

INSPECTION REPORT

BISHOP MARTIN C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Skelmersdale

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119616

Headteacher: Mr P Whitby

Reporting inspector: Mr J Plumb
16930

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th July 2002

Inspection number: 196613

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Birkrig
Skelmersdale
Lancashire

Postcode: WN8 9BN

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs I Jones

Date of previous inspection: 30 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16930	Mr J Plumb	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What the school should do to improve further?
19365	Mr G Stockley	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31975	Ms K Andrews	Team inspector	Foundation Stage History Music	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
20326	Mr P Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology	
2911	Mr E Steed	Team inspector	English Art and design	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22704	Mr G Williams	Team inspector	Science Geography	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average sized primary school with a nursery. There are 24 full-time equivalent children in the nursery and 317 pupils in reception to Year 6 and so the school provides education for pupils aged three to eleven. The pupils come mainly from the Digmaor ward which has very considerable social and economic disadvantage. In Skelmersdale it ranks highest in terms of ward deprivation for income levels, housing and education. A well above average proportion of pupils, 53 per cent, are eligible for free school meals. Forty per cent of pupils are included on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), a proportion well above the national average. There is a range of needs and a very significant number of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is high. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and only one child is at an early stage of English acquisition. In the current Year 6 only 63 per cent of pupils have completed a full seven years within the school. Pupil mobility is a very significant factor. The school is part of the Skelmersdale Excellence Cluster. Attainment on entry is well below the national average. The governors have set challenging targets to raise standards in English and mathematics for eleven-year-olds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bishop Martin C of E Primary School is a very good school. Excellent leadership from the headteacher creates a learning environment where the achievements of all pupils are valued and celebrated. There is an emphasis on raising standards whilst never losing sight of the special educational needs of so many pupils who are often also disadvantaged socially and economically. Pupils are extended and thrilled by demanding teaching, which enables them to achieve very good standards measured against their prior attainment. All pupils are fully included in every aspect of school life. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is very good resulting in very good progress throughout the school;
- The care the school takes of its pupils;
- The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational and the quality of management is very good;
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is excellent;
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good;
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good;
- The extra-curricular provision is excellent; and
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent.

What could be improved

- An increased number of pupils being able to swim 25 metres; and
- The monitoring and control strand of information and communications technology (ICT) by the end of Key Stage 2.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been very good improvements since the last inspection in June 1997 and the capacity for further improvement is excellent. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for early

years (the Foundation Stage). The quality of teaching and learning has improved throughout the school. Provision for history and music has improved and standards in history have risen in Key Stage 2. The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is even better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Procedures for monitoring are better. Extra-curricular provision has improved. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is better.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E	E	D
mathematics	E	D	E	C
science	E	C	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

***** Note: the inspection took place at the end of the school year before the national comparison tables for the 2002 tests were published. The test results for 2002 show very significant improvements on the Year 2001 results, but they cannot be put in the table above because comparative data has not yet been published.**

National Curriculum test results for 2001 show that, by the end of Year 6, pupils attained well below standards in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools (determined by the number of pupils eligible for free school meals) pupils attained below average standards in English, but standards which were in line with the national average in mathematics and science. This is seen in the context of the high mobility within this school, only 63 per cent of the current Year 6 pupils have been in school for seven years and also the very high proportion of pupils with SEN in this school. Test results for 2002 show a very significant improvement in English, mathematics and science. In the current Year 6 standards are below the average in English and mathematics, but in line in science. However, achievement in English, mathematics and science measured against attainment on entry which is very low and seen in the context of the large number of pupils with SEN is judged to be very good. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations as pupils in Year 6 have not grasped monitoring and control skills. Too few pupils in Year 6 can swim 25 metres. In history, music and some aspects of art and design and physical education standards exceed national expectations. In all other subjects standards are in line with national expectations. Most children enter the nursery class with standards well below those usually found. Although they make very good progress they remain below the national average in literacy and numeracy by the age of five. Pupils make at least good progress in the infants, but the majority remain below the national average in literacy, numeracy and science. In all other subjects standards are in line with those expected of pupils aged seven. Achievement (as measured against prior attainment) for all pupils, including those with SEN and those who are gifted and talented, is very good. The school sets realistic and achievable targets for improvement. The proportion of pupils that attained Level 5 in the 2002 tests tripled compared with the 2001 results and early indicators suggest that standards in science in the current Year 6 tests are close to the national average. These are significant improvements on the outcomes in 2001.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school because lessons are exciting and interesting.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and out of school is at least good and often very good.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Relationships are very good throughout the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very 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.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good. The quality of teaching across the school is also very good. Fourteen per cent of teaching was judged to be satisfactory, 41 per cent good, 38 per cent very good and eight per cent excellent. This is a better standard of teaching than was found in the previous inspection. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. The management of pupil behaviour is excellent and teachers have the highest expectations for all pupils. As a consequence pupils have a very positive attitude to learning and make at least good and often very good progress. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is very good. Pupils are motivated by interesting teaching based on very good subject knowledge and so achieve very good standards measured against their prior attainment. The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN and also for gifted and talented pupils is very good. There is only one child with English as an additional language (EAL) and she is catered for well. The only weakness is that there is insufficient teaching of monitoring and control skills in ICT in Year 6.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The Foundation Stage curriculum is excellent. Throughout the rest of the school the curriculum is good. However, monitoring and control skills are not planned for sufficiently in the Year 6 ICT program and pupils who cannot swim 25 metres in Year 6 cannot currently make up this deficiency. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Extra-curricular provision is excellent. Links with the community are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
Provision for pupils with	The provision for the pupil with English as an additional language is very

English as an additional language	good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall but more could be done to prepare pupils for adult life in a multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are very good. Procedures for monitoring attendance and promoting good behaviour are excellent. Assessment systems are very good. Very good use is made of assessment to set targets for individual pupils and by so doing raise their standards in English and mathematics.

Links with parents are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership. The management of the school is very good. The management of SEN is a key strength. The school improvement plan is very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very effective and supportive. They meet their statutory responsibilities fully. The designated governor for SEN is a pillar of strength.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and governing body have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Procedures for self-review and evaluation are a strength.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is very good. Resources are targeted very effectively. The application of principles of best value is very good.

There are sufficient teaching staff and learning support staff. The accommodation is very good. The grounds are very attractive. Resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They like the family atmosphere within the school; • The fact that staff are approachable; • They like the fact that their children enjoy going to school; • They value the respect and very good discipline within the school; and • They appreciate the very good quality of the school grounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents did not consider that anything significant was in need of improvement.

Inspectors' judgements support parents'/carers' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Baseline assessments and inspection evidence indicates that the children start nursery with levels of attainment well below those usually found. When they begin their reception year, the majority of children are still attaining below average standards in most areas of learning. These are similar findings to the last inspection report. Particular weaknesses occur in the areas of language, literacy and communication, personal and social skills and knowledge and understanding of the world around them. This reflects the special educational needs of the pupils and also the high level of social disadvantage many children experience before entering the nursery. The school does much to support the development of parenting skills.
2. Because of the very good teaching and also due to an excellent, vibrant and exciting curriculum children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the age of five the majority of the children just meet national expectations in the areas of personal and social skills, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative skills. Skills in physical development are above the national expectation. However, despite having made at least good progress many children have not achieved the early learning goals in language and mathematical development because of their very low prior attainment.
3. In 2001, the results of the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds indicated that when compared with all pupils, standards in reading were average. The number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was below the national average. Compared with similar schools (determined by the number of pupils eligible for free school meals) standards in reading were well above the national average. Standards seen during the inspection are below average. This reflects the high proportion of pupils in the current Year 2 group who have special educational needs. These standards are not so good as at the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be average.
4. Results for writing indicated that when compared with all schools, standards were below average. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average. The proportion of Level 3 writers was well below the national average but the proportion of Level 2A writers was very pleasing. Standards observed during the inspection were below average. Although standards are not as high as at the time of the last inspection it is very important to note that the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is much higher than it was at that time and expectations have risen nationally since that time.
5. Teacher assessments in speaking and listening indicate that standards were below the national average. Inspection evidence agrees that standards in speaking and listening are below average but they are very considerably better than when these pupils were aged five. Standards in speaking and listening are lower than at the time of the last inspection but the profile of pupils' SEN is much different from what it was then.
6. Results in mathematics indicated that, when compared to all schools, standards were well below average. Compared with similar schools, standards were in line with the national average. Standards observed during the inspection were well below average. Levels of attainment are not as good as at the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be in line with the national average.

7. Teachers' assessment in science in 2001 indicated that, by the age of seven, the number of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was marginally below the national average, as was the number attaining the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence agrees with these assessments. These results are not as good as those reported in the previous inspection, which judged standards to be average.
8. Levels of achievement at Key Stage 1 are good overall and pupils build well on the good start they make in nursery and reception. Inspection evidence shows that, by the age of seven, standards in all other subjects are in line with national expectations. However, standards in ICT are only just in line and aspects of two-dimensional art are marginally above.
9. The National Curriculum assessment test results in the Year 2001 for eleven-year-olds indicate that standards were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science in comparison with all schools. Compared with similar schools, standards were below the national average in English but in line with the national average in mathematics and science. These findings are not as good in English as those at the time of the last inspection, but very similar to those in mathematics and science. However, the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects was broadly in line with the national trend. These results are to be seen in the context of the very high proportion of pupils with SEN in the 2000 – 2001 Year 6 group, the instability a proportion of these pupils experienced due to a staffing difficulty and most importantly the very high transience factor within this school. Form S2 (a form submitted to the lead inspector by the headteacher) indicates that 41 pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of entry and 34 pupils left the school not at the usual time for leaving. In 2001 only 33 per cent of transient pupils attained a Level 4 compared with 62 per cent of the other children and 11 per cent of these were statemented. Only 63 per cent of the current Year 6 pupils have completed seven years at the school. There is evidence to indicate that those pupils who move right through the school make very good progress and also evidence to support that many who join the school half way through their school life come with very challenging behaviours, often having been excluded from other schools, with complex associated learning difficulties and poorly established patterns of attendance. Considering all of these complex factors the school does very well by these pupils.
10. Standards of work seen for the current Year 6 in English are below the expected average because of the high number of pupils with SEN in the year group. However, the 2002 National Curriculum test results indicate that the school has exceeded its target of 55 per cent of pupils attaining Level 4+ and also more than tripled last year's number of pupils who gained the higher Level 5. This is a very significant improvement on last year's results.
11. In mathematics, standards are below average at the end of Year 6, but some of the pupils in this year group have made excellent progress when measured against their prior attainment. Standards of work seen in science in Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average. The National Curriculum assessment tests in science in 2002 indicate a very significant improvement on the results in 2001.
12. Standards for eleven-year-olds are above average in history, music and also in the games and athletics aspects of physical education. Standards in swimming are well below average for eleven-year-olds. Also in ICT, particularly in the aspects of control and monitoring, standards are below those expected of eleven-year-olds nationally. In all other subjects standards are broadly in line with those expected of eleven-year-olds, except for in the two-dimensional aspects of art where standards are above.

