

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MEADOW HEAD INFANT SCHOOL**

Blackburn

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119122

Headteacher: Mrs G. Purchase

Reporting inspector: Mr R. Gill  
4074

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2002

Inspection number: 198868

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 & Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shorrock Lane Blackburn Lancashire
Postcode:	BB2 4TT
Telephone number:	01254 202600
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D. Narayan
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4074	Mr. R. Gill	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage, science, art and design and music.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
8988	Mrs. J. Cross	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
1882	Mrs. L. Chapman	Team inspector	Equal opportunities, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), and physical education.	How good are the curricular opportunities?
19041	Mr. R. Linstead	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language and design and technology.	
22644	Mrs. B. Hill	Team inspector	Special educational needs, geography, history and religious education.	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>29</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Meadow Head Infant School is situated close to the centre of Blackburn in Lancashire. The majority of the school's 280 pupils live locally. A very few travel by bus to school from the centre of Blackburn. The school is bigger than an average sized infant school. About 30 per cent of pupils receive free school meals, which is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average and an average proportion has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Most pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. About two per cent of pupils have an ethnic minority heritage. A very small proportion of pupils is learning English as an additional language and even fewer are at an early stage. Most pupils attend the school nursery before joining the reception classes. The school is part of an Educational Action Zone that was established to provide facilities and resources to assist in the raising of educational standards. The school will not be receiving funds from this project until September 2002. Children's attainment when they start school is below average.

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

Meadow Head Infant School gives a good standard of education that includes a high regard for children's personal development. Standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 2 are often in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the good teaching they receive. This represents good achievement because most pupils started school with attainment that was below expected levels. The school is well led by the headteacher, governing body and the staff who have a strong commitment to raising standards and maintaining a good all round level of education. The school is managed well. Despite the relatively high cost of educating pupils at Meadow Head, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), by the end of Year 2, are higher than expected nationally due to the very good use made of the excellent resources.
- The quality of teaching is good and has improved substantially since the time of the last inspection.
- The school is well led with a very good commitment to raising standards.
- Parents are given very good opportunities to be involved in their children's learning.
- The well-organised provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make good progress.
- The very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a strong effect on pupils' personal development.

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

- The clarity of the school's development planning process as it relates to improving standards.
- The way that pupils are involved in evaluating their own learning and working towards targets for improvement.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

When the school was inspected in December 1997 it was described, primarily, as being very successful at promoting a caring ethos where children are valued. This is still the case and good improvements have taken place in other aspects of the school's provision. Since 1997 the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been successfully introduced and provision for ICT has been improved radically. The nursery and reception classes have been formed into a cohesive Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching has been improved to include a much higher proportion of good, very good and excellent lessons. There have been good improvements since the last inspection in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the progress made by pupils with special educational needs, the assessment of pupils' learning and the general concern for pupils' welfare. The school has

tackled successfully the key issues contained in its previous inspection report. For example, pupils now practise their writing well in subjects other than English and the monitoring of attendance is now good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	C	C	D	B
Writing	C	D	D	C
Mathematics	C	C	D	C

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

Pupils attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are often in line with the national average. Standards in science follow a similar pattern. The 2001 results fell below the national average, but were still reasonable when compared to the standard achieved by pupils in similar schools. Moreover, many pupils achieved well in 2001 because the proportion of pupils who found learning difficult was unusually high for the school. Writing was the weaker aspect of learning in 2000 and 2001, but pupils' achievement is higher this year. The school's efforts to raise standards in writing are finally paying off. Current attainment meets the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2.

By the end of the reception year, children do not reach the expected level in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They do, however, reach expected levels in creative development, physical development and personal, social and emotional development because they are not hampered so much by the lack of fluency in their speech. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve average standards in all other subjects except in ICT and physical education where they go beyond what is expected for their age.

Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language achieve well owing to the good quality support they receive from teachers and their assistants. Those pupils who are capable of higher attainment achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' learning is generally good; they achieve well considering the below average level of skills with which they enter the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They enjoy school, involve themselves fully in their work, and are keen to please their teachers and the support staff by doing their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and in their free time. This enables them to concentrate fully on their work and play without oppression or harassment. There have been no exclusions from the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very positive throughout the school. Pupils' personal development is good. They show consideration for others and are careful not to hurt their feelings. They willingly and sensibly help the staff with a range of tasks.

Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance continues to be in line with the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence has fallen and is now below average. Pupils are generally punctual.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Good	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 is good. Successful teaching, throughout the school, has a positive effect on pupils' learning as demonstrated by their good achievements in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and they concentrate hard on their lessons. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented well by staff and are taught well as are both English and mathematics. Teaching for children in the nursery and reception classes is good overall, but better, on balance, in many reception lessons in which effervescent teaching produces very positive effects in children's learning. The school succeeds well in meeting the needs of most pupils including those with special educational needs and pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Higher attaining pupils sometimes lack suitable targets to reach very high standards. On occasions, average and higher attaining pupils lack sufficient opportunities to talk about what they have learned. This is a relative weakness of learning in lessons.

