appointed co-ordinator. The quality of teaching and planning is good and this is having a positive effect upon standards.

83. Standards in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 between 1996 and 1998 were in line with national standards. In 1999 results were average when compared with the results of primary schools nationally and similar schools. Evidence gathered during the inspection through lesson observation and a scrutiny of pupils' work judges that standards reached by the end of Key Stage 2 in the school are above average, whereas standards on entry at Year 3 are only average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Further improvement in standards could be achieved through the provision of more challenging tasks for higher attaining pupils.

84. Science has become a popular subject with boys and girls who work co-operatively together and share their findings and experiences. In Year 4 when investigating which materials dissolve they take turns in stirring the beakers and pass them to one another and discuss their findings confidently using the correct terminology. Pupils are good listeners and are prepared to ask questions to help develop their own knowledge further. They readily enter into class discussion. Some of the older pupils in Year 5 bring books and pictures related to their science topic from home to show the class and can talk about their relevance knowledgeably. The behaviour of pupils in most classes is nearly always good.

85. The quality of teaching is good and on occasions very good. Lessons are well planned and organised using an appropriate range of resources. The best teaching occurs when clear learning objectives have been set, the lesson is well structured and planned, the pace is brisk and the pupils are well managed. In Year 6 pupils' understanding of drawing and using circuit diagrams is reinforced through the good use of practical apparatus, and they are given useful strategies for remembering specific diagrammatic symbols. In Year 5 good use is made of visual aids to assist in the manipulation of variables for establishing a fair test when pupils are investigating the measurement of shadows. Teaching is carried out confidently when teachers are secure in their own subject knowledge. Teachers constantly check pupils' understanding of scientific concepts through the skilful use of questioning. Where teaching is less effective it is due to the lack of clear and sharp learning objectives, the setting of inappropriate activities and poor class management.

86. The recently revised science curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities in which all pupils can participate and apply their skills and knowledge. They are able to record their findings in graphical or tabular form using numeracy skills, as well as in written form. There are examples of where pupils have used their knowledge of electrical circuits to make up question and answer boards by correctly linking the names with the parts of a flower, or the names of countries to their position on the map, to light a bulb. Good use is made of display so that pupils' work may be shared with others. Group work, although not exclusively a feature of the science lesson, does allow pupils to develop their social skills through working together.

87. The school does not yet have in place procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching so that the best practice may be shared with the whole school to assist in the raising of standards. Neither are there any formal assessment arrangements to inform planning across the Key Stage. Teachers are using a range of marking strategies but at present no common marking scheme has been adopted. However, there is some very good practice in school that needs to be shared through the co-ordinator. This would help inform pupils of their progress and provide a corporate method of assessment for the school to use.

88. A teacher whose academic background is science, and therefore has very strong subject knowledge very effectively leads the subject. Since her appointment to the post in 1998 the science co-ordinator has put in place a new science scheme of work, topic guidelines, key skills for assessment linking science with literacy (including special needs), health and safety policy procedures for science, and materials to encourage the teaching of investigative science. The subject is adequately resourced and resources are stored centrally for safety and easy access by staff. Parents are informed annually of the subject aims and skills for each age group to encourage support at home. The co-ordinator has led in-house staff development, that has raised the level of staff confidence in teaching experimental and investigative activities, provides strong support for her colleagues, all having a positive effect upon standards. The introduction of effective monitoring and assessment procedures will increase the school's capacity to further raise standards.

## **ART**

89. The standard of work observed in displays indicates that pupils undertake a worthwhile experience and that satisfactory learning takes place. In the previous inspection standards were judged as good, however due to greater subject time being devoted to English and mathematics, the time given to the teaching of art has been reduced. This will require adjustments to the timetable for September for the art curriculum to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. Standards in art today are broadly satisfactory.

90. In Year 4 pupils use a marbling technique to produce a wide variety of vivid patterns. In Year 5 pupils combine a variety of pressed flowers and leaves to create a card design for Mothers' Day. Pupils' designs are original and interesting. They use watercolours well to paint a flower portrait illustrating daffodils. Older pupils have mastered the skills of using pencils to create tone and shade, and different kinds of lines to be used, for example the drawing of Roman artefacts and musical instruments. Pupils appreciate the work of a limited range of artists such as William Morris and Matisse. Three-dimensional work is not much in evidence throughout the school.