13. The large proportion of pupils with SEN make at least good progress in reading, spelling and numeracy work due to the very good special needs assistant support they receive and so achieve at least good and often very good standards measured against their starting point. Those pupils with statements of special educational needs make very good progress in relation to their speech, physical and behavioural needs. Gifted and talented pupils make very good progress because they are well catered for. The one pupil with English as an additional language is coping well and the school is waiting for her to be formally assessed to assist in planning for her needs. No significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls was observed during the inspection although indicators suggest that boys aged 11 did better than girls aged 11 in the 2001 NCATs. The disproportionate number of girls to boys who took the 2001 NCATs makes any kind of comparison very difficult.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The vast majority of parents think the school is helping their children to become mature and that behaviour is good. Parents very positive views about the behaviour and attitudes of their children to school are fully justified as inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils, because they are encouraged throughout the school to develop well as people, are mature beyond their years by the age of eleven and this is reflected in their very good attitudes and enthusiasm for their learning and their very good behaviour. They work very hard in lessons and concentrate closely on their tasks. They are reluctant to finish when lessons end and give freely of their time to support the vast range of extra-curricular activities that the school provides. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection, due in no small measure to the very high priority that the school places on this aspect of development and is a significant factor in the steady rise in standards over recent years.
15. Pupils enjoy coming to school because lessons are exciting and interesting, and because they are constantly encouraged to think and reflect on their own actions and their behaviour towards others and the environment. They have developed into thoughtful caring children. Pupils say they appreciate the very good opportunities that are provided for them to engage in personal research because this makes their tasks more interesting. Instances were observed in lessons, for example in Years 4 and 5, where pupils could not wait to open their books and start 'finding out'. A very good start is made in the nursery, which is reinforced throughout the reception year. Even the youngest children leave their parents happily and engage in their activities quickly and purposefully, because school routines are so well established. By the end of reception, children are already becoming independent learners and work well in pairs and in groups without constant supervision.
16. Behaviour is at least very good throughout the school. A larger than average number of pupils are identified as having challenging behaviour and emotional difficulties. These and new pupils, and those with other special educational needs, are quickly and fully integrated into the life and work of the school, because the school is so inclusive and consistent in applying its policies. Boys and girls work and play happily together and there is no significant difference in the progress that both groups make and the very few pupils that are from other ethnic groups make similar progress to other pupils. No instances of unacceptable behaviour were observed during the inspection in any part of the school. The school is a very orderly community, where pupils are unfailingly polite and courteous and helpful towards each other and younger pupils. Pupils in Year 6, for example, are very thoughtful and confident when they speak to visitors. They show they are proud to work with and support the learning of children in reception, as they do each

week in their personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. This is a strength of their personal development.

17. Through vehicles such as the school council, whole class group discussion (circle time) and good quality PSHE lessons and the consistent application of the behaviour policy, unacceptable behaviour such as bullying and other oppressive behaviour have been eradicated. Good behaviour is celebrated regularly and pupils' views are always taken into account when reviewing policy. Members of the school council, for example, say that behaviour has improved in the playground because, when pupils said they did not have enough to do, the council received a budget with which they have purchased a range of play items that pupils wanted. When the council reported that some pupils were uneasy because toilet doors were low and other pupils could look over, the doors were changed. Pupils also say there is no bullying. They have been taught to take responsibility for their own actions and do so very well. They say, for example, that occasionally there is name-calling. When this happens, they always 'turn their back, walk away and tell an adult'. This is effective because adults always deal with such matters immediately. Pupils are also given responsibility for important aspects of school life, which continues to raise their self-esteem and gives them pride of ownership in the school. Recently, pupils in Year 6 went to a book warehouse with a budget of £2000, which they spent on topic and other books for the school. All but five of the books were well chosen and useful. Exclusions are very rare and are only given in the interest of the pupil and the safety of other pupils and staff.
18. Relationships are very good throughout the school. This is because teachers are friendly and approachable and because they show pupils that they are valued, whatever their background or ability. They also make it very clear that racism and other oppressive behaviours will not be tolerated, thus enabling pupils to work in an atmosphere of tolerance and harmony. This strategy has a very good impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils are taught how to reflect deeply on issues raised in lessons and in the world around them. They are able to reflect thoughtfully, as a result of this very good teaching, on their own feelings and on their actions towards others. Significantly, they show they are aware of the consequences of actions on others. When they discuss, for example, the prevalence of human sacrifice in the Aztec culture, they showed they appreciated the cruelty and waste of these actions. Occasions were noted, where pupils worked in complete silence because they were so affected by issues that were raised in a lesson and needed time to think about them, before articulating their own views.
19. Attendance is satisfactory. It has steadily improved over the last three years and in the latest reporting year it was just below the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence was below the national average. Much of the authorised absence is due to pupils taking holidays and to sickness. On one occasion earlier this year almost half of one class was absent for a whole week with chicken pox.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is very good across the school. Fourteen per cent of lessons were satisfactory, 41 per cent were good, 38 per cent were very good and eight per cent were excellent. This is a better standard of teaching than that found at the time of the last inspection. More teaching was good than at the time of the last inspection and there was no unsatisfactory teaching compared with four per cent of unsatisfactory teaching at the time of the last inspection. There are significant strengths in the teaching of all year groups. Pupils are well motivated to learn by the very good teaching

and achieve high standards measured against their prior attainment. High expectations and management of behaviour are particular strengths in the teaching across the school.

21. In the Foundation Stage the quality of teaching is very good and so children under five make at least good progress. Teachers foster a very good transition from home to school and so children are happy and secure in their learning. Behaviour management in the nursery and reception is excellent and because children know exactly what is expected of them they respond appropriately and make good gains in their learning. Teachers plan an impressive range of exciting role-play situations, which capture children's imagination and so children make very good progress in their development of speaking skills.
22. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good except for the teaching of monitoring and control skills in ICT in Key Stage 2. In all Key Stage 2 mathematics lessons observed teachers deployed very confident subject knowledge and as a result pupils' learning in these lessons was also very good. Excellent subject knowledge in history resulted in the subject coming alive for pupils and because they were so excited in their learning they gained a very good insight into the life of the past. Teachers also have good subject knowledge in music and in aspects of physical education and this makes a valuable contribution to very good learning in these subjects. Teachers have a very considerable knowledge of the needs of pupils with SEN and so these pupils make very good progress. The progress of a child with complex speech and emotional difficulties in the nursery has been outstanding. On entry to the nursery he did not utter a word but is now capable of vocalisation and is beginning to make independent choices. The special needs support assistants make a very valuable contribution to the very good learning of pupils with SEN. Almost all teaching is robust and delivered with energy and enthusiasm at a cracking pace and so pupils are excited about their learning. They often have much fun and enjoyment whilst developing important skills as in their warm up sessions in physical education.
23. The teaching of literacy and numeracy across subjects is very good but, sometimes, insufficient use is made of ICT to support teaching in other subjects.
24. Relationships between teachers and pupils are a very significant strength of the teaching, and the management of pupils' behaviour is consistently very good across all classes. Very good use is made of praise and encouragement to motivate pupils in their learning. The successes of all pupils, no matter how small, are celebrated and so pupils gain confidence and self-esteem and this contributes to their very good learning. In a physical education lesson a pupil with emotional and behavioural difficulties was encouraged sensitively to participate in the lesson and was so successfully included that he made very good gains in his development of batting skills. Because teachers value and praise pupils they gain very positive attitudes to learning and show interest in their lessons. For example, in science pupils are confident to answer questions about what they think may happen in their investigations because they are not afraid of saying the wrong thing or making a fool of themselves. They are confident to try answering again when the teacher informs them that their first attempt at answering was not correct. Because of the supportive culture in this school pupils learn very effectively from their mistakes. Teachers skilfully develop pupils' answers and this successfully develops their language across a range of subjects. Lesson planning is very good and teachers share the planned learning outcomes with their pupils and so they are clear about what they are expected to achieve at the end of the lesson. This results in most pupils making at least good progress in their learning. Teachers make good use of homework and this makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.

25. The pace of teaching is cracking and in almost all lessons pupils are challenged by the high expectations of the teacher. Very occasionally in some lessons the quality of written work is disappointing, when pupils engage in worksheet exercises which demand one word answers or colouring in, rather than having the opportunity to express their own views and ideas in writing. Most learning is fun, dynamic and exciting because the teaching is so demanding and also due to the fact that pupils have confidence in their teachers. Pupils listen very attentively and thrive on the range of interesting activities. For example, in music pupils say they really enjoy their lessons because they are fun and because they are all engaged in interesting musical activities. Because teaching is so good in music pupils are eager and willing to perform in front of visitors and their families. Learning is very good because of the practical advice teachers give to their pupils. For example, pupils say that their singing is good because they are taught to control their breathing and their posture and this helps them. Inspectors agree with the pupils' judgement.
26. Pupils' levels of interest, concentration and understanding are very good because of the effectiveness of teaching methods. Very good use is made of inspirational resources in history to capture pupils' interest and to motivate them to learn. Very effective use is made of practical activities in mathematics and science to promote very good learning. Effective use is made of ongoing assessment to identify the needs of individual pupils and to inform subsequent planning so as to enable pupils to make further gains in their learning.
27. The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is very good. Teachers make effective use of individual education plans to inform their planning for pupils with SEN and so these pupils make very good gains in their learning. The quality of teaching and learning for gifted and talented pupils is also very good. There is only one pupil with English as an additional language and she is well supported.

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

28. Children in the Foundation Stage receive exciting and relevant experiences from a wide-ranging, relevant and vibrant curriculum. In a nutshell the curriculum provision for children in the nursery and reception class is excellent. The curriculum provided for the statutory years of schooling is suitably broad and makes very good provision for pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. This was broadly the position at the time of the last inspection. All required National Curriculum subjects and religious education are in place and are taught well. In addition, the school has good arrangements for pupils to receive sex education and has plans in preparation for them to receive drugs education. There are good procedures for pupils' personal, social and health education to be included in planning across the curriculum. The study of citizenship is currently being prepared so that it may be integrated into whole-curriculum planning. In order to offer separate and specific time for pupils to suggest and discuss topics, circle time is currently undergoing successful trials. The success of the venture will cause circle time to become a feature of the school timetable from the autumn term (from September 2002).
29. The governors have agreed a policy for sex education that includes the statutory provision through the science syllabus. In addition, the school nurse meets with single gender groups of Year 6 pupils to present an approved sex education video. Parents

have been properly informed of their right to withdraw their children from these sessions. Members of staff are currently considering a draft policy on drugs education; this policy is scheduled to go to the governing body for possible ratification early in the autumn term. It is intended that the school nurse will play an important presentation role in the delivery of drugs education. At this time the governors will also consider a revised policy on PHSE that now includes citizenship and places great importance on pupils gaining knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a member of a diverse and multicultural society.

30. The curriculum is suitably balanced except for the presentation of the modelling and control elements of ICT in the upper junior classes. The allocation of teaching and learning times to the various subjects of the curriculum is close to the national averages and is satisfactory. The overall planning for pupils' learning is very good. Provision to share proposed learning activities at the beginning of lessons, together with opportunities to review them at the end, has proved to be beneficial.
31. The school is fully inclusive in its policies and outlook as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. Equality of opportunity is provided for all pupils, including pupils with differing abilities or members of ethnic minorities. The curriculum provided for pupils with SEN is very good.
32. There have been significant changes to the schemes of work used for subject planning since the previous inspection. The school has adopted nationally recommended subject guidance, sensibly adapting the schemes of work to incorporate any successful aspects and practices already in place. The strategies employed by the school to promote literacy and numeracy are very good and are raising standards effectively.
33. The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. These include seasonal major and minor sports that are enjoyed by both boys and girls. The manner in which these activities are appreciated may be gauged from the numbers of pupils that attend. For example, 33 girls attend the football club, whilst 91 and 50 pupils respectively attend the cross-country and athletic clubs. Pupils have a wide choice of activities that include chess, board games, gardening, choir, guitar, recorder and French clubs. It is a strength of the school that so many adults are willing to give up their leisure time to engage pupils in worthwhile activities.
34. The school continues to have good links with the community that enhance the quality of pupils' education and contribute well to their personal and social development. Naturally, there is a very strong relationship with the church. Pupils visit the church to look at vestments and other items and have discussions with the vicar. Members of the local clergy visit the school weekly and lead acts of worship. Pupils celebrate Christian festivals in the church and the school is allowed to use the church for a two week period for their Christmas presentation. The choir entertains at the nearby senior citizens' home and local residents are invited to the Winter Fayre and the Christmas presentation.
35. Pupils take part in the district sports in Wigan, winning the boys' and girls' trophies this year. They also join with other local schools at the public speaking competition and the benefit of this was demonstrated well by the high quality of pupils' performance at a parents' assembly during the inspection. Pupils practise their computer skills when they send e-mails to other local schools.