Teaching is good in all subjects or areas of learning except in music and art and design where it is satisfactory. In ICT teaching is very good as a result of the powerful way in which staff use their expertise well and employ the up-to-date resources in the form of electronic whiteboards.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils enjoy a wide ranging curriculum that is well supplemented by special weeks in which deeper study of one subject can be undertaken.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers, teaching assistants and specialist teachers all work well together.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are well provided for in the classroom, but the evaluation of their progress could be better.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Personal development plays an important part in giving pupils the confidence to achieve well. This is a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. The school takes good care of its pupils. Welfare, health and safety are seen as very important. There are good procedures to encourage regular and punctual attendance and good behaviour. Pupils' work is assessed thoroughly and the information generated is used well to plan new lessons. Pupils' results are monitored reasonably well, but analysis is often not thorough enough for average and above pupils who are capable of higher attainment.



How well the school works with parents.	Very well. The school's partnership with parents is very effective. It provides very good information for them, particularly about what and how their children learn. Parents have a very high regard for the school and get involved well in their children's learning.
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## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher leads very well and is well supported by an energetic team of senior teachers. The school is well managed. Co-ordinators have a good grasp of their subject, but have not evaluated teaching enough to have first-hand experience of the way that pupils learn.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. The governors are active, supportive and very well led by a highly involved chair of governors. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but lack a crystal-clear appreciation of how any plans for action are to be fulfilled in detail.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. This is undertaken well, but it is not available in one commonly held and understood document.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Teaching assistants are deployed well. Particularly good use is made of computerised equipment.

The school employs a good number of teachers and assistants. Resources for teaching and learning are generally good and very good in the case of ICT. Governors are not only concerned about financial implications. They acknowledge and actively pursue their role in maintaining and raising standards. The principles of best value are applied well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The good teaching</li> <li>• The high expectations that teachers have of their children</li> <li>• The approachability of the staff</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• Information about what and how their children are taught</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons</li> </ul>

Inspection findings broadly agree with parents' views about the school. The provision for activities outside lessons is satisfactory. There are no extra-curricular activities. There are, however, some interesting activities on offer. For example, when the school mounts special weeks devoted to one subject of the curriculum, the days are full of interesting and special activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science, at the end of Year 2, is generally in line with national averages. This level of attainment has been successfully maintained since the time of the last inspection. The results in 2001 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics, but this was a year in which the proportion of pupils who had difficulty in learning was higher than usual and there were also several pupils with severe emotional difficulties that prevented them from learning effectively. Despite these low results, pupils' achievements compared well in reading to those achieved in similar schools and satisfactorily in writing and mathematics. Since 1997, writing has been the weaker aspect of learning. The school has worked very hard to remedy this and results this year show that this has paid off. The school has a history of satisfactory achievement in mathematics. This is due to the fact that the national strategy for teaching numeracy was used to build on some existing good practice, which was recognised in the last inspection report.
2. Children's attainment on entry to school is generally below what would normally be expected for their age. It is often well below in the respect of children's ability to talk about their experiences. Consequently, children are not on course to reach the expected levels, in those areas of learning that depend heavily on the ability to talk in order to gain a proper understanding, by the end of the reception year. Despite good teaching, children can only make satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, because they are held back by the lack of verbal dexterity. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 2 pupils have made good progress overall to reach satisfactory standards. The general pattern is that pupils take until the end of Year 1 to fully catch up and begin to gain a better understanding through an increased confidence to talk about what they are doing and learning. Then in Year 2 the teaching has the challenge to consolidate learning and advance it to satisfactory or higher levels. This is done successfully in most cases although achievement could be higher still for average and higher attaining pupils.
3. Currently, most pupils are reaching the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. A reasonable proportion is also attaining the higher level. This represents good achievement. Nevertheless, higher attainers are not always provided with sufficiently demanding work and they are not involved enough in talking about their own learning.
4. Beyond English, mathematics and science, pupils' attainment is typical for their age in all subjects except ICT and physical education by the end of Year 2 where attainment is higher than found elsewhere. In ICT it is higher due to the very favourable level of resources and a well-trained teaching force. In physical education standards are higher because lessons are planned well to challenge pupils at all levels of physical ability and they require pupils to work very energetically in order to complete the tasks.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection when progress was satisfactory. As a result of the support they receive a significant minority is able to attain the standard expected by the end of Year 2. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties also make good progress because their teachers have been so well trained in managing their difficulties.

6. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language are achieving well despite their achievements not being well monitored and evaluated within the school's system of assessment. Gifted pupils or those capable of higher attainment make satisfactory progress, but work is sometimes not well matched to their needs to enable them to do better in English, mathematics and science. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Talented pupils do well in singing, which is a strength of the school, particularly when pupils sing in assemblies. They also gain a great deal from working with high quality computerised equipment.