91. In the one lesson observed pupils' response was very good. They show a very positive attitude towards their work and high levels of concentration both during the teacher's demonstration and whilst at work, sustaining interest over long periods. This has a positive impact on standards achieved in the work completed. Most pupils are able to work without the direct supervision of a teacher and establish very good relationships with supporting adults. Pupils respond well to tasks that are challenging and persevere to good effect. Behaviour is very good and this has a direct impact on the resulting enjoyable experience. Pupils invariably listen very carefully to instructions and are enthusiastic when answering questions.

92. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with evidence of good teaching where the subject receives a high priority. Teachers' planning is sound. They teach skills that are necessary for the production of good quality work, which is appropriately displayed. Teachers are supported well by good advice from the subject leader. The methods used in class are well matched to what pupils are intended to learn and lessons are well organised and resourced. Very good relationships with pupils encourage very good behaviour. Pupils are introduced to the work of other artists from a range of cultures. This makes a significant contribution to their social, cultural and personal development.

93. The school is aware of the need to develop progressively skills through assessment. At present the use of assessment to inform future planning of lessons is ineffective. The management of the subject by an enthusiastic co-ordinator is sound overall. However, systems for reviewing the quality of teaching and learning outcomes lack specific focus and rigour. Resources are adequate and accessible to all pupils and staff but space is limited and does not support a broad range of practical experiences being easily delivered.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

94. Due to timetable arrangements it was only possible to observe a very small sample of lessons in design and technology during the inspection. Scrutiny of available samples of work, discussions with pupils and evidence provided in class teachers' planning indicate that the subject provides worthwhile experiences. Learning is satisfactory throughout the school and pupils generally work at levels appropriate for their age. This is similar to the findings at the time of the last inspection. However, a newly adopted scheme provides a framework for the successful progression of skills.

95. In Year 3 pupils make a variety of Plasticine models depicting creatures from another planet. In Year 4 pupils have manufactured a range of herb pots made from modelling plaster to support a history topic relating to life in Roman times. A wide variety of models from construction kits indicate learning about movement and stability. Large three-dimensional space rockets, planned and designed by pupils in Year 5, illustrate a good range of cutting and gluing techniques. The finished craft are of high quality. In Year 6 pupils have developed a 'parts of a flower' quiz board linking science and design successfully in a purposeful activity. Victorian house interiors support a range of design and making skills including the measurement, shaping and joining of a range of materials. Where design appraisal takes place pupils are given the opportunity to identify what they think is good in their work and how they think their product could be improved.

96. Very good attention is paid to the appearance of models manufactured by the pupils. Throughout the school pupils decorate and finish their models to a good standards.

97. Many of the design and make tasks pupils undertake are linked very effectively to work in other subjects and they provide good opportunities for pupils to consolidate their measuring skills in a practical, meaningful manner.

98. Pupils have very good attitudes to design and technology and they listen very sensibly to instructions from their teachers. Most pupils work very well in groups, co-operating and sharing resources sensibly when necessary. Pupils sustain very good levels of concentration and solve problems they encounter before seeking adult support. Pupils' very positive attitudes and very good behaviour in lessons promote a hard working, productive atmosphere.

99. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some evidence of good teaching where the subject receives a higher focus. Most teachers enjoy teaching the subject, however levels of subject expertise vary. Teachers plan lessons satisfactorily, ensuring tasks are appropriate for the age and ability of their pupils. The most effective teaching occurs when teachers make appropriate interventions, supporting and encouraging without taking over. The creation of a purposeful atmosphere linked to high expectations underpins a very worthwhile experience.