36. The school also gives generously of its time in helping other members of the local community by providing work experience opportunities for pupils from local high schools and allowing disaffected high school pupils to visit weekly as part of raising their self-esteem. Bishop Martin pupils have also joined with pupils of other local schools to paint a mural in a local subway.
37. The school has good relationships with partner institutions. It is part of the West Lancashire Excellence Cluster in which four secondary schools and seven primary schools are working together to raise standards. Older pupils attend summer schools at the local high schools, and a member of staff at one of the high schools is currently working at Bishop Martin for half a day each week helping pupils to improve their computer skills. Several local schools have also worked together on a mathematics bridging unit (the mathematics bridging unit is a unit of work started in the primary schools and finished in the high schools). The work is started in mathematics work books with the name of the receiving school on the front and this provides a good bridge for liaison between the primary staff and secondary school colleagues. All these initiatives help to reduce the natural concerns that pupils have about their transfer to secondary education.
38. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and this is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection. Provision for spiritual development is very good and sometimes excellent because it is successfully promoted and ingrained into the life and work of the school. Pupils are regularly encouraged to show concern for others, and to think and reflect on their own views and feelings about issues raised in lessons, such as history, and on other occasions such as school assemblies and PSHE lessons. This is particularly effective towards the end of Key Stage 2, where pupils are exceptionally mature and demonstrate ability for personal reflection. The groundwork, however, is established very well from the Foundation Stage, where even the youngest children are caring of others and show awe and curiosity about aspects of the world around them, for example when they make ice cream for the first time and eat it and also when they use finger puppets to help them articulate their own feelings.
39. Provision for moral development is excellent. One of the reasons why the school is so effective in this aspect is because pupils' views are regularly sought and are taken into consideration. This raises their self-esteem and gives them pride in their school, their learning and in their achievements. The school's behaviour and bullying policies are exceptionally well applied throughout the school and all staff encourage and foster values such as honesty, fairness, truth and justice. Staff also provide pupils with very good role models and encourage them to reflect on their feelings, behaviour and their treatment of others, and also on the consequences of their words and actions. Pupils have a very caring attitude and a mature understanding of what is right and wrong as a result of this good nurturing. They are also taught to value the environment and those less fortunate than themselves and are eager and willing to give very good support to charitable causes.
40. Provision for social development is also excellent. The school has clear aims and principles within which a family ethos and Christian values flourish. Regular discussion, circle time and debate help develop this ethos as the school demonstrates a collective desire to provide an environment where growing up and learning is a happy and enriching experience. Parents are very positive in their views that this is effective. Opportunities for enhancing pupils' self-esteem and acknowledging achievement are given high priority. The school provides clear rules, particularly for behaviour and anti-bullying. Good procedures are in place to monitor and deal with racist and oppressive

behaviour, should any occur. These are displayed in corridors and classrooms and referred to regularly and, as pupils have helped draw up these rules, they show great respect for them and abide by them. Opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility for aspects of life around the school are regularly planned, to ensure they exercise initiative and take due responsibility. The school is, as a result, a very orderly community, where pupils are taught to be polite and courteous and to behave well. The school council, comprised of elected members from each year group, meets regularly and is an effective vehicle for pupils' representation, encouraging participation in decision making and developing qualities of citizenship. Pupils' social skills are further developed through involvement in much community sporting activities, extra-curricular activities and during educational visits.

41. Provision for cultural development is good. It has been a focus in recent years as the school recognises the need to celebrate cultural diversity and differences. However, there is a need to push the boundaries out even further. Much effort has been put into developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding of their local culture through study, visits and visitors in subjects such as geography, art and design and music and this is a strong feature. In subjects such as geography and music, pupils are taught about cultural diversity in the wider world. Links with the principle cultures and values of multicultural Britain, however, are less evident, although this is happening. This means that pupils are not yet fully prepared for adult life in a multicultural society, nor can they fully experience the personal enrichment that contact with other ways of life can bring.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The feature that stands out most strongly in this school is the very good care it takes of its pupils. It is an area of strength that has improved even on the good picture that was noted at the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher sets very high standards which staff are eager to follow and even seek to improve upon. All children are valued, no matter what qualities or problems they bring with them. Very good use is made of external agencies to support pupils with SEN. The friendliness of everyone is very evident as you move around the school.
43. A high priority is given to health and safety. Pupils are safe and secure here, any concerns being handled with care, dedication and good humour. All the necessary safety checks are carried out regularly and the governors are involved. There are a large number of trained first-aiders and relevant risk assessments have been carried out. There is a good policy for handling pupils and incidents are logged.
44. Child protection is taken very seriously. The co-ordinator is well trained and all staff have regular discussions about the procedures and signs of possible concern that might result in a child protection issue.
45. Good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are having a positive effect. The school works closely with the education welfare officer to monitor attendance trends regularly and takes action where there is a concern. Lateness, too, is monitored closely and when a pupil has been late on three occasions in a half term the school sends a letter to the parents. Targets are set for some pupils together with the opportunity to gain stickers and this raises the importance of attendance and punctuality in a non-threatening way. The school does not currently contact parents on the first day of absence when no explanation has been received. Schools that do operate this system usually find that it leads to a further improvement in attendance.

46. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent and a strength of the school. They start with the school's aim that pupils should learn to behave in accordance with the ideals of Christianity. The aim is translated into action by means of a very effective behaviour policy based on encouraging and rewarding good behaviour with stickers, certificates, badges and headteacher's awards that are presented in assembly. Pupils value these awards and strive hard to achieve them. The school is receiving an increasing number of pupils with challenging behaviour and it is a great credit to the procedures and the skills and dedication of all the staff that behaviour is so good. The way that pupils' behaviour is managed is one of the major strengths of the teaching.
47. There are excellent procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The policy makes it clear that bullying will not be tolerated and pupils are taught to walk away from any such situations and tell an adult, who will respond without delay. Pupils have confirmed that the school responds quickly and effectively to any reported bullying incidents. There is a robust system for logging any racist incidents. The school has been slow to respond to the issues raised in the Macpherson enquiry into the Stephen Lawrence case because it has been awaiting guidance from the local education authority. There are now arrangements in hand to ensure that the new requirements are implemented as soon as possible.
48. There are very good procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development. The formal systems include pupil profiles, which are reviewed twice a year, and records of achievement. These are supplemented by informal monitoring helped by teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils and in many cases, their families as well. For those pupils who need it, an individual behaviour plan is prepared. This sets out targets and the methods to be used. Progress is reviewed either termly or half-termly according to the circumstances of each pupil.
49. For all pupils procedures for monitoring their academic progress are very good. The school's assessment policy has very clear guidance, which has assisted staff in developing a consistent approach to assessment in all subjects. All staff have a clear understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses through informal daily and systematic long-term methods of assessment. Baseline assessments are carried out very effectively in the Foundation Stage and very good records are kept of children's achievements. Careful, detailed day-to-day assessments of what children can do are recorded accurately to target individual and groups of children to particular activities in order to develop specific knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils with SEN are identified early and very effective use is made of their assessment to inform detailed and specific targets on their individual education programmes (IEPs).
50. Analysis of the results of national tests in English, mathematics and science and other tests by gender and ethnicity has enabled the school to identify needs and implement changes in its provision. This has contributed very successfully to the improvement in pupils' achievement in these subjects over recent years. The school successfully monitors the progress of individuals and year groups against national and local standards, and this has helped to raise expectations. With higher than average numbers of pupils joining the school midway through their primary schooling, the school undertakes regular reassessments of particular year group targets to refine assessment systems still further. The results of these tests and other assessments are discussed with pupils so that they know how they are doing in the subjects, and what they have to do next in order to improve still further.

51. Teachers use assessment information accurately to evaluate the curriculum and plan the next step for pupils in most subjects. As a result, work set generally meets the needs of all pupils well, especially the higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. The school is aware of the need to target still further the development of pupils' individual skills in ICT and design and technology as they move through the school, to raise standards still higher.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Parents continue to be very satisfied with the school and what it provides for their children. All those who completed the questionnaire felt that the teaching and behaviour were good and that their child was making good progress. They also believed that the school was well led and managed. Inspection findings not only support the parents' views, but in relation to teaching, behaviour and leadership the inspectors feel that the reality is even better than parents had suggested. A very small number of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that their child did not get the right amount of homework. An even smaller number did not feel well enough informed about how their children were getting on and that the school did not work closely with parents. Inspectors' views on homework are recorded elsewhere in the report; in relation to being informed about pupils' progress, inspectors feel that some reports could be more consistent, but their judgement is that the school does work closely with parents.
53. Believing as it does that an essential foundation of a successful school is a positive relationship with parents, the school works hard to create and maintain very effective links between school and home that have a good impact on pupils' education. In this respect there has been an improvement on the good position reported at the time of the previous inspection. There is a genuine open-door policy and parents feel welcome and comfortable in school. The headteacher maintains a visible presence around and about the school throughout the day and always has time to exchange a word of greeting with a parent or to enquire about a family difficulty. He gets on well with staff, parents and pupils. Teachers and other adults working in the school have a similar approach and are always willing to listen to parents' concerns or to share in their celebrations. Procedures for involving parents / carers of pupils with SEN in the planning of their IEPs are very good. Procedures for involving parents / carers of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs in their annual reviews are also very good.
54. Parents are very happy with the information they receive. Regular letters and newsletters keep them well informed about school events and they feel that reports on pupils' progress are clear and helpful. Whilst those for the Foundation Stage are of very high quality, there is some variation in the quality of reports in other years, particularly in the extent to which they guide parents on how they can help their child at home. There are two formal opportunities each year for parents to talk about their child's progress with the teacher. One takes place in the autumn term so that parents can find out how their child has settled in to their new class. The other meeting is towards the end of the summer term when the written report is handed out and discussed. There is a very high attendance at these meetings. At the start of the autumn term teachers send information to parents about the work to be covered during the year and this prepares parents to help their children at home. Parents are invited to help in school, but very few do. An active Friends Association organises social events such as the Winter Fayre and the Easter Egg and Bonnet Competition. Parents support these events well, helping to raise valuable additional funds for the benefit of the pupils.

55. The majority of parents spend time listening to their children reading at home. Teachers say that this has a noticeable effect on pupils' progress in reading. Overall, parents have a good impact on the work of the school and make a good contribution to their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The quality of leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent. The high standard of leadership evident at the time of the last inspection has been maintained and improved upon. The headteacher provides a very clear and effective educational direction for the school. His vision, shared by all staff, focuses on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, whilst never losing sight of building the self-esteem of every pupil in a school with a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and where many also come from the most disadvantaged part of Skelmersdale. All staff have played a vital and successful part in creating a school which is an oasis in a difficult environment and in partnership they focus on promoting the self-esteem and self-worth of every pupil. Parents / carers have also been successfully involved in creating this quality environment. There is a commitment to creating an all-inclusive school, which celebrates the achievements of all pupils.
57. Management is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The senior management team, comprising the headteacher, deputy headteacher and a Year 6 teacher is very effective. The management team comprises seven members of staff and all of them are crystal clear about their management roles and responsibilities. The headteacher is exceptionally good at delegation and developing and supporting his management team so that they fulfil their roles and responsibilities well. He has empowered staff so that they have confidence to manage change in accordance with the priorities on the school improvement plan. Members of the management team have responsibility for chairing the school council (so that all pupils are involved in important management decisions), overseeing the welfare of staff and the site supervision as well as developing and monitoring the curriculum provision. As a result of an effective partnership of all staff a caring school ethos has been created which focuses on the highest achievement for all pupils. The management of special educational needs and also the management of the gifted and talented programme are key strengths. The senior management team, due to its own rigorous self-evaluation procedures is very aware of what the areas for improvement are and has plans to address these through the school improvement plan.
58. The headteacher is consultative and has successfully involved the parents, staff, pupils and governors in shaping the priorities in the school improvement plan. His open style of management is valued by all staff and parents and he is held in high regard by them. The school's aims and values are very good. They promote a Christian ethos which pervades all aspects of school life. The school promotes very good relationships within the community. There is a commitment to support families who experience poverty within a community committed to equality of opportunity for all.
59. The school improvement plan is very good. It is a very effective tool with which to manage change. It prioritises raising standards, improving and enriching the curriculum and enhancing the quality of the accommodation. The whole school community is involved in decision making. The school improvement plan provides a clear focus for the whole staff who knows what is in it and what they have to do to make the plan work. All priorities on the plan are carefully and meticulously costed.