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

7. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development continue to contribute strongly to their learning and to the quality of school life. Moreover, pupils with special educational needs are supported and valued, so that they grow in confidence and self-esteem. They are able to contribute significantly to the school community.
8. Throughout the school pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning. In the nursery and reception classes children are keen to please their teachers and the support staff and show a very high level of interest in their work. In a lesson promoting mathematical development, for example, children in the nursery tried very hard to think what might be hidden inside a small cylindrical box given that the object was circular. They each waited patiently for their turn to hold the box and resisted temptation to cheat by peeping inside. Although it took some considerable time for everyone to have a go they did not lose interest and listened carefully to their classmates' suggestions. Pupils enjoy their learning as seen when children in a reception class were singing along with their teacher to taped musical accompaniment. Their faces beamed with delight as they added their own verses, actions and instruments.
9. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also involve themselves fully in their learning and are keen to do their best. In a Year 2 art lesson, for example, pupils were undertaking two- and three-dimensional work on birds following their recent educational visit to a local bird sanctuary. The classroom was a hub of activity as pupils looked closely at feathers through magnifiers and referred to digital photographs and bird charts to help their detailed observational work.
10. Inspection findings agree with parents' perceptions that behaviour is good and bullying is not prevalent, the rare incidents that occur receiving a swift response from the school. Pupils concentrate on their work in lessons without disruption from unsatisfactory behaviour. Occasionally, however, they are distracted when the teacher does not manage behaviour well enough. They play without oppression or harassment in their free time. Many engage in ball games with great enthusiasm in the playgrounds. Others enjoy skipping and playing with hoops. These activities successfully channel their energies. Pupils from a range of heritages are fully integrated into friendship groups and games. No bullying or racism was witnessed during the inspection. At lunchtime pupils are well behaved when the midday staff are in charge both indoors and in the playgrounds. No one was excluded from the school last year.
11. Relationships throughout the school are very good and this builds pupils' confidence and trust. They show care and consideration for others and are very sensitive to their feelings, helped by lessons and assemblies that encourage them to be good citizens. Pupils of all ages enjoy helping the staff who suitably increase opportunities for them

to take responsibility as they get older. Year 2, for example, willingly share a range of minor duties each week, such as helping to sweep the hall floor at lunchtime once everyone has dined. They undertake these jobs sensibly and maturely. Pupils look after the school's property well and are good at tidying up in lessons. They are eager to chat to visitors about their school and their work and are polite and well mannered.

12. Attendance is satisfactory as it is broadly in line with the national average. Over the last four years the school has managed to reduce its higher than average rate of unauthorised absence to a level below the norm. It has achieved this by keeping a closer check on the registers of attendance and by following up all absences that are unexplained. Pupils generally arrive at school punctually, but there are a small number of families that are persistently late. The school does all it can to bring home the importance of everyone being on time so that learning does not suffer.

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

13. Teaching has improved well since the last inspection. Teaching is now good, on balance, throughout the school. The proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching has risen considerably. At the time of the last inspection most lessons were taught in a satisfactory way and only a small proportion were deemed as very good. Now one in three lessons is very good with a very small proportion being excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in 1997 and this is still the case. This strong profile has been brought about by the successful introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, the very good introduction of electronic white boards into the classrooms in Year 1 and Year 2 and the helpful monitoring of teaching that has given teachers useful pointers for improvement. The successful induction of staff new to the school has also contributed well.
14. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. The good, and sometimes very good, teaching they receive caters successfully for their often slow pace of learning and ensures that they make good progress despite their sometimes quite severe difficulties. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language also make good progress as a result of the good teaching they receive. This confirms the parents' view expressed before the inspection. They considered teaching to be good.
15. The good quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is due to the very successful planning of lessons, the thorough teaching of basic skills and the strong teamwork that exists between teachers and their assistants. Teachers' planning is carefully based on the early learning goals for children of this age. Relationships are very good and the teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children. This has a very positive effect on children's personal, social and emotional development. They become confident and self-disciplined and able to join in very well with adults and other children by the time they reach the end of the reception year. As a result of the successful teaching, children have very good attitudes to their work. Play is correctly considered to be a central feature of learning and children thrive on the opportunities to use the outside spaces for learning, for example, and to act out stories using the books and associated artefacts from the 'story sacks'. Teaching is most successful in some reception class lessons in which children experience very tightly organised, inspirational and fun-packed learning that really boosts their confidence and self-esteem. For example, in a physical education lesson in a reception class, children's levels of confidence, agility and ability to express themselves through physical movement were raised to well above those usually expected for their age. This resulted from superb teaching, which possessed the highest expectations that were realised in a very practical way.

16. The strength of the teaching in the nursery class is the wealth of activities and resources provided for children to explore, talk about and learn from. These are designed to stimulate children's powers of speech and verbal dexterity, which is an area of weakness for many. This is important because teaching rightly understands that these skills provide the foundation for successful reading and writing. Teaching is largely successful, but there are occasions when children are not provided with enough words and ways of talking about objects and events to boost their powers of speech. For example, in a class talk about seashells, children were encouraged to touch and describe a huge conch shell. Many could only summon up the word, 'cold' to describe it. Later the same thing happened with a starfish when 'rough' was the main word generated. The session ended a little flatly with a slight sense of unfulfilled expectations. The opportunity was missed for adults and children together to generate as many words as possible to describe these objects and, in a playful way, to use these words in sentences.
17. This struggle, by teachers, to improve children's spoken language is a theme running through the nursery and reception classes. Some lessons are very good in the way that children are encouraged to talk and others only satisfactorily address the issue. In the best lessons saying what you think is fun and many children want to join in. In others only a few children hold the floor. Despite the very good teamwork that exists between teachers and their assistants, there are few occasions when children's verbal contributions are noted to provide an assessment and a means by which they can be targeted for better use in the future. Even in the best lessons the teacher is likely to do most of the evaluation. They say, for example, "Well done everybody. This is what we have learnt today." There are too few opportunities for children to practise talking about their own learning. This does take place, but not often enough.
18. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are taught well across the school. There is some very good teaching of literacy in the Year 1 and Year 2 lessons where lively teaching caters very well for a wide range of attainment in the class and pupils make very good progress as a result. Teaching assistants, who have a most productive relationship with the pupils, often support this work very well. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, teaching made very good use of the early morning activities that take place at register time, to prepare the pupils for the lesson. As a result, it began at a very good pace. Excellent use was made of the electronic white board to help pupils understand more about giving change for sums of money. After this, two pupils spontaneously said, "I get it now". This very good teaching contained some weaknesses that were present in several other lessons. The original objectives of the lesson were not rigorously pursued and pupils, at the end of the lessons, were not asked to say whether they had achieved them or not. Furthermore, the higher attainers were not given the opportunity to think and talk widely about more complex problems.
19. Some lessons in Year 1 and Year 2 are satisfactory, but contain shortcomings that prevent achievement from being good. Teachers are generally good at planning what will take place and setting the scene well at the beginning of the lessons. They ask helpful questions and have a good knowledge of the work in hand. Sometimes, however, the teachers talk for too long and pupils become restless, particularly if they find the work difficult. Teaching assistants are sometimes not given a clear enough role in the first part of the lesson and are effectively under-employed at these times. In some Year 2 numeracy lessons the work is not quite correctly matched for different groups of pupils. For example, higher attainers can sometimes lack challenge in their learning. The use of specialist teachers and trained assistants for pupils with special