100. Arrangements for assessment to inform future planning are at present ineffective. It is not part of teachers' short-term planning and, having limited impact on the quality of learning, it does not inform skills progression. Management of the subject is sound overall. However there is no planned system for monitoring the quality of teaching on learning outcomes. Resources are adequate, clearly marked and accessible to all pupils and staff.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

101. In 1996, attainment and progress in geography were good. Teaching and learning were also good, and whilst there were limited resources, they were well used. Four years on, geography does not have quite the same profile in school, though through worthwhile experiences pupils make steady progress during their time at school.

102. In comparison with history, geography has less cohesion as represented in the work of the past year. There are a number of times when the work amounts to a number of seemingly separate topics rather than a unified whole. This is amplified by the over-use of worksheets. This has the effect of constraining pupils to complete a pre-determined pattern of written work, rather than exploring and understanding issues with a moral dimension, as in the study of South American rainforests in Year 5, for example. Higher attaining pupils are not challenged by such work. They know the facts but do not have enough opportunity to gain insight.

103. The teaching of geography is satisfactory overall, and there are times when it is better than this. Subject knowledge is appropriate, teaching is brisk and a good range of methods is used. Planning is thorough, but the specific skills, knowledge and understanding to be learned are not identified consistently enough. There is no formal assessment of geography and when teachers add written comments to the work ways to improve the work are infrequently identified.

104. Pupils are interested in their work, they are well behaved and form very good relationships. Lessons are productive working sessions and an appropriate amount of work is completed. Skills and knowledge are built at a steady rate and factual knowledge of geography is as expected. Year 5, for example know how to orientate and read an Ordnance Survey map and they handle two figure grid references accurately.

105. The management of geography is effective and there are clear insights for improvement though there is no monitoring of work, teaching or the curriculum. The level of resources has been built soundly since the last inspection, though there are still some shortages of books and maps. Assessment is another shortcoming that the co-ordinator knows needs answering.

106. The current provision for geography is at a basic level of adequacy but as Curriculum 2000 comes on-stream school managers will have to adapt the delivered curriculum in order to give pupils a cohesive and fully worthwhile geography programme. Things are satisfactory, but they could be improved. The co-ordinator is fully aware of the need to raise the profile of the subject within the school's development plan in the immediate future.

## **HISTORY**

107. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in history were "fairly good" and progress was as expected. The report singled out research and recording skills as weak and some teachers were judged to talk for too long. The school has made improvements to history in the intervening four years and today, standards are good.

108. Pupils learn history well. This is because teachers make the lessons interesting and enjoyable and there is a good mix of fact building and research from a variety of sources. Over the four years in school, pupils progress through a series of motivating history topics in the appropriate chronological order. Thus, Year 3 pupils learn about the Ancient Egyptians and then the Greeks. Year 4 move forward to the Romans and the work continues this way until Year 6 when the Victorians are studied. The pupils develop a clear understanding of what history is, as well as a sense of chronology. Good links to other subjects, such as religious education in the Year 3 work on Pharaohs and the land of the Nile, enable pupils to view the past as a study of people as well as events. Later in school, pupils are able to compare then with now and to see some things in terms of continuity and others as representing change. This is evident when Year 6 relate Victorian artefacts and photographs to familiar things, people and places in and around Leyland.

109. Pupils' basic historical knowledge is good. Year 4 pupils talked with animation of what it must have been like to have been buried alive at Pompeii, but they also reflected on how this tragic event shaped our knowledge of life in a Roman town. When asked why such towns had walls, they gave a graphic account of Boudicca's revolt and the sacking of Colchester. There was a good sense of cause and effect in what they described. History is well alive for pupils of all ages.

110. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good insights into history and they base their lessons on a conviction that history is an active subject and not a matter of factual regurgitation. This marks a big step forward from the last inspection. Expectation levels are good and there is good sense of purpose in lessons. In return, pupils want to work, they put in good effort and are well behaved. The very good quality of relationships is an asset in history lessons, for pupils work together very effectively and sound ideas and facts out on each other before sharing them more widely.

111. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator. As of yet, she has had no opportunities to monitor teaching, standards and the curriculum and so the strengths of history tend to be kept within individual classes. Assessment of the subject is rare and so there is no effective means of logging whether individual pupils are giving their best and achieving at optimum levels. The available resources are adequate for the work and they are put to good use. In addition, a carefully chosen programme of visits extends pupils' knowledge and understanding well.