60. The governing body is very effective and supportive of the headteacher and his staff. Individual governors are a pillar of strength to individual members of staff as well as to the headteacher. The governing body is actively involved in whole school decision making and planning through its appropriate committee structure. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities very well. The governors' knowledge and understanding of what goes on in the school is very good. They act as a critical friend of the headteacher by asking him very challenging questions when necessary. However, they are at the same time very supportive of a very good headteacher and this is deserved support.
61. Financial planning and daily administration is very good. This indicates a significant improvement from the previous inspection when financial control was sound and administration good. The carry forward figure at the end of the last financial year was high. The governing body and headteacher offer three major reasons for this, although there are other minor reasons. Last year, because of the transient pupil population, identifying an exact number of pupils proved to be difficult and was inaccurate. Thus a retrospective adjustment was made reimbursing the school with extra revenue that was not anticipated. A second reason was the allocation of reserve funds for the new school roof, which due to a change in policy reduced the percentage grant from 15 per cent to 10 per cent. Thirdly, should pupil numbers fall, the governing body would wish to retain existing staff in order to sustain the value added profile in raising standards. The inspection team shares this view. The current year's forecast is just over the five per cent recommended. The governing body and its finance committee are directly involved in the approval of the school's spending priorities and careful monitoring takes place to judge value for money on high expenditure items. An effective 'best value' approach has been developed for the purchase of major items of expenditure, including building renovations. Good support is received from the local educational authority on these issues. Effective use is made of specific grants, such as standards fund for improving the quality of raising standards for pupils with special educational needs. The excellence cluster grant is used effectively for gifted and talented pupils and also raising the profile of the local area. The school makes very good use of modern technology in financial management, teachers' planning and displays, pupil data and school reports and is shortly to use it for assessment. The recommendations of the last auditors' report, produced several years ago, have been fully addressed.
62. Performance management is well established within the school. All members of staff, including administrative, support staff and the site manager, have an interview at the commencement of every term. Apart from valuing staff, it provides the headteacher and staff with the opportunity to discuss and review targets on a regular basis. This process and professional dialogue provides the headteacher with an overall view of the school. Induction of new staff to the school is very good. A mentor supports newly qualified teachers, newcomers to the staff and long-term supply teachers. Staff new to the school receive a well-structured staff handbook. Newly qualified teachers receive one designed specifically for them. The qualifications and number of teaching staff to meet the needs of the school are good. They are extremely well supported by a significant number of learning assistants. The number of support staff is above that normally expected in a school of this size, but the governing body's decision to employ this number is justified by the very positive impact they have on pupil learning. The school secretary carries out the day-to-day financial management of the school efficiently and provides very good support for the headteacher and staff. Administration procedures are well established and her approach to staff, pupils, parents and visitors is caring, courteous and effective. This contributes significantly to the smooth running of the school. She responsibly assumes control of computerised systems for maintaining accounts, financial transactions and school records. As a result, the procedures are

unobtrusive and support the day-to-day running of the school well. The site manager and his staff take great care to ensure that when pupils arrive at school in the morning, they enter a building which is warm, secure and clean. The site manager is not only concerned with the internal presentation, but takes a considerable interest in creating different features within the grounds that offer educational as well as recreational facilities.

63. The school has generous accommodation that is set in very attractive and spacious grounds. Most classrooms are light and airy, with good ventilation and are well equipped with sinks and suitable storage. A very good range of class displays reflecting pupils' work makes the interior of the school building bright and colourful. Nursery children have their own fenced outside area to develop their physical skills by climbing or riding bikes and tricycles, in addition to a well-resourced 'quiet' area used for group stories and individual support. Two large halls on different sites provide ample space for indoor games, gymnastics and whole school assemblies. This accommodation makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Outside, attractive features such as the extensive grassed areas and the recently planted wooded areas provide an environment that is both stimulating and interesting, providing a wide range of habitats for numerous animals and insects, successfully enriching the provision for science teaching. The extensive grounds give pupils freedom of space when they are outside at break times. The site manager makes a strong contribution to the life of the school by maintaining an excellent clean environment, and carrying out some external maintenance. Overall, the accommodation is a wonderful asset to pupils' learning.
64. At the time of the previous inspection resources were described as being generally good, both in range and appropriateness. This remains the case, although there have been some changes of provision. The major difference is the partial loss of the library brought about by the need to provide additional space to accommodate the growing numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Careful management has retained sufficient library shelving for the simple classification system, that was mentioned in the last report, to still be available for pupils to gain important skills in retrieving fiction and non-fiction books. The book stock has improved significantly since the last inspection, especially following the recent acquisition of two thousand pounds worth of new books. The school's collection of historical artefacts is extraordinarily good and adds significantly to pupils' understanding of the historical periods that they enhance. Resources available for visits around the school are used very effectively to support pupils' education. Pupils in Year 6 are particularly fortunate in attending a residential week at Crosby Hall, Liverpool.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The governors, headteacher and members of the management team should give attention to the following points to improve further the quality of education provided and to raise standards for all pupils:

- Improve standards in swimming by having a strategy in place to ensure that pupils who cannot swim 25 metres by the end of their swimming session in Year 5 have the opportunity to make good their shortfall after their National Curriculum tests in Year 6 (paragraph nos: 12, 133 and 135); and
- Raise standards in information and communication technology in Year 6 by completing the New Opportunities Funding (NOF) training and planning for and teaching monitoring and control skills (paragraph nos: 8, 12, 22, 23, 30, 51, 119, 121, 122 and 124).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	30	32	11	0	0	0
Percentage	8	38	41	14	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	317
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	182

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	124

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	30	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	27	26	27
	Total	40	39	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (69)	80 (76)	84 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	15
	Girls	28	29	28
	Total	41	44	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (80)	90 (86)	88 (88)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	22	18	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	20
	Girls	9	9	12
	Total	22	25	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (55)	63 (71)	80 (84)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	17	16
	Girls	9	11	11
	Total	24	28	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (61)	70 (58)	68 (45)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	269
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	300

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.4

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	4	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	865,081
Total expenditure	856,051
Expenditure per pupil	2,460
Balance brought forward from previous year	93,533
Balance carried forward to next year	102,563

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	356
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	20	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	78	22	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	76	24	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	69	20	7	2	2
The teaching is good.	83	17	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	72	20	4	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	91	6	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	15	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	81	13	0	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	80	19	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	87	9	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	20	0	4	7

Not all columns add up to 100 because some parents/carers return questionnaires with some questions that are left unanswered.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

66. Children who are aged three years enter the nursery in three termly groups, according to age, on a part-time basis. Transfer to full time in reception takes place the following September. Currently the reception children are taught in two classes, the older class having some Year 1 pupils in it also. Initial baseline assessment at the beginning of nursery shows the achievement of the majority of children to be well below that which is found nationally, particularly in the areas of language, literacy and communication, personal social skills and knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Provision in the nursery is consistently very good, sometimes excellent, except for physical development, which is good. In reception it is always at least good, often very good.
67. Children in the nursery make very good progress overall. In reception children make good, often very good progress. This is because they receive vibrant, exciting and relevant experiences from a wide-ranging and excellent curriculum, which enables them to progress at a fast rate. It is also because teaching is so good across the Foundation Stage. Teachers foster a very good transition from home to school and as a result children are happy and secure in their learning. Parents are welcomed into the school, and through good quality information are kept in close contact with their children's learning. They are invited into the school for many special occasions, such as the very moving, very good quality assembly taken by one of the reception classes during the inspection. Teachers and support staff are friendly and caring and, as a result, children grow in confidence and self-esteem and quickly adapt to the routines of school. Teachers and support staff manage behaviour and discipline very well and are very sensitive to children's needs. This means children know exactly what is expected of them and respond appropriately. Teachers' planning is thorough and exciting and carefully shared with support staff. Daily ongoing assessment is a strong feature. This means that children with special education needs and the one child in reception with English as an additional language have their personal needs well catered for and are able to fulfil their potential.
68. By the age of five years, despite having made very good progress throughout the Foundation Stage in all areas of their learning, many children have not achieved the early learning goals in language and mathematical development. Able children, however, are ready and able to participate in the demands of the National Curriculum in these areas. In the areas of personal and social skills, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative skills, the majority of children are just meeting national expectations. Physical development is a strength because, by the end of nursery, skills are still below expectations, despite very good progress, but by the end of reception, most pupils are achieving above average standards. There has been good improvement overall across the Foundation Stage since the time of the previous inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. Teaching in the area of personal and social skills is very good and, as a result, children soon develop very good attitudes to school and their learning. The majority have very immature skills on entry to school, which can still be seen with the youngest children in nursery. The benefits of this very good start they are given in the Foundation Stage, however, can be seen throughout the school. Teachers and support staff throughout

the Foundation Stage have a friendly and approachable manner, which encourages children to take part in activities. Towards the end of the nursery children are beginning to work independently and make proper choices of activity. They work well in groups and share their toys and equipment freely. They move off to their activities with great enthusiasm. They show curiosity in their work, for example when they study fruit and other items under magnifying glasses and when they try to predict whether items will sink and float. They are enthralled by some of the exciting, interesting activities that are planned for them, for example when they use a whole large fish to paint and print. They dress and undress fairly independently and manage their own personal hygiene well. Every child is willing and happy to contribute in discussion and concentration skills are developing well. By the end of reception, children are independent, enthusiastic learners. In a delightful assembly led by the children, they were confident and eager to show off their learning to their parents. They are successfully encouraged to express their feelings through sensitive use of finger puppets and song. In physical education they enjoy their activities and consequently behave well, co-operating appropriately and displaying good social skills in considering the needs of others. Individual children try hard to listen to instructions, generally persevering in their tasks.

Communication, language and literacy

70. Provision for communication, language and literacy is excellent. Teachers make every effort to plan, for example an impressive range of exciting role-play situations, which capture children's imagination and have a very good impact in the development of speaking skills, and very good progress is evident across the Foundation Stage. In the nursery, children are developing a love for books and stories. They are developing some pencil control and, with support, are beginning to form clear letters. They listen exceptionally well because activities are so interesting. The speaking skills of the majority of children are developing slowly. Speech is not clear. Many children, particularly the youngest, do not speak in full sentences and often supplement their speech by gesture. By the end of reception able children are writing simple sentences independently, using word banks from around the room. All children write clear, well-formed letters with support. Children with special educational needs are very well supported to complete their tasks purposefully. The majority of children listen attentively and speak clearly. Reading is developing well and children are eager to read to visitors. More able children have a good bank of familiar words and know single sounds well, although they are not fully utilising this skill as yet to help them tackle unfamiliar words. They talk about characters and events in their stories freely. Other children have a growing bank of words. Reading at home is well established.