educational needs is very good. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language also make good progress, similar to the rest of the class.

20. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their writing, in geography, history and science for example. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection, but is now a strong feature of learning. The application of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory. Pupils measure well in design and technology, for example, and produce graphs in science and geography.
21. Teaching in the rest of the subjects is generally good. It is very good in ICT and satisfactory in art and design and music, but good elsewhere. The teaching of ICT has greatly improved since the last inspection. Teachers are now far more knowledgeable and can help pupils get the best from the improved range of computers and the electronic white boards that are linked to the computers. Parents agree that ICT has been vastly improved. Many of them have tried out the computers for themselves and understand how pupils are learning in lessons. The central thread running through the good teaching in science and other subjects is the relevance and excitement generated through well-pitched activities that increase pupils' knowledge but also boost their self-esteem. This is true of history lessons in which pupils act out a 1960s wash day, dancing like aliens in physical education in a way that is linked to an assembly theme and drawing the colourful and delicate markings of a peacock feather in art. Where teaching is less successful in otherwise satisfactory lessons, it is due to the lack of rigour shown in getting pupils to speak about their learning in an evaluative way. Teaching provides lots of exciting opportunities, like the making of fruit salad in science, and much talk is generated about what to do and what happened, but learning is not summarised and reinforced in a crystal-clear fashion. This disadvantages all pupils, but particularly the higher attainers who could go further to reach a higher level. Lesson plans are often not sharp enough in recognising what higher attainers might achieve that is different from the average pupils, for example.
22. Methods of assessment are well established, but the use made of the results to record the individual progress of pupils, in English, mathematics and science, and to set targets for learning, is less well developed. This also has a limiting effect on the way in which pupils talk about their own learning and understand what they need to do to improve.
23. The accommodation is well used for learning throughout the school, but the classroom for nursery children is not well designed. Some areas are too cramped and others lack opportunities for learning because the wallboards are too high for children to see what is displayed on them. Nursery and reception classes do not have electronic white boards, but this is a drawback that the school acknowledges and is working towards solving.

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

24. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which effectively meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum reflects the aims and values of the school well and all pupils benefit according to their needs. The quality and range of the curriculum are good across the school. In Year 1 and Year 2 teachers make good links between subjects in their planning, for example in mathematics and science in the use of a graphical recording of healthy foods to promote healthy teeth.
25. Provision for pupils with special educational need is good. They have equal access to the full curriculum and are included in all the activities. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Pupils who are having learning difficulties are given an individual programme, which is agreed by the co-ordinator, the class teacher and the parents of the pupil. The learning support teacher and the educational psychologist offer helpful advice. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs receive assistance, if needed, from outside agencies. In this way all work in harmony to speed up the rate of pupils' progress. Similarly, the curriculum provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is good. Good emphasis on speaking and listening in nursery, reception and Year 1 enables pupils to make progress in basic language skills and benefit fully from the National Curriculum.
26. The staff has implemented well the new curriculum guidelines for the nursery and reception classes. Good teaching ensures that children play and learn well at the same time. Children are provided with a rich array of experiences both in and out of school. Very good use is made of day visits to extend the children's knowledge and experience. A very good feature of the curriculum is the school's provision for continual outside play despite the English climate. Children are dressed for all weathers and make good use of the play facilities provided.
27. In all subjects, schemes of work are very good, and match and reflect national recommendations well. They are very detailed and provide good guidance to teachers. Across the school the majority of pupils receive relevant, rich and varied experiences, which stimulate and interest them, so that by the end of Year 2 they achieve very well in ICT and well in the majority of other subjects. The curriculum for ICT has improved dramatically since the last inspection and is now a very strong feature of the school's work and the pupils are benefiting from the well-organised curriculum and computer area in each classroom. In both Year 1 and Year 2, higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged in science and mathematics. This results in pupils not achieving as well as they are capable of due to the fact that they are not always clear what they have to do to reach a particular standard. For example, when conducting a fair test in science, and ascertaining which objects would move through different forces of water and air, higher attainers were not encouraged to think about a wider range of variables which would make the fair test even more accurate, and to record these differences.
28. The school, rightly, places great emphasis on the development of pupils' listening skills, clarity of speech and speaking in simple sentences. These aspects are very well planned and bear fruit in the quality and range of learning opportunities. There is overall, however, too little emphasis placed on developing pupils' ability to talk about their learning. They answer the teachers' questions well enough, but are not sufficiently encouraged to speak at length about what they understand and judge their learning to be like.