112. History has a strong profile within the curriculum and the school is set well to make the necessary adjustments to meet the demands of Curriculum 2000 as it is implemented later this year.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

113. Information technology was the subject of one of the key issues in the last inspection report because pupils had few opportunities to work with computers and so they made unsatisfactory progress in learning. Standards were below average at the end of Key Stage 2 and teaching had some shortcomings.

114. In the four years since that inspection, the school has enhanced the number of computers, there has been some successful staff training and the curriculum has been overhauled. During the current inspection, the computers in the separate suite were used intensively and all pupils received appropriate experiences to help them build skills, knowledge and understanding in all strands of the subject. Pupils progress at a reasonable rate and attainment is average by the age of eleven. Rates of progress are however uneven, and this is an aspect of the new provision the school has yet to review.

115. Pupils develop appropriate skills in word processing, though the extension of these slows down towards the end of school. Pupils are well able to mix text and graphics and to use some of the facilities offered by the word processing package. Data handling skills are promoted as expected and work with computers to control processes or monitor events is developing well. Year 6 pupils construct a flow chart to control traffic lights at either end of a narrow bridge. They then link this program to a simulation to show the accurate phasing of the lights. These pupils know how to alter the duration of each cycle and are beginning to understand that each phase must be long enough to allow enough traffic to pass. They also have the confidence to apply this knowledge to another simulation involving a more complex array of traffic lights.

116. Pupils enjoy the work in information technology. They are generally very well behaved and concentrate well on their tasks. Teachers build well on the very good quality of relationships and pupils collaborate very well in pair and group work. Pupils' personal development is fostered very well in information technology because they are given ample opportunity to work independently of the teacher and to make decisions about the work for themselves.

117. Teaching has improved since 1996. It is now satisfactory through the school. Teachers have better subject knowledge and understanding than before. They teach all elements of information technology with enhanced confidence and plan worthwhile activities to promote learning at sound rates. Teachers control the pupils well and lessons are orderly working sessions where effort and productivity are good.

118. Management of the subject is good, as shown by the good progress made with improvements since the last inspection. However, there remain a number of issues for the school to address. The organisation of resources is of prime concern. The ten computers in the suite are crammed in and when 36 pupils, or more, are grouped around them there is little space, elbows jostle and distraction is common. This impacts profoundly on progress. When smaller numbers are present, progress is heightened; when the class is large and constricted in this way, it slows considerably. There is no good reason for the workspace to be so cramped. The room is over full of furniture and space is not used efficiently. School managers accept that a rationalisation of the room is overdue.

119. Relatively little use was made of the class based computers during the inspection. In addition, not much work using information technology was found during the work scrutiny. It is evident that information technology is used to support and extend studies in other subjects, but the intensity of this use is less than in most schools. The school has moved forward in the use of computers to develop skills and knowledge across the curriculum, but this requires further enhancement.

120. Good steps have been made to introduce a consistent level of assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills in information technology. The procedures introduced are satisfactory, though it is too early to judge their total effectiveness, as teachers have only been using them for a few weeks. The monitoring of such innovations has been weak in the past, for there are no formal and rigorous procedures to check the strengths and weaknesses of the subject across the school. Thus, managers cannot be certain that provision is consistent in all years or that pupils are making the best progress possible.

121. Information technology is an improved subject. It is clear that it can quite easily be even better. Pupils know more about computers than in the past but they could know even more. The school is committed to making standards higher and there is good determination amongst staff to strengthen provision and eliminate weakness.

## **MUSIC**

122. There has been an improvement on the good progress that was seen in music in 1996. Pupils make very good progress across the key stage, developing their listening skills well and mastering an increasingly complex musical vocabulary both in the recognition of instruments and in their use of musical expressions and terminology. A large number of pupils have learned to play string instruments by attending the lessons which the school offers through peripatetic music teachers. This expertise is put to good use in assemblies and in music lessons within group work in musical interpretation of mood, composition, and performance. The provision in music is a strength of the school.