Mathematical development

71. Provision for mathematical development is very good. Children in the nursery show a keen interest in counting and numbers and make very good progress during the year. This is because the well-structured play activities that the teacher presents engages their interest and involves them practically in their own learning. In the 'train game', they confidently try to count the number of windows on the train and the number of people getting on and off. Answers are often inaccurate, but they are always willing to have a go, and are helped to find the right answers. Their faces express their pleasure at participating in the game. More able children count accurately to seven or ten. By the end of reception many children can accurately count the number of claps and taps on a tambourine to 20. They enjoy counting on and back from a given number and understand the concept of 'more than/less than.' They enjoy adding numbers together and do so accurately.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. Provision for this area of learning is particularly good and as a result, children are curious about the world around them and make very good progress in their learning. Teachers use the school grounds and the locality outside the school very well as a tool for learning. Good examples are when nursery children study and collect leaves and take bark rubbings in the school forest. Also when they write their own letters and post them at the local post office, and when they buy vegetables at a local supermarket to make their vegetable soup. They investigate with familiar objects around the classroom and try to predict whether they will float or sink. By the end of the reception year investigative work is very well established. A good example is when children work purposefully with an assistant to experiment and find out which types of balls have the best bounce. They work carefully and record their findings suitably on a data sheet. Opportunities to predict, however, which might have enhanced learning, were not offered. When they study and plant their own seeds, they thoughtfully record in their own writing how the plants grow and change and when observing frogspawn in the classroom, they carefully sequence development into frogs. They become aware of their immediate environment when they go on a 'bear hunt' in the school forest.

Physical development

73. Provision for physical development is good in the nursery and very good in reception. The manipulation skills of nursery children are sometimes poor, for example when handling parts of a game or construction toys, despite the many very good opportunities that the teacher provides for them. They engage in regular, well-organised outdoor play activities to develop confidence, and mobility. When they travel along the 'road' on wheeled vehicles, they are beginning to show an awareness of space. Opportunities for children to engage in daily structured outdoor play, where the skills of mobility, control and balance can be developed on suitably prepared climbing and balancing apparatus, are more limited. By the end of reception children are beginning to develop their fine and gross motor skills well and very good progress is evident. They use space appropriately, demonstrating where they are in relation to others. In physical education they form groups quickly and where pairs were formed, a good level of co-operation is achieved. Skills in controlling, catching, throwing and balancing a ball on a bat are developing well, although girls are generally better at throwing accurately and at skipping.

Creative development

74. Provision for creative development is very good in the nursery and good in reception. Work is practical, bold and colourful with an exciting range of media to work with; consequently, children thoroughly enjoy their work and achievement is very good. Good quality colour mixing is a feature. In the nursery, children work effectively with the teacher, in pairs, and note the shape and textures of large seashells. They enjoy feeling the rough / smooth surfaces and try to find words to describe the shells, such as 'spiky'. They carefully try to create observational drawings of them and some are of a high standard. Other children study and describe the colours and texture of the skin of a large fish before using it to print and discuss the patterns that emerge. By the end of reception they begin to understand that collage pictures can be created using things other than brushes, when they cover different size balls with paint and bounce and roll them across a large sheet of paper. The resulting picture is colourful and vibrant and they are eager to show and discuss it with visitors. After carefully studying the patterns and textures on a Spanish fan, they create their own in the same style, showing a good sense of form and line. By the end of nursery children sing a wide range of songs and

rhymes tunefully. They listen intently to taped sounds of animal noises and try hard to identify them and enjoy experimenting with untuned instruments. By the end of reception children accurately name a wide range of untuned instruments and describe thoughtfully how they should be played. In a 'listening' game they listen attentively, with closed eyes, as they try to work out which instrument is being played and how it is being played, scrapping or tapping, for example.

ENGLISH

75. The evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards by the age of seven years are below the national average in both reading and writing. Whilst the majority of pupils attain within the expected average range, with a small percentage above this standard, there is a significant minority of pupils with lower ability or special educational needs whose attainment is below, and sometimes well below, the national average. By the age of eleven years standards overall are also below the expected average because of the now greater than average numbers of pupils both with special educational needs and statements. It is, however, pleasing to note that in the 2002 national tests, for pupils aged eleven, the school exceeded its target of 55 per cent for pupils to attain the expected Level 4+, and also more than tripled last year's number of pupils who gained the higher Level 5.
76. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is overall well below the expected national average. They make very good progress through the Foundation Stage where they catch up much lost ground. They make good progress in their learning in the infant years, as at the time of the previous inspection. They make very good progress in the junior years. This represents a great improvement over the judgement of satisfactory progress made following the last inspection. Their rate of progress means that by the age of eleven years they are overall only below the national average, with the majority in line with the average and a small percentage above.
77. The single pupil for whom English is an additional language is coping very well. The school has made very good provision for her to acquire early English language skills and has arranged for her to be assessed in the near future so that her further acquisition of English may be properly monitored. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for very effectively and they also make very good progress in accordance with their individual abilities. Pupils who are identified as being gifted and talented within the school context make very good progress.
78. On entry to the school the speaking and listening skills of the greater majority of pupils are below, and often well below, national averages. The school has recognised the need for children to have opportunities to practise speaking and listening skills and plan accordingly. A very good feature of lessons across the curriculum is that teachers accept any chance to help pupils to broaden their vocabulary or to speak in answer to questions or to offer their own comments. Single word answers are not accepted when a whole sentence is required. A range of well-planned speaking inputs, other than in the classroom, includes assemblies, circle time, drama and school council meetings. In class, teachers make good use of open-ended questions to give pupils the chance to answer at length. These strategies were seen, for example, as a Year 6 class considered the best means of describing characters in their extended stories, and as older pupils discussed alcohol abuse during circle time. The effectiveness of the school's strategies is reaped in Year 6 as average and above average pupils talk confidently during discussions and in conversations with visitors. By this time these pupils have developed the use of dictionaries and thesauri during their writing and the words investigated begin to be used in their speech. All pupils are given opportunities to

talk to adults in the school, especially during break and lunchtime periods when supervising non-teaching members of staff are frequently seen in conversation with a group of children. Pupils' listening skills develop quickly and to good effect; teachers rarely have to repeat instructions and this enables lessons to proceed smoothly with very few repeats because pupils have drifted off task. By the time they leave the school pupils have realised that the language of the playground is often inappropriate in other contexts and have learnt to modify their speech patterns according to their audience. However, overall standards in speaking and listening are below the national average overall at the end of Year 2 and also at the end of Year 6 because they are so very low when pupils enter the school in their early years.

79. Pupils' reading standards display a wide range of ability. Whilst pupils in Year 2 are overall slightly below the expected national standard, there are pupils who are above that level and, equally, those who are well below it. The majority of pupils are able to use strategies to help them to attempt to pronounce unfamiliar words. The ability to read accurately is generally better developed than the ability to read with expression; this is an aspect of reading that requires attention throughout the school. Whilst, when questioned, most pupils know the function of punctuation marks they do not always use this knowledge in reading to help them to pause or modulate their voice to add colour and meaning to the spoken words. However, there is in every year group a small number of readers whose reading skills are above, and sometimes well above, average. These pupils read with very good attention to expression and extract additional meaning by their interpretation of the text. Pupils learn to use reference skills from Year 1 onwards. By the end of Year 2 pupils can find information through the content and index pages of non-fiction books; the average and above pupils have sound knowledge of how to 'read' the cover of a book, with regard to title, author and illustrator, some also know publisher and blurb. By Year 6 higher attaining pupils are able to explain and demonstrate how to retrieve both fiction and non-fiction books from the library. Elsewhere, the retrieval of non-fiction books is not so secure, but individual pupils from Year 3 onwards use the initial letters of an author's surname to find a book in the school library. By Year 6 the higher attaining pupils are able to gather information from the glossaries and index pages of a range of books, producing bullet points to record it, and synthesise the knowledge gained into continuous prose. At this time these pupils skim and scan for information and, with help, are developing the ability to infer and deduce underlying meaning from the text. However, overall standards in reading by the end of Year 6 are below the national average.
80. A weakness in provision is the lack of a complete and adequate school library. The school did have a dedicated library but this was partially sacrificed in order to provide for the greater needs of the growing numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The school very properly retained sufficient shelving to enable pupils to have taught library sessions when they are able to practise necessary library and reference skills. Additionally, there is very good practice in arrangements made with the local public library whereby it is closed to allow pupils in Years 5 and 6 to access the facilities under the guidance of a trained librarian. All pupils are enrolled as members; many report that they attend with their parents. Equally good practice has recently enabled a group of older pupils to visit a book warehouse to choose fiction and reference books for the school. There is good practice throughout the school in providing pupils with reading materials other than books in order to illustrate that writing can be used for different purposes.
81. A feature of pupils' writing is that it is usually presented to a high standard. Pupils are taught to form their letters accurately and to a uniform size from an early age; by the time they leave the school most have acquired an easy-to-read cursive script. They

take pride in producing good quality second drafts, whether in their own handwriting or, for older pupils, through the use of a word processing program. By the end of Year 2 most pupils know that they need to use a capital letter and a full stop in sentences, however, too many fail to do so unless reminded. Average and above average pupils spell commonly used words accurately or use phonic justification sufficiently well to make the meaning clear. There is a significant number of pupils whose limited vocabulary and knowledge of the structure of standard English inhibits their writing. Better writing shows that pupils actively seek to use words and descriptive phrases to interest the reader. The use of punctuation in the better writing is that which is expected for pupils' age, with a few higher order writers beginning to use speech and question marks. The use of connectives remains at the basic stage with little use of noun phrases or adverbs to raise writing to the higher Level 3 standard. Standards in writing are below the national average at the end of Year 2 overall.

82. Very good progress in learning is a characteristic of the junior years. By the end of the current Year 6 there are pupils who are clearly capable of attaining the higher Level 5. These pupils display good vocabulary, have a good sense of audience for their writing and try very hard to engage and sustain the readers' interest with, for example, the use of adjectives and adverbs to give colour to events and characters. Paragraphs are used to denote the beginning, middle and end of pieces of writing, new dialogue is placed on a new line and tenses are used correctly to denote shifts in time. Better writing uses strategies to raise or lower the pace; short sentences to move events along, with longer, more complex sentences when descriptions of scenes or characters are required. In the writing of this quality, punctuation and spelling is generally accurate and features the regular use of dictionaries and thesauri to investigate alternative words and to check spellings. All these elements were present in an excellent Year 6 lesson when pupils used their above average knowledge of the 'Home Front' during the Second World War to draft out plans for an extended story. Because the national guidelines for literacy teaching are followed closely, pupils are able to receive a full range of writing modes as they move through the school. However, standards in writing are below the national average overall at the end of Year 6.
83. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes to lessons are very good, this represents an improvement since the last inspection when attitudes were described as being good. They settle very quickly and make themselves ready for work with a minimum loss of time. They listen carefully and politely to their teachers and to classroom assistants, maintaining very good relationships at all times. When opportunities arise they co-operate together in sharing materials and equipment, and collaborate to undertake joint tasks. Excellent examples of these strengths were witnessed as pairs of pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked amicably together whilst drafting work onto a computer. They willingly shared ideas, made decisions about content and forms of words and shared the inputting of the decided texts. Behaviour was very good in almost every lesson seen, because pupils are kept interested and busy.
84. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was overall very good; there were no unsatisfactory lessons. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was described as being good but with some unsatisfactory lessons. The majority of lessons in the infant classes were good; in the junior years one lesson was outstanding, most were very good and one was good. The analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning establishes that the quality of teaching is generally at least good over time. Planning produced for the lessons seen was thorough and presented both the above average and average pupils with suitable challenges to maintain their very good levels of learning. Occasionally, the work planned for the class is over-difficult for the lower attaining pupils. In most lessons, planning indicates the assessment objectives

for groups of pupils or the planned assessment opportunities to check that objectives are being met. Teachers work hard to improve the vocabulary of pupils of all ages and abilities. Good opportunities are planned for pupils to read aloud in class and to take part in discussions. There is very good practice in ensuring that lower attaining pupils are given equal chances to speak, a factor that is ensured through the active participation of the well-informed classroom assistants who support pupils in class. Pupils, who could be reluctant to speak, do so confidently in the knowledge that all contributions are valued. The marking of work in the majority of books presented for scrutiny was undertaken regularly and offered encouragement and praise for pupils of all abilities. The better marking also gave advice and examples on how current work may be improved to help pupils to make progress. This form of marking was not a regular feature in all classes and where it is missing is an area for improvement. Occasionally, inappropriate words are used to describe pupils' work and so convey the wrong impression about standards attained. For example, the use of 'excellent' or 'super' where marking should indicate that although improvements have been accomplished there remains room for further improvement. Group and individual targets are presented to pupils and these give them clear indications of what is expected of them within given timescales. As targets are achieved these are recorded so that pupils know the expectations that teachers have of their current and future work. This is good practice.

85. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and, as at the time of the previous inspection, still provides very good leadership and management for the subject. Procedures for the administration of statutory and optional tests are good. These are analysed with care and the results used to focus attention on areas of weakness. This has resulted in focused, whole-school attention on raising standards of writing across the curriculum, and on the provision of suitable reading materials to tempt boys to become avid readers. The co-ordinator monitors her colleagues' planning in order to ensure that the programmes of study are covered and pupils receive their entitlement. There is now a need to monitor with closer attention to whether individual pupils, especially the lower attaining pupils, are receiving tasks that provide correctly focused challenges that ensure that they make progress in accordance with their abilities.

MATHEMATICS

86. The standards achieved by most pupils reflect an improving picture since the last inspection. Considering the high proportion of pupils requiring additional special educational needs support, and the very high mobility factor, with many pupils failing to complete their primary education in one school, standards achieved are very good.
87. In the 2001 national tests, the results were well below the national average for pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Nevertheless, when compared with results achieved by pupils in similar schools, attainment is broadly in line. Levels of attainment are not as good as they were judged to be at the time of the previous inspection for pupils aged seven, when they were judged as average in comparison with schools nationally, but this is to be seen in the context of a high number of pupils with SEN now on the school roll. The upward trend in results achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 broadly reflects the national upward trend in test results. Many pupils start full time education with a limited understanding of mathematical language; many exhibit difficulties in counting and sequencing numbers beyond ten. From this low starting point, the majority of pupils, including pupils requiring special educational needs support, make very good progress and achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.

88. From this very low 'starting base', scrutiny of pupils' work and observations of teaching reflect standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 2 to be well below average, rising to below by the end of Year 6. This very good improvement is securely based, on the very good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, very good teaching overall, provision of booster classes targeting pupils needing additional support and much closer analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject in the school. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning against prior learning levels. All pupils are fully included in all aspects of mathematics with no specific differences in individuals' progress or response. Progress by the end of Year 2 is very good, and this is reflected in the quality of teaching. This level of progress is maintained as pupils move upward through the school, supported by well-focused teaching, with excellent progress being made by pupils in Year 6.
89. The National Numeracy Strategy provides a very good and secure framework for planning. The mental 'quick thinking' starter sessions introducing each numeracy lesson are generally well taught and proceed at a cracking pace, using a wide variety of resources. They include white boards, counting sticks and number bingo which keep most pupils very alert and interested and aid their quick calculations. Nevertheless, the sharing of strategies that pupils use to find their answers is not common in all lessons. In some lessons, opportunities are missed to enhance and consolidate learning for pupils of all abilities. In most classes, pupils are given well-planned opportunities to apply mathematics to every-day problems, for example a Years 1/2 class relating to a weekly wage and the subsequent purchase of shopping items with the money and then checking the change. Activities that include careful estimation, measurement and interpretation of results are part of pupils' weekly experience in investigational work, an area of development highlighted in the previous inspection.
90. Teaching in Year 1 and 2 is very good overall. In one lesson observed, pupils enjoyed using decimal coins, giving respective values as they purchased selected items from a worksheet. Pupils were very well supported by the additional adults, positively enhancing the sustained levels of concentration. Higher achieving Year 1 pupils confidently matched the coins needed to pay for an item valued at £2.43 on the computer. However, it was very obvious that understanding for the lower attaining pupils was well below age-related expectations as they found counting up to ten in sequence difficult. The very well managed reporting back session at the end of the lesson provided a very good opportunity to enhance and consolidate pupils' speaking and listening skills when they were asked to give answers. However, the use of displayed mathematical vocabulary that forms part of the numeracy corner' in each classroom is seldom used to consolidate learning. The majority of displays reflected a range of pupils' work, including the use of ICT. Many classrooms have well laid out practical equipment that encourages pupils to 'play' in a constructive manner involving estimating and weighing various articles and 'building' using a range of mathematical shapes.
91. Teaching in Year 3 to Year 6 is very good overall, with some excellent teaching observed in Year 6. In all lessons observed, teachers displayed very confident subject knowledge, enabling lessons to progress at a very brisk pace. The use of practical resources suitably enhanced very good learning. As a result of this very effective teaching, pupils worked hard for long periods, producing written work of a high quality. During a carefully structured lesson in Year 4, pupils confidently worked with a range of numbers, showing very good understanding of accurately adding together numbers containing thousands using a range of strategies, reflecting standards achieved broadly in line with the national average. Pupils confidently recognised that numbers can be split into thousands, hundreds, tens and units to aid addition. Work set by the teacher

was carefully matched to challenge the higher attaining pupils and to support lower attaining pupils, consolidating work already undertaken very well. In the excellent lesson observed, the sheer pace and enthusiasm by the pupils enabled learning at a very high level to take place. The lesson was enhanced by the excellent relationships and management of the pupils by the teacher. The use of additional adult support had a very positive effect on very rapid learning, as all adults had high expectations both of the way pupils responded and their ability to think in clear mathematical terms. Higher attaining pupils were given very good opportunities for developing their own systems for recording work.

92. The subject is well managed by the deputy headteacher, who has clearly identified the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Careful analysis of national test results and teachers' assessments has resulted in pupils receiving their own targets for improvement. The better use of assessment is having a direct effect on slowly raising standards. Nevertheless, the school is aware of the need to develop more rigorous systems in the monitoring of pupils' work. At present too much repetition in the form of worksheets slows learning for higher attaining pupils. There is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils in some lessons. However, there is very good capacity to improve standards to even higher levels, positively enhanced by the excellent shared commitment from all staff to do so.

SCIENCE

93. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are below the national average, whilst standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line. However, the progress that pupils make through Key Stage 1 is good and very good in Key Stage 2. Standards since the previous inspection have shown an upward trend from well below to in line at Key Stage 2 in the year 2000. Standards dipped in the National Curriculum tests in 2001, but this was due to the cohort which contained a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. Although, as yet not validated, the 2002 results indicate that the number of pupils attaining Level 4 is close to the national average and a significant number of pupils attained Level 5. These, as yet invalidated results, confirm inspection findings.
94. Pupils in Year 1 have an understanding of the requirements for a fair test. This was evident in their experiments to determine which objects made the biggest splash. They are able to make suitable predictions and to test accurately. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to explore their environment and accurately describe the objects they feel or see or the sounds they hear. Pupils at Key Stage 1 respond enthusiastically to suggestions made by their teachers and willingly put forward their own ideas on how scientific answers can be found to questions. They have a good understanding of seed growth and seed dispersal. They cut fruits and vegetables and can classify fruits with seeds that humans usually eat. They investigate sound and compare distance from sound and how distance can be increased if volume is raised. In their study of electricity they create circuits and are aware of the components required and the way they are set up in order for them to work. They know about moving and growing, and pushing and pulling, and how friction reduces the speed of a toy car, for example. They use the correct scientific names for their scientific studies.
95. Throughout Key Stage 2 the investigative process continues. In a Year 3 lesson pupils investigated the effect of exercise on the heart and how important it was to keep the heart healthy. They knew that blood flowed to and from the heart. As pupils move through the key stage, their investigations become more challenging. In the middle of the key stage, pupils investigate conditions which woodlice prefer and record their

findings accurately. By the end of the key stage, pupils become aware that scientists group animals according to their features and characteristics in order to make identification easier. By Year 6, pupils understand and have acquired considerable knowledge about body systems, electricity, magnetism, life processes and materials. Throughout the school considerable emphasis is given to the investigative process and the priorities of a 'fair test'. Scientific vocabulary is used well. Pupils are expected to use it both in their response to questions and in their written work. Work is matched well to individual needs and pupils make mostly very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included and supported well. All aspects of the curriculum are covered and the development of scientific skills is effective and progressive.

96. The quality of teaching and learning is always at least good. It is often very good. Teachers plan their lessons well with an emphasis on practical and investigative work, ensuring pupils have 'hands on' experience, for example, Year 1 pupils testing the boats they had made for buoyancy and load carrying capacity. The pupils were fascinated and the investigation prompted eager anticipation, enthusiastic questioning and 'awe and wonder'. Teachers pay particular attention to the correct use of scientific vocabulary. Very good relationships have been established with pupils who are very aware of their high expectations of work and behaviour. These good aspects of teaching have had a positive effect in raising standards in science within the school. Pupils respond well to probing questioning; their behaviour is very good because lessons are brisk and delivered with pupils' interests and abilities in mind. They are allowed independence in setting up their own investigations and show independence when collecting and returning equipment. Pupils throughout the school display very positive attitudes in their lessons and their behaviour is very good.
97. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The scheme of work provides good guidance for teachers. Assessment procedures are good and monitoring of teaching, learning and standards is taking place to good effect. Resources are good overall and day-to-day assessments and analysis of data from statutory tests are used effectively to inform future planning and teaching, and to raise standards further.

ART AND DESIGN

98. Standards of two-dimensional artwork in the school are above average. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore a range of media and techniques through the study of the works of famous painters. The techniques met during these studies are developed effectively as pupils move through the school. Three-dimensional work has not yet achieved the same standard, but the work seen was in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and also those identified as having above average talents in art, make good progress in their two-dimensional studies. This judgement accords with that made following the last inspection when standards were stated to exceed national expectations.
99. The quality of teaching of drawing skills is good. However, there is room for improvement in the teaching of the use and understanding of three-dimensional media. There is good practice in teaching basic drawing skills through direct observational studies, for example as Year 6 pupils attempted to emulate the intricacies of William Morris's floral designs by paying close attention to detail and pattern.
100. In each year group pupils study the different styles, range of colours and subject matter of a range of painters and pupils appreciate that art covers many moods and cultures and can be applied with implements other than a paintbrush. For example, in Year 1, pupils who studied David Hockney's 'Splash', mixed and matched his basic blue colour

before producing similar tones and shades. In order to achieve his flat areas of colour flecked with spray, they used a roller and flicked paint off a nail brush. In Year 3, where Georgia O'Keefe's 'Blue and green music' provided the inspiration, pupils learnt that overlapped tissue paper produced shades of colour that were not in the original range provided for investigation. Whilst attempting to reproduce the textures used by Klimt in his 'Farm Garden', pupils in Year 4 discovered that dragging a spatula through applied thick paint could be controlled to produce strong textures.