29. High quality experiences in geography, history, art and physical education provide enjoyment and enrich the ethos of the school through the well-planned visits and activities that particularly support these subjects. Moreover, in history, geography and science, investigation and research skills are developed well through a curriculum that focuses on the study of key periods and topics. Annual 'weeks' for mathematics, science, ICT, and books involving parents and their children in a range of activities, are exciting for pupils and further enhance and enrich the provision. Family literacy and numeracy programmes, involving parents and their children, contribute to the pupils' achievement because parents' skills are developed and they are better able to support their children. At a weekly award assembly, successes achieved in out of school activities, for example, swimming and badges awarded at Rainbow and Beavers clubs, are celebrated.
30. There are after or before school care facilities provided and this is an aspect the parents would like to see improved. However, the school has been successful in its bid to the Excellence in Cities Action Zone for funding in September for a 'wrap around' club to meet parental requests for out-of-school care.
31. Good use of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies supports well the development of pupils' basic skills. In addition to these, effective organisation at the start of the day and after lunchtime enables some pupils to practise a range of basic skills planned for their individual needs. Some pupils in Year 1 classes practised writing their name, improving their letter or number formation and reinforcing work in learning letter sounds, using the electronic white board before and during registration as an aid to their learning. Effective organisation and use of national initiatives, such as the Early Literacy Strategy in Year 1, are well planned, delivered by classroom assistants, and ably support groups of pupils who may have fallen behind in their work in letter sounds and reading.
32. A particularly strong feature is the provision made for pupils' personal, social and health education. The staff provide an exciting programme of well-planned experiences, including health education, sex education and attention to drug misuse. These experiences promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence and develop appropriate skills and knowledge about working as a member of a team. They encourage pupils to have very positive attitudes to learning and to other people. The school places great importance on developing opportunities for pupils not only to work with others but also to take responsibility by establishing high expectations of their own behaviour and in their learning.
33. The curriculum is enhanced well with visits and visitors to the school. These include sport coaches in football, enhancing the skills of both pupils and staff. Visits are annually planned for each year group to museums and heritage sites and these visits are very effectively used in follow-up work to support work in history, geography, science and art. Overall, the school maintains satisfactory links with the local community and neighbouring schools that contribute to pupils' learning, but there are insufficient opportunities for members of faith communities to share their faith and cultures within school.
34. The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in the caring, supportive ethos and promotes very good standards of personal development. It has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to school and the quality of their work and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.



35. The school has developed a community in which all pupils grow in self-esteem, and learn to respect one another's beliefs and opinions. A major strength is the way in which teachers make the most of assemblies, lessons and whole-class discussions to nourish pupils' spiritual growth. For example, the weekly 'Golden Awards' assembly celebrates, in a strong family atmosphere, values such as perseverance and responsibility. There was great applause when ten members of staff received their medals for taking part in a charity run. Pupils gave confident and enthusiastic demonstrations of their achievements, such as Irish dancing. There was a really spiritual moment too in a whole-school assembly when the headteacher welcomed some 40 parents and especially a five-day old baby sleeping in his mother's arms. Teachers are also very good at making the great scriptural stories meaningful to children and pupils of all ages. For example, through drama, storytelling, questions and votes, a Year 1 teacher made the Parable of the Sower real for all pupils. This was because she linked its teaching about spiritual development to familiar experiences at home and school. Newsletters to parents strongly encourage them to work with the school to develop their children's independence. Well-taught lessons and calming music at the beginning and end of assemblies allow pupils to enjoy stillness and peace as well as energetic activities. As a result of such sensitive provision pupils develop real trust in the adults in school. They are therefore open to the strong influences in the school to turn young minds and hearts to the highest values. For example, when asked how it was possible for terrorists to commit the 11<sup>th</sup> September atrocities a seven year old said: "I don't think they had love in their hearts." There are good opportunities for the pupils to explore feelings and emotions. For example, pupils in Year 1 acted out the story of 'The Rainbow Fish' very thoughtfully before a fascinated class audience. The lesson also greatly enhanced their self-confidence and self-esteem. Singing is a strong feature of the school, creating a very special atmosphere that makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Science lessons and the science week show pupils the wonders of Creation. When pupils study ice, shadows and water they strongly develop their appreciation of the powers of the elements.
36. From their earliest days in nursery, pupils are encouraged to consider how their actions affect others. There is a strong emphasis on considerate behaviour throughout the school. Each class agrees and follows a simple set of rules. Lessons and assemblies regularly use stories and discussion to reinforce these moral values so that pupils develop a good understanding of right and wrong. For example, in a Year 2 geography lesson pupils discussed how to improve parks and playgrounds they knew. One pupil suggested there must be rules. The teacher then asked what these might be. A thoughtful discussion followed. In a well-led assembly on a story called 'The Aliens', pupils took to heart the message that our differences were no reason for hatred. Members of staff create a very orderly environment and help pupils to become responsible members of the community. All staff consistently set examples of good conduct and relationships which pupils readily copy. Teachers also consistently give praise and encouragement to help pupils achieve the school's aims of good manners, consideration and respect for others.
37. The foundation of the very good provision for pupils' social development is the very good relationships between adults and pupils. Nearly all lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to co-operate and collaborate in group activities to develop pupils' speech and social skills. For example, Monday mornings in the Year 2 classes start with pupils writing about their news. However, they write down the news of a chosen friend after discussions in pairs. This dialogue develops awareness of, and then consideration for, others. Class and school responsibilities increase appropriately as pupils get older. The school's very well planned programme for

personal, social and health education effectively develops pupils' understanding of what it is to be a member of a community.

38. A particular strength in pupils' cultural development is the school's use of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' experiences. For example, the school receives visiting theatres, puppet theatres and artists. The cultural dimensions of pupils' learning often feature in a range of curricular activities. Year 2 pupils observed peacock feathers, and model birds made of china and pottery before working with great care and attention to add paint to their models of ducks. Pupils were really fascinated by the 'bird' paintings of Thornburn. Singing, music and dance lessons give pupils early experience of the different qualities of songs, tunes and rhythms from cultures around the world. Pupils gain a full repertoire of modern and traditional songs by the time they leave the school. This is partly because nearly all staff attend singing practice and join in enthusiastically. All these activities help to develop pupils' understanding that people from a range of backgrounds and countries may have cultures that are different from their own. The cultural diversity of the school is well drawn upon as a resource. For example, parents helped the school's celebration of the Chinese New Year. Pupils also receive a useful introduction to some major world faiths within their religious education. The school has been prompt to revise its policies and procedures to promote racial equality in the light of the latest guidance from the Commission on Racial Equality.

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

39. The school takes good care of the pupils. It promotes their welfare, health and safety better now than at the time of the last inspection when arrangements were satisfactory. Health and safety procedures feature strongly in the excellent staff handbook. This and the school's detailed health and safety policy clearly and comprehensively cover staff responsibilities. Staff have recently attended appropriate training in first aid and in matters relating to child protection. Parents are also alerted effectively to health and safety issues in the monthly newsletters.
40. Staff know the pupils well in terms of aspects of their personal development, special educational needs and other circumstances that might influence how effectively they learn. This knowledge enables the staff to do their utmost to help the children overcome their difficulties and sensitivities. Good arrangements are made upon induction to the nursery and reception classes to ensure that the school's youngest pupils are gradually introduced to school routines and expectations. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved over the past four years and is now good. All pupils are equally valued and those with special educational needs are fully integrated into all aspects of school life. They are regularly assessed and detailed records of individual targets are kept. These are reviewed twice each year; clear progress is noted and new specific targets are set. Files containing the individual educational plans are kept by the teachers and monitored by the co-ordinator.
41. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting regular and punctual attendance are now good. The registers of attendance are suitably checked each week for patterns of absence and the education welfare officer is involved where appropriate. Parents are speedily contacted about unexplained absence the same day that it occurs. Local education authority personnel play a large part in this process by shouldering responsibility for challenging parents about such absences as a matter of urgency. If they fail to elicit a response the same day the school suitably pursues the matter further by letter. This system has greatly reduced the rate of unauthorised absence and successfully reinforces the need for the school to know

the whereabouts of every child to ensure safety. Late arrivals are suitably recorded. Parents of those who are often late are regularly contacted by the headteacher who reiterates that their children miss important information and cause disruption to others' learning.

42. Staff have a common approach to monitoring and promoting good standards of behaviour and eliminating racism and bullying. Overall these procedures are good. Staff are consistently fair and usually firm when disciplining the pupils. They use assemblies and discussion times in lessons very effectively to help pupils understand the impact of their actions upon others. The emphasis is on care and consideration towards others and sensitivity to others' feelings. Good behaviour and positive attitudes are recognised publicly during the weekly 'Golden Awards' assembly. Recipients of these awards get special mentions from the staff and are named on the board of honour in the entrance. Staff are actively encouraged to "listen, believe and act" to eliminate bullying. There are suitable sanctions, report systems and behaviour plans to moderate the behaviour of the few pupils who fail to meet the school's high expectations regarding their conduct.
43. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. A strength of these procedures is their effect on raising standards. In English and mathematics these improved procedures have recently helped pupils achieve better results in national tests. Good assessment of pupils' attainment in ICT has contributed significantly to the good standards pupils now reach by the end of Year 2.
44. Assessment procedures in the nursery and reception classes are also good. Children in the nursery classes are carefully assessed on entry to the school to find out what skills they bring in key areas, such as personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. The results are closely analysed and show clearly the increasing number of children who are not reaching the standards expected for their ages because of poor speaking skills. Teachers measure accurately the children's progress towards the national goals for learning that apply at the end of the reception year. The need for teachers to change their methods of assessment to match this system, during the last two years, has improved the focus and quality of assessment.
45. Effective monitoring of pupils' progress continues as they move through Years 1 and 2, with the emphasis on the progress of individual pupils towards meeting national levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, teachers assess pupils' attainment and progress in these subjects each term. They also make good use of assessment of Year 1 pupils' reading and writing skills early in the year to determine if any are falling behind and need extra support. The monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT is not fully developed.
46. The main weakness in assessment arrangements lies in the variable quality of teachers' planned aims for learning. In the majority of lessons both teachers and pupils know clearly the aims of the learning at the outset. In good lessons teachers also carefully check through with their classes whether their learning has achieved these aims. In a small number of lessons, when teachers plan only what pupils will do, rather than what they will learn, assessment of learning during the lesson is inexact. Teachers are then unable to discuss learning with their classes or to improve the quality of learning in the following lessons.

47. However, the school makes good use a wide range of assessment data to redirect and improve pupils' learning. Teachers are increasingly using nationally recognised tests to monitor pupils' progress and analyse strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. They are beginning to use computerised tracking and data analysis to help this development. For example, analysis of pupils' answers to questions set on national test papers has yielded useful information on the difficulties pupils face when trying to understand the requirements of the question. Evaluation of the progress of different groups of pupils takes place and some appropriate action is taken. For example, the school is careful to analyse differences in performance of boys and girls and of pupils who have not received all their education at Meadow Head Infants. However, the needs of gifted and talented pupils and those for whom English is an additional language are not identified clearly enough. The learning needs and progress of pupils who have statements of special educational needs are very carefully checked and recorded.

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

48. The school's partnership with parents remains strong, helped by the very good quality information provided for them, particularly about what and how their children learn. The staff invest considerable time and effort in strengthening trust and relationships through, for example, encouraging parents to play an active role in their children's learning. Parents in return have very positive opinions about the school and support their children fairly well at home and at school.
49. Parents particularly value the good teaching, and the high expectations that teachers have of their children. They also appreciate the ease with which they can approach the staff with questions or problems. Their only concern is with the school's lack of provision for extra-curricular activities, but this is not uncommon for the age range represented. Inspection findings broadly agree with all that they most like about the school.
50. Parents and carers have good opportunities to share in the life of the school by attending a weekly assembly that is often led by a particular class. Their support in large numbers is very encouraging for both staff and children. Family literacy, numeracy and computer evenings and courses are less well attended but much enjoyed. The school produces excellent packs of information booklets and suggested activities for parents who attend these curriculum evenings. The family courses are organised in conjunction with a local college and provide crèche facilities. The courses, which take place during school hours, successfully teach parents how and what their children learn and how to help them more effectively at home.
51. The school provides a wealth of information for parents of new starters. Reception class children, for example, take home a very useful booklet each day. This clearly explains about the early learning goals for these children and about school routines and topics. It suggests many ways for parents to help their child to learn at home and includes their child's reading record. Parents are suitably encouraged to comment upon the experience of sharing books together each evening. The headteacher, through recent newsletters, has on more than one occasion expressed disappointment that some parents do not read with their children at home, judging by these records. The school's prospectus, whilst generally informative, does not contain all the elements required to be included by statute. There is no reference, for example, to the school's policy on admissions.

52. Formal consultations with teachers to discuss children's progress suitably take place in the autumn and spring terms. These are reasonably well attended and the school makes appropriate alternative arrangements for those who are unable to be there. The annual written reports to parents about their child's progress are generally of good quality and parents can arrange to discuss them with class teachers if they wish. They give particularly detailed information about attainment in English, mathematics and science, and levels of progress over the year. Most suitably include areas for development.
53. The parents of those pupils with special educational needs are included in their child's learning review and are kept well informed. Individual education plans are shared with parents at consultation meetings and they are advised on how they can support their child at home. The school encourages a partnership between home and school.
54. A few parents regularly assist in school, helped in this role by a useful guide booklet. There is a well-established parents association, which organises successful social and fund-raising events such as discos and sponsored events. All such voluntary assistance is much appreciated by the staff.

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

55. Leadership was described as being strong and purposeful at the time of the last inspection. A strong ethos had been created in which pupils were valued and cared for most effectively. This is still the case. Leadership and the way that the school is managed make sure that the school's aims are fulfilled very well day to day. Parents appreciate the way that the school is led. They have a very good opinion of the school largely because the school works so hard to make them feel part of the process.
56. Planning for lessons is very thorough and takes account of the most recent national guidance, for example, in the three to five age range. This has a positive effect on children's learning, particularly in the reception classes where a high proportion of very good and sometimes excellent teaching takes place. The school has many strengths and these are attributable to energetic teamwork and effective leadership, including that provided by the governing body. Positive leadership is demonstrated regularly in collective worship to which parents and relatives are invited and come in good numbers. Children present the theme with great confidence, ably assisted by their teacher, and the headteacher who summarises the 'hidden message' very effectively in a way that thoroughly engages adults and children alike. The tone of the day is established with great aplomb on these frequent and very well organised occasions.
57. At the time of the last inspection, the standards achieved by the end of Year 2, in reading, writing and mathematics, were in line with national averages. Teaching has maintained this position well despite time being devoted to implementing, successfully, the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, totally upgrading the school's facilities for ICT and establishing the new Foundation Stage for children in the nursery and reception classes. Children have achieved consistently well in most cases, taking into account the low level of attainment on entry to the school's nursery.
58. The theme of inclusion is a strong one running throughout the work of the school. In the academic year 2000/1 there was a significant minority of pupils with emotional difficulties that caused them to behave badly. The school managed the situation very well. The headteacher organised specialist training for the staff, which was used effectively to minimise the potential for disruption. The academic results for that year

were low, but in many cases pupils achieved well owing to the firm and supportive management provided. Provision for special educational needs is managed well by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Effective organisation and planning ensure that quality support is given to the pupils. The governor responsible for special educational needs is a frequent visitor, shows a keen interest and is very supportive of the school. The governors monitor finance closely and make wise decisions on how the money should be used to raise attainment for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Provision for special educational needs is a strength of the school.