123. Pupils sing in unison, using appropriate phrasing to good effect but there is a lack of enthusiasm and power to their singing even in Assembly. By the end of the key stage, pupils sing a range of songs confidently and with clear diction. Pupils have good knowledge of the elements of music and recognise them when listening to the works of composers. They understand rhythm, pulse, tempo, and timbre and use the correct terminology when talking about their responses to music. For example, pupils in Year 6 referred to timbre when discussing the distinctive effects portrayed by instruments contemporary to the music of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Pupils widen their knowledge of composers and contemporary musicians through regular listening. They appraise the different approaches and techniques used in different musical styles with confidence. They compose musical stories very effectively, using percussion instruments, both tuned and untuned, to represent elements of the story. Pupils are beginning to recognise how music expresses and reflects



the emotions in their work on musical appreciation and composition. They collaborate very well in group musical composition to interpret their own ideas through use of percussion to create the desired effect of light and shade in their music.

124. The quality of teaching is very high with the occasional flair of excellence. The teaching of music is a strength of the school and results in very good progress in learning. Teachers have high levels of expertise. They prepare lessons carefully with clear aims and transmit their confidence and enthusiasm to pupils. Teachers follow a newly introduced commercial scheme, which gives direction to their work and ensures that all aspects of the subject are covered. This also gives confidence to teachers who are not musicians. Visiting specialists make a positive impact on the quality of learning and make a significant contribution to pupils' attainment with violins and guitar. All pupils are given the opportunity to learn the violin and they make good progress in playing a musical instrument. This provides a strong opportunity for equality in access to music for all pupils.

125. Pupils' response to teaching is very good. Pupils are well behaved. They have positive attitudes to music and show enthusiasm and enjoyment, particularly when playing instruments. They listen quietly when teachers play taped music and apply themselves well in discussions; they offer sensible suggestions when appraising music and handle instruments responsibly and with care. There is a thriving choir, which performs regularly at local venues and music festivals, including an annual performance at St. Mary's Catholic Church. All classes perform regularly for their parents within the school and there is an annual musical/drama production for the general public as well as friends and parents.

126. The school has a good range of percussion instruments, which are easily accessible. The curriculum is well planned, with the use of a good quality commercial scheme of work, and is very effectively co-ordinated across year groups with effective monitoring for National Curriculum coverage. Management of the subject is highly effective in ensuring very worthwhile experiences are provided for pupils in all years and most make very good progress in consequence.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

127. The good standards of physical education have been maintained since the last inspection. Evidence gathered during this inspection shows that pupils are given a wide range of worthwhile experiences both during school and through extra-curricular provision that meets the school aims.

128. During the lessons seen, Year 3 pupils in Circle time can share without inhibitions their private thoughts about the things that make them angry. They then express these ideas well, using facial expression and appropriate body movements. In Year 4 pupils collaborate well in trying their hand at short tennis, demonstrating good hand to eye co-ordination skills. In Years 5 and 6 pupils show they are able to pass a football accurately whilst running, and able to shoot for goal. The boys demonstrate a high level of accuracy and confidence and the girls participate keenly without matching the boys' standard of performance. In swimming standards achieved are well above average with three-quarters of all Year 5 pupils greatly exceeding the standard set for the end of the key stage.

129. The majority of pupils approach this subject with enthusiasm and the desire to achieve a good standard. They are able to work co-operatively together, organise themselves into groups and demonstrate sustained application. They respond immediately to the teacher's signal by listening carefully and following instructions. Pupils work with a good team spirit and enjoy the competitive element in small games. This enables them to improve their own level of skill.

130. The quality of teaching is good and those who were observed during the inspection clearly demonstrated sound subject knowledge. In football skills they are well supported by two coaches from Preston N E Football Club who provide good supervision and direction and a range of strategies for maintaining interest and the development of skills. The best teaching occurs when the pace of lessons is brisk, teachers have high expectations of pupils, lessons are well planned, and pupils are well managed and given clear directions. Teaching could be improved still further if time is allowed during lessons for self-assessment and peer assessment. There is an adequate supply of good quality resources, which are used well and stored conveniently.