101. Studies made following the examination of the works of famous painters are a feature of the school; these are of high quality. However, there is too little evidence that pupils are given the opportunity to use the well-learned techniques creatively in their own individual work. Some examples of pupils' own good quality drawing skills appear in other subjects, for example in the small detailed drawings of the buildings in which pupils would like to live, carried out in geography. Pupils gain some knowledge of the art culture of other, non-western European countries, for example of the dot printed designs of the Australian aborigines. In Year 6 there are very interesting examples of Mondrian's linear paintings being turned into three-dimensional representations, each with a different combination of cube-based structures. In the same year, pupils have produced well-made coil built clay mugs, decorated with grotesque faces.
102. Pupils enjoy art and are pleased with the high standards to which their work is displayed, and see this as proof that their teachers appreciate their artwork. They are pleased with their own work and are eager to show the work of others and to say why they like it. They are able to explain how various colours were matched to the original paintings and how effects were obtained. They have good knowledge of the painters that they have studied and recognise their styles. Pupils in Year 6 who examined examples of the William Morris designs were in awe of his skill, especially when they discovered that he had lived over a hundred years ago and that his works are still popular today.
103. Teachers and classroom assistants enjoy art and design; they are rightly proud of the high standards that pupils attain. Subject knowledge for two-dimensional art is good, but further development of the use and understanding of three-dimensional media is required if standards are to match those of two-dimensional work.
104. The quality of leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The policy document recognises the place of three-dimensional work in the art and design curriculum and the co-ordinator has begun to gather resources to implement the policy fully. She has also recognised the need to study more broadly the art of other cultures, to which a good start has been made, and has plans to obtain suitable resources for this purpose. A start has been made on studies of artists other than painters in order to widen pupils' perception of art. Resources are good for two-dimensional studies and satisfactory for three-dimensional studies. The library holds a comprehensive collection of books that covers the works of the painters currently studied in art and design lessons. The co-ordinator is fully aware of the impact of seeing artists at work and has arranged for a local artist to work alongside pupils at the beginning of the autumn term.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain standards in line with those expected. Pupils' achievement is good overall and they make good progress in most areas of the subject. In discussions with pupils in Year 6, they confidently gave examples of evaluating their work and that of others in a very constructive manner, talking about the materials needed for camouflage in order that their Anderson air raid shelters would not be seen by enemy aircraft. Their enthusiastic approach and many inventive ideas provide very good opportunities for their personal and social development, which is suitably enhanced by worthwhile practical sessions.
106. Attainment for pupils by the end of Year 2 is in line with national expectations, building upon the very good practical work undertaken in the reception classes where very close links with spoken language and numeracy are firmly established. Progress through the key stage is always at least satisfactory and often good. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates a developing range of skills being encouraged as pupils design and evaluate products, such as they do in the manufacture of items. The present curriculum places the correct emphasis on each of these important areas, and pupils make good gains because there is a systematic approach to the teaching of new skills from year to year that correctly reflects new government guidelines. The subject is used well to inspire learning in other subjects, particularly in basic skills, for example ICT where a suitable graphics package enhanced a topic on building houses from a range of junk material. In Year 3, the approach to teaching design and technology is through topics such as musical instruments. Pupils investigate how a range of sounds are made by different musical instruments before they manufacture their own drums, rattles and shakers. Pupils experiment with a good number of joining techniques until they find the right one for the job. In Year 5, as part of their work on gears and cams, pupils are given good opportunities to make sliding levers, linked by a pivot, that move. Working very well in pairs, pupils thoroughly enjoyed assembling a range of levers to create a desired movement, later linking this to a 'pop-up' card. The lesson ended with a well-planned opportunity in which pupils described what they had made, and what improvements they would make in a future design. This element certainly consolidated new skills very effectively, enhanced by the teacher's very confident subject knowledge.
107. By the end of Year 6, attainment is in line with national expectations for most pupils. For example, in the lesson observed, pupils confidently designed slippers, labelling the various types of material to be used, following an experiment to test material suitability. Pupils were positively encouraged by the teacher to use their own initiative and solve problems regarding the joining of materials. Projects with history are used skilfully, for example the construction of an air raid shelter with interior layout of furniture and packet food to recreate life in the 1940s. Planned projects indicate the bringing together of science, history and literacy, in addition to aspects of cultural, social and personal education. For example in a food technology lesson in Year 5, pupils prepared a 'Greek salad' from a wide range of well prepared vegetables. The supervising adults placed correct emphasis on the need for high levels of cleanliness, and the need to eat healthy food as part of a balanced diet.
108. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Most lessons are well planned. For example, in Year 6, where an adequate supply of resources enhanced learning, the teacher used questioning very well, challenging pupils to make decisions about the quality and suitability of their designs. Because of effective intervention of the special needs support assistants pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress measured against their prior attainment. Teachers constantly

reinforce language skills well, using relevant vocabulary, and encouraging individual and group opinions. Pupils' responses to practical sessions are very good, most listening attentively to instructions and following them carefully, responding to health and safety requirements in a positive manner, for example when carrying a pair of scissors. Behaviour is very good, with most pupils sharing equipment in a very mature manner. Tidy up practices are very well established, with the minimum amount of time being lost.

109. The management of the subject is satisfactory, the present co-ordinator being in post for less than one year. Nevertheless, her energy, subject knowledge, enthusiasm and good awareness of the subject's present strengths and weaknesses reflect a commitment to improve quality and standards. In some classes pupils are not given opportunities to evaluate and improve their designs and models. The school is aware that this is an area for improvement. The school has also correctly identified the assessment of pupils' skills as an area of development, enabling planning to be securely based on pupils' previously acquired skills. The school has not yet introduced the element of control technology to enhance design skills and this is unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

110. The previous report identified overall attainment in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Inspection evidence shows that those standards have been maintained and that boys and girls, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, achieve well. They make at least good, and often very good, progress.
111. In Year 1, pupils compare the geographical features of the abstract Isle of Struay and Edinburgh. The lesson seen was well thought out and through effective questioning the pupils were able to describe the geographical features that Katie Morag would have passed on her journey between Struay and Edinburgh, when visiting her grandmother. These included various modes of transport, buildings, towns and villages and the comparison that could be made between Katie Morag's home and that of her grandmother's in Edinburgh. In Year 2, pupils continue to develop their skills of enquiry by comparing Grasmere School and their own. Pupils identified the direction they would have to travel and used their previously acquired mapping skills to identify features on a local map, such as hotels, parks, post offices, roads and railways. Pupils worked in pairs and used good vocabulary. They worked hard and persevered in their searching for features identified by the teacher. In Year 3, pupils are able to locate places on a world map and on a globe, and appreciate why some areas are heavily populated and some only sparsely. An interesting feature of the lesson was when a group of pupils with special educational needs sat on the carpet with a globe, unprompted and unsupervised, and began testing each other on locations. They did this enthusiastically and they clearly enjoyed the learning experience. By Year 6, most pupils understand the features of different climates across Europe and the impact of climate on a region or countries. They are able to locate capital cities and, as a part of their investigative programme they analyse evidence well and draw suitable conclusions from weather statistics. They confidently compare temperatures across Europe, which they discuss using appropriate geographical vocabulary.
112. The overall quality of teaching is at least good and on occasions very good. Pupils make good and often very good progress. The effective teaching promotes positive attitudes in pupils and a willingness to respond to questioning. Pupils collaborate well and often spontaneously as in the case of pupils with SEN in Year 3. They also work independently and apply themselves well. Pupils are briefed effectively about learning

objectives and given guidance about what they are expected to learn. Skilful questioning was evident in all lessons, which enabled pupils to grasp the main points of the lesson and establish their understanding. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic and careful preparation and often thorough planning ensures that the work is matched well to the ability of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The school makes very good use of support staff. They work well with pupils and have established very good relationships. They offer encouragement and significant support for these pupils, which impacts very positively on raising standards. Evidence from pupils' work and lesson observations confirm pupils' good use of geographical vocabulary and effective use of other curricular areas, such as mathematics.

113. The curriculum co-ordinator provides good leadership and valuable support to colleagues. Information and communication technology is being used in this area but is not always used as an effective tool to promote geography. Resources in geography are good. Monitoring of planning is good and some monitoring of teaching, learning and standards takes place, although this is an area that the school recognises needs to be developed further.

HISTORY

114. This subject has improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 now achieve well although standards are still in line with what is expected nationally. By the end of Key Stage 2, however, pupils now attain standards that are above average and achievement is very good, sometimes excellent. In a letter to the inspection team, staff at the feeder high school say that pupils at Bishop Martin have a real love of history. This view is fully justified. All pupils, by the end of Year 6, including those with special educational needs, have well-developed historical skills.
115. By the age of seven, pupils are quite clear that they can find out about the past from books, photographs, videos and other sources. They come to understand that life in the past was different when they make comparisons of everyday objects, such as hot water bottles and cooking implements and when they engage in purposeful role play to enact a Victorian washday. They thoughtfully compare their own clothes and homes with those of Victorian children and record some of the main differences they have observed. They show in discussion that they understand that the lives of Princess Victoria and Orphan Annie both had their difficulties. They begin to develop a sense of chronology when they create time lines of their own lives and later of their own families. They have a sound knowledge of people and events they have studied, such as Guy Fawkes and the reasons for the gunpowder plot, the rescue by Grace Darling and also when they record in their own writing what Florence Nightingale had to do and the main changes she made.
116. The knowledge and understanding of history that pupils' display by the age of eleven is impressive. It exceeds national expectations. These pupils have a real love of history and the provision of deep and reflective spiritual experiences makes learning in this subject special. This is developed throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, are enthralled by their study of the Aztec period and the Ancient Greeks. Their imaginations are captured by their teachers' dramatic representations and they cannot wait to get into their reference books to find out even more information. In a Year 6 lesson the teacher cleverly engaged pupils' emotions as she led their thinking from the joy and celebrations of VE Day to the tragedy and horror of the bomb on Hiroshima and then capitalised on this by deep thought and reflection. At this time, pupils were so moved they worked in absolute silence and needed time to bring themselves to a moment where they were ready to discuss the issues raised. The teacher showed

sensitivity to this when she asked, “Who is now brave enough to express their feelings?”

117. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. It is sometimes excellent towards the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers work hard to bring history to life by hands on experiences and discussion, with very good quality artefacts and other sources, which help to create empathy for the period. Pupils are inspired by this subject and say this is because teachers explain things so very carefully and give lots of opportunity to study primary and other evidence, which they enjoy. Opportunities to engage in personal research are frequent, as plenty of relevant interesting books are available for pupils to use. Behaviour in lessons is very good, as a result, and pupils are very well motivated and interested in their tasks. Occasionally, the quality of written work is disappointing, when pupils engage in worksheet exercises which demand one word answers or colouring in, rather than having the opportunity to express their own views and ideas in their writing. However, this does not detract from the overall achievement of teachers in bringing to pupils an exciting and relevant experience and very good insight into life in the past.
118. The enthusiasm and excellent subject knowledge of the co-ordinator is a significant factor in the success of history teaching at this school. She has a very good overview of history throughout the school and monitors all aspects except teaching, which is planned for the autumn term. She further enriches pupils’ experiences by regularly bringing history drama groups into the school, where pupils are involved in workshop activities. Recently, younger pupils tried out old toys. She works with teachers to provide interesting and relevant visits to historical sites within the community. Recently, for example, pupils in Year 3 visited an old Roman site and made some clay pots and role-played as Roman soldiers. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 had fun when they dressed and engaged in role-play at a Tudor house.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Standards in ICT have declined since the previous inspection, and they are now below those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 6. The school has tried to keep pace with recent developments; however the prolonged absence of the subject’s well-qualified co-ordinator and only partial completion of a government training scheme for teachers has constrained teachers’ knowledge relating to the development of pupils’ skills in the monitoring and control element of the curriculum. Nevertheless, attainment for pupils at the end of Year 2 is broadly average. There are no differences in achievement caused by gender or by prior attainment, and all pupils make good progress in their learning. Many pupils do not have regular access to a computer at home. At the time of the previous inspection, standards attained were broadly in line with the national average. However, expectations have changed since then, and demands on pupils are now greater.
120. Scrutiny of pupils’ work indicates that by the end of Year 2 pupils control a mouse to move the cursor round the screen, click to enter different parts of programs and all pupils are gaining confidence in using the keyboard. At the end of lessons, pupils save their work and exit programs efficiently, closing down the computer correctly. Displays of pupils’ work indicate the use of painting and drawing packages for work in art and design. Although teachers directly teach skills and identify programs to practise these skills, most work within classes involves pupils using their developing ICT skills across the curriculum. Higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged, and their achievement in school is also good.

121. By the end of Year 5, pupils understand that they can control some devices and write instructions for controlling a programmable toy. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the challenge, and work on ICT tasks with enjoyment and perseverance. In Year 6, pupils create stories, matching text size and font to their needs. Using CD-Roms, pupils confidently scan information relating to World War Two, geography map work topics and research into questions related to functions of main body parts. Pupils use spreadsheets to collect data for use in numeracy lessons, confidently extracting and comparing information. As they move through the school, pupils build up good skills in using a wide range of communication equipment, for example an overhead projector in lessons and for assemblies, digital cameras and a programmable robot. The school has a good range of software to support learning in most areas, and pupils are learning well how to use this when doing research and editing information for subjects such as history, geography and science. However, by Year 6 pupils' skills in aspects of monitoring and control are below those expected nationally.
122. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The few lessons observed were soundly planned and organised, and the purpose of the lesson was clearly shared with pupils. In very good lessons, however, good questioning techniques contribute to pupils' good progress and achievement over time from a relatively low base on entry into the school. The co-ordinator, before her prolonged illness, had worked hard and enthusiastically to promote staff confidence and increase their knowledge of ICT and its applications. All teachers are committed to improving provision for the subject. However, due to delayed staff training events, a few teaching staff lack the confidence and knowledge to teach the monitoring and control elements of the subject. At present this is unacceptable, and leads to pupils having less opportunity to develop their skills in this important area of the subject.
123. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and the priorities highlighted in the subject's action plan are appropriate to raise standards. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is good, with each class having its own portfolio of pupils' computer work, thus ensuring that pupils' progress is tracked well. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator does not at present have the opportunity to monitor standards and provision for all, an area the school is keen to develop.
124. The school is aware of the need to improve the provision in ICT, and it is one of the main priorities in the school improvement plan. Once training has been completed via the New Opportunities funded scheme, the school is very well placed to accelerate standards by the end of Year 6 to nationally accepted levels.

MUSIC

125. By the end of Year 2, pupils' achievement in music is good and attainment is in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards in music that are above expectations, particularly in singing, which is very good. Achievement is very good overall. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection when pupils made satisfactory progress in both key stages. Bishop Martin is a musical school, where singing in particular permeates the life and work of the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in all musical activities, both in school and out into the community. Instrumental tuition is offered for recorder and guitar. Visiting musicians make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Recently, a Didgeridoo and bagpipe player and traditional Asian musicians shared their expertise with pupils in both key stages, with a workshop emphasis. This makes a significant contribution to raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. String and

brass musicians gave presentations, also to both key stages. The creative arts club has a musical emphasis and enhances standards in this subject.

126. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1, after taking a 'listening walk' around the school, record appropriately in their own words the sounds that they hear. They later investigate to see if different sounds were to be heard in the afternoon and record their findings in simple terms. After listening to a visiting musician, they record in drawing and writing how and why they enjoyed the unusual sounds that he made. They choose their own instruments to create a sound picture, through simple repeating patterns, of a train journey, demonstrating a good sense of rhythm and dynamics.
127. By Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the musical elements. They recognise how sounds can be changed from fast to slow, from high to low and from soft to loud, and use these skills when they work together to create simple rhythmic patterns. They accurately name a wide range of instruments, including some multicultural instruments and know which should be tapped, shaken or struck. Some pupils find it hard to explain this but do so by gesture. The majority know how to create a 'silence'. They listen very carefully to instructions so they are very clear as to what they have to do. They also listen attentively to each other's performance and enjoy demonstrating their own skills. Singing is tuneful and pupils compose their own songs, for example to celebrate the Jubilee.
128. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' skills are developing well. They close their eyes and lower their heads as they listen very carefully to haunting South American music, and thoughtfully discuss how to create their own music in the same style. They reflect sensitively on feelings the music first engendered and express their ideas well as they begin to review these ideas. Their comments are relevant and their imagery is appropriate, such as 'night time in Africa', 'a chase through the rainforest', and 'a tiger chasing and catching prey'. They decide to include many of these ideas in their own compositions and to illustrate this by using repeating drums, a fast tempo and changes of dynamics. As they create their own interesting sound pictures, working very well in groups, they experiment to add more sounds together to change the texture of their compositions.
129. Pupils in Year 6 are very enthusiastic and knowledgeable when they talk about their study of the music of the 1930s and 1940s. They describe how they like to think about their feelings and emotions before they compose. After listening to the music of Beethoven, for example, they created a dance drama about the Blitz and tried to show the horror and fear of the people involved. After listening to 'Jitterbug' music, they had fun by trying the dances themselves. Recently, they composed fast and slow body actions with instruments to accompany their Haiku poems. They say they always perform their compositions for the rest of the class, who suggest ways that they may improve their work, for example by adding more or different instruments.
130. Teaching and learning is at least good and often very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to concentrate properly on good skill development and accurate terminology. Pupils say they really enjoy their lessons because they are fun and because they are all engaged in interesting musical activity. Because teaching is so good, pupils are eager and willing to perform and sing in front of visitors and their families. A good example is when rehearsing for the school production of 'Twelfth Night', and although many pupils in the choir were absent, singing was of a very high quality and individual talents were celebrated. Pupils say their singing is good because they are taught properly how to control their breathing and their posture and this helps them.

131. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is fairly new and is not a music specialist. She makes up for this by her hard work and enthusiasm and she has a good overview of how music is progressing throughout the school. She is currently reviewing the scheme of work because she was aware that there was not a strong enough focus on composition. She has now introduced other schemes to supplement this and some inset and demonstration lessons are planned. After carrying out an audit of resources it became evident that, although a good range was available, there was not sufficient of each instrument for all pupils to be involved in music making at the same time and insufficient multicultural resources were available. A very big order was recently submitted to rectify this.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. By the end of Year 2 standards attained in gymnastics, dance and games are in line with national expectations. A significant minority of pupils in Year 2 exceed the national expectation in games skills due to their involvement in clubs outside of school and because of the very good subject knowledge imparted by their very talented teachers. In a Year 1 lesson observed pupils made excellent progress in dribbling and controlling a football because the teacher was able to give excellent advice about which part of the foot to use and how to use that part of the foot to control and pass the ball. Consequently the standards attained in travelling with and the skill of passing the ball in that particular lesson exceeded the standard usually found with a group of seven-year-olds.
133. By the end of Year 6 standards are in line with national expectations in gymnastics, dance and games skills but well below in swimming. The school plans to provide additional swimming lessons for Year 6 pupils who fall short of swimming 25 metres by the end of their allocated period for swimming (currently in Year 5). Because of the pressure to improve literacy and numeracy standards the current Year 6 have not gone swimming since the end of Year 5 and so those pupils who did not reach the required national standard by the end of Year 5 have not had the chance to catch up during Year 6. The school plans to implement an intensive swimming programme for pupils in Year 6 who cannot swim 25 metres after their National Curriculum tests and so give them the opportunity to catch up and develop a crucially important life skill. The school has the funding to enable this plan to be actioned. Skills in outward bound activities are in line with national expectations by Year 6, pupils benefiting from an exciting residential experience. Standards of achievement have improved in dance since the last inspection because teachers have become more confident in their teaching of this aspect of physical education.
134. By Year 2 pupils perform a good range of jumps in gymnastics and have good control on landing. They walk along a beam with good balance and climb ropes skilfully. They are becoming more independent and the majority are beginning to use their own initiative to perform a series of movements in unison. They have well-developed games skills. They can hit a tennis ball using forehand and backhand strokes and pass a football accurately whilst travelling. Some Year 2 pupils dribble a football skilfully with control which exceeds the national expectation. By Year 6 gymnastic skills are very well developed and pupils attain levels of creativity and accuracy in body movements that are in line with national expectations. Athletics skills, for example sprinting with very good technique, often exceed national expectations as do games skills because of the excellent advice pupils receive from their teachers. The use of professional football coaches who come into the school also makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' development of games skills.

135. Pupils make very good gains in their development of skills in gymnastics, games and athletics because of the demanding teaching they receive based on very good subject knowledge. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection when progress in these skills was judged to be satisfactory. Not enough pupils make satisfactory progress in swimming in the juniors at present and the school has recognised the need to address this problem. Progress in dance is good because the confidence of teachers has been raised since the last inspection as have their skills to teach dance. As pupils move through the school they gain in confidence and become increasingly mature and so are better able to evaluate and improve their own performance. They take the constructive criticism of other pupils and their teachers on board and by so doing improve their skills even further. All pupils are valued and praised and the successes of all, no matter how small, are celebrated in this totally inclusive school. Pupils with behavioural difficulties associated with their special educational needs and also those with dyspraxia (a condition which often results in pupils being somewhat clumsy) make very good progress because of the high quality support they receive from their attached special needs support assistants and class teachers who work very effectively in partnership to ensure that these pupils are fully included in all activities. Pupils with complex behavioural difficulties often excel in their physical education lessons and this makes a very significant contribution to improving their confidence and sense of self-worth.
136. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and have much fun in learning new skills which they put into practice in new and challenging situations. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed their warm up session when they participated in a stretching and bending routine whilst pretending to be broad beans, runner beans and jelly beans. This activity brought gorgeous smiles on the faces of the pupils whilst making a very valuable contribution to their improved fitness. Pupils begin to develop morally as they learn the importance of fair play in team games and why they should not cheat. As each class includes pupils with physical difficulties and challenging behaviour in their physical education activities pupils grow spiritually.
137. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It ranges from good to excellent. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection when some teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. Because of the very good teaching based on an outstandingly good subject knowledge coupled with very good behaviour management and delivered at a cracking pace the quality of learning is also very good. The high quality teaching very skilfully builds the confidence of all pupils by creating an atmosphere in which the skills and aptitudes of all pupils are valued. The confidence of those pupils with learning difficulties who have a marked aptitude in physical education is developed successfully by allowing them to demonstrate their skills to the whole class. Very good interventions by teachers and learning support assistants to challenge pupils and also to offer practical tips enable pupils to improve their skills and technique in gymnastics and games activities. Teaching ensures that pupils understand the importance of warming up before an activity and of cooling down afterwards. There is an excellent emphasis on the importance of having a healthy body and demanding teaching results in all pupils getting their heart to pump harder through physical exertion. All pupils break into a sweat in their lessons! In a Year 2 lesson pupils showed a greater confidence in holding a bat correctly and hitting a ball to a partner by the end of the lesson because of the very good teaching. Teaching makes a very valuable contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and also to their personal development. Younger pupils are encouraged to count out the balls being used and to count them back in again at the end of the lesson. Older pupils are encouraged to estimate distances and to take responsibility for setting out games equipment at the

start of the lesson and for putting it away at the end of the lesson. There is always a strategy to include non-participants in lessons (those who cannot participate because of illness or injury) and this is very good practice.

138. The co-ordination of the subject is very good. The extra-curricular sports clubs enable talented pupils to excel but these clubs are fully inclusive and all pupils have an opportunity to access them and so improve their personal performance. The scheme of work has been improved since the last inspection and as a consequence the position of dance is much stronger than it was at that time. Assessment procedures are developing well. All pupils are given opportunities to participate in gymnastic, athletic and games events outside of school. The school does exceptionally well in inter-school football and cross-country events and pupils are rightly proud of their achievements. Four boys play in the Skelmersdale schools football team and a few have had trials for Liverpool. Excellent resources for games have been accrued through the use of the 'Top Sport' bags and these resources have enhanced the quality of provision for physical education. Support from an enthusiastic co-ordinator has encouraged teachers to improve their quality of teaching which in turn has led to improved learning for all pupils and higher standards of achievement than was the case at the time of the last inspection. However, the co-ordinator has not had enough non-contact time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the past year and she has not been able to deliver any demonstration lessons. This is largely due to the fact that the emphasis has been on monitoring the provision for literacy and numeracy.