59. The school has a well-established system for checking the quality of teaching. This includes the national requirements for performance management and paired observations of lessons by the headteacher and advisers from the local education authority, for example. Teachers are given a comprehensive appraisal of their lessons and apt pointers for improvement. This includes newly qualified teachers and those new to the school, who, in general, are all inducted well. Subject co-ordinators have not yet had enough opportunities to observe teaching and learning and are therefore unaware, at first-hand, about how learning, for example, could be improved. This is a gap in the school's management and a drawback in the way that co-ordinators exercise leadership.
60. Many members of the governing body are closely connected to the school and are consequently knowledgeable about its strengths and areas for development. They meet their legal requirements in nearly every respect except in some minor aspects of reporting to parents. They are most proactive in responding to the very comprehensive reports given to them by the headteacher. Their subsequent role in steering the direction taken by the school is a good one. At the time of the last inspection the governing body was jointly responsible for both Meadow Head Junior and Infant Schools. Since then, separate bodies have been formed. The infant school's body has established good procedures to fulfil its duties and is led in a most effective way by a committed and energetic chair who visits the school regularly to keep abreast of developments. The governors' action plan following the previous inspection report has been implemented effectively. For example, pupils' writing is now well developed in subjects other than English. Furthermore, the school's development plan now contains objectives for the longer term. However, there are drawbacks in the current planning process that result in a lack of clarity overall. There are several key documents in the school that express, in total, the way that standards will be maintained or improved. There is, however, no formal guarantee that the headteacher, governors, senior manager and staff will all have the same crystal-clear vision of how the school's targets will be fulfilled. This is a flaw in an otherwise tightly managed school and one which is recognised as an area for improvement.
61. The leadership and management of the nursery and reception classes are good. The co-ordinator works well with all the staff to ensure that children make good progress throughout the two years despite their difficulties with spoken language. A particular strength in the leadership is the way in which the recent guidance on education for children aged three to five has been implemented to good effect.
62. There is an appropriate number of teachers who are deployed very effectively to form an enthusiastic and committed team. The conscientious band of teaching assistants and special needs assistants works extremely well with the teachers and has a good impact on pupils' learning. The accommodation and resources for learning are generally good except in the nursery class where the internal accommodation has not

yet received the same sort of attention as is the case in Year 1 and Year 2, for example.

63. The school makes good use of available grants, including those for the special needs class. These grants are largely designated for specific purpose and have been put to good use. Funds available for ICT, for example, have had a very positive effect on standards. Staff and governors monitor closely the benefit from these monies.
64. The school is not knocked off course by administrative demands from its local education authority or the government. All paperwork is prioritised in an efficient fashion. The governors are helped greatly by the headteacher in this respect. The regular meetings between the headteacher and chair of governors make sure that things run smoothly at an administrative level. The headteacher and governors manage the school's finances well. The school's secretary runs the school office very efficiently. The headteacher and governors make sure that the budget is closely monitored throughout the year. The governors make sure that money is spent wisely by researching how to spend it and choosing the goods and services that represent the best value for the school. The school had a sizeable surplus in the last financial year because it was thought that number of pupils might be falling in line with a drop in children in the surrounding area. This has not proved the case and the surplus is back to reasonable proportions this year.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

### 65. In order to improve standards in further, the governors, headteacher and staff with support from the local education authority should:

1. Improve the school's development planning process by:
  - creating a school development plan that prioritises the objectives for improvement in one document that is commonly shared by staff and governors; and
  - making more specific the plans for fulfilling the objectives annually and devise specific ways to monitor and evaluate their success.(Paragraphs: 60,99,104,109,115,137,145)
  
2. Improve pupils' learning in line with the school's own priority in this respect by:
  - helping pupils to be more aware of any targets set for them and how they might achieve them;
  - involving pupils more often in talking about their own learning during and at the end of lessons;
  - improving lesson planning to make it absolutely clear in all cases what will be learnt and what those capable of higher attainment are expected to achieve; and
  - monitoring lessons to judge the quality of pupils' learning and its effect on standards achieved.(Paragraphs: 2,3,6,15-18,20,21,28,46,47,59,71,73,74,82,97,98,101,103,104,109,115,120,124,125,135,137,145,148)

A minor issue for improvement identified during the inspection was:

- (i) the quality and use of accommodation in the nursery class.  
(Paragraphs: 23,80)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	16	19	18	0	0	0
Percentage	4	29	35	32	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 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	254
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	74

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	73

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

### Attendance

Authorised absence

%
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Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	42	54	87

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	29	36
	Girls	41	42	39
	Total	73	71	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (85)	82 (79)	86 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	36	35
	Girls	42	41	40
	Total	74	77	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (84)	89 (91)	86 (92)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	176
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.1
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### Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.9
Average class size	28.2

**Education support staff: YR– Y2**

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	252.5

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

	£
Total income	699,362
Total expenditure	673,868
Expenditure per pupil	2324
Balance brought forward from previous year	69,070
Balance carried forward to next year	94,564

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	280
Number of questionnaires returned	126

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	22	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	24	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	34	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	40	5	0	2
The teaching is good.	84	13	0	2	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	32	3	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	10	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	14	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	66	30	2	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	79	18	2	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	25	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	30	13	2	20

## **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 start school in the nursery class in the term in which they are three years of age. On entry to the nursery the children's levels of attainment are generally below average. Children attend the nursery class on a part-time basis and then transfer to one of three reception classes. Their attainment, by the end of the reception year, in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, which is below the expected levels, represents satisfactory achievement. Their progress has, however, been hampered by their limited development in spoken English, which is an essential pre-requisite for eventual success in reading and writing. They are, however, on course to reach the nationally expected levels in creative development, physical development and personal, social and emotional development, which is good achievement.
67. When the school was last inspected in December 1997, the report judged that most children's attainment, by the age of five, was in line with national expectations. It is different now not because the quality of teaching