131. The curriculum offers a wide range of activities to ensure breadth and balance. In order to ensure equality of coverage for all year groups the subject is organised in blocks on the timetable, the details of which are outlined in the school's own guidelines and policy based on the Durham Scheme, which is linked to the National Curriculum. The school also offers considerable opportunities for both boys and girls to participate in extra-curricular activities such as football, netball, Kwik cricket, and cross country running. The school has had considerable success in these sporting activities in recent years and this motivated pupils and has contributed significantly to high standards. Annual events for the whole school include sports day and a swimming gala for Year 5 pupils. The aims of the school to develop co-operation between pupils and a sense of fair play have been evident in some of the lessons observed.

132. In 1999 the school took the decision to discard the Blue Pupil Profile assessment procedures it had been using, and to adopt those being developed by the Local Authority. These are not yet ready to go out to schools. Only informal assessment procedures exist at present, and there are no structures in place for monitoring the work of colleagues and sharing the good practice that exists in the school.

133. Physical Education is effectively led by an appropriately qualified co-ordinator whose aim is to raise the profile of the subject in the school curriculum, as she feels it is in the shadow of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. She has been directly responsible for putting the school guidelines and policy in place after receiving governors' approval. She is now keen to develop a new combined scheme to incorporate Curriculum 2000. The small budget for additional resources is managed well, but storage space for large PE equipment is at a premium. The co-ordinator provides a good level of support by attendance at appropriate in-service training at county level and communicates developments back to staff. Several of them have received BT Top Sport training. The school has the capacity to improve standards even further when suitable monitoring and assessment procedures are in place.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. In 1996 standards in religious education matched the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching was sound and pupils progressed at appropriate rates. Much has improved since that time and today, standards are better than those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

135. It is very evident to the visitor to Leyland Methodist School that religious education is a central subject and that it pervades much of the work of the school. There are very strong links between assemblies and the content of religious education lessons and work in other subjects is related back to religious education at every opportunity. This works well in the interests of the pupils and gives them insights into the subject that most pupils of this age do not have.

136. At the heart of the work is the study of Christianity. Pupils know the chief celebrations, customs and stories of Christianity. Indeed, their knowledge of the events of Lent, for example, is greatly detailed. More than this, pupils reflect on the meaning of Lent for them and Year 6 pupils know that Jesus took the right course when he refused temptation and journeyed to Jerusalem and death. Pupils in Year 5 discuss their own personal temptation with honesty and integrity. It is evident they know what is right and they try to take the right course. They also know it is easy to be tempted and, that on occasion, humans fail.

137. Complementing this work, good attention is paid to the core attributes of other religions. Pupils build good knowledge of Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism. In a Year 6 Class, for example, the pupils were able to relate the eightfold path of Buddhism to their own lives. They gave some quite sophisticated responses to the teacher, including "tame your tongue when under pressure" in relation to the need for "right mindfulness".

138. Pupils are enthusiastic in their response to religious education. Lessons are very orderly because pupils behave so well. They concentrate hard and are eager to answer questions and to explain their own view point. Work proceeds at a good rate and pupils build knowledge, insight and understanding at a good rate throughout the school. Pupils' personal development is very well supported in religious education because they are given every opportunity to work independently and to take responsibility for their own learning. In addition, their spiritual and moral development is extended greatly by the time for reflection on words and deeds that teachers build into lessons.

139. Teaching quality is good in the subject. Teachers have personal conviction as well as good subject knowledge and this means lessons are taught with confidence and good levels of expectation. Religious education is not just taught as factual knowledge, understanding is at its core. Teachers have great personal faith and this is communicated well. However, there is no coercion of pupils. They are given time to stop, think and reflect, and to build their own response to religion and religious education. This is a major reason why standards are good.

140. Management of the subject is effective and many improvements have been made since the last inspection. There are still some things to do to bring greater progress still. There is little assessment of religious education, planning sometimes lacks precision because objectives relate to teaching and content rather than what will be taught, and monitoring of the subject is absent. Attention to these shortcomings will ensure that all pupils, especially the higher attainers, achieve their personal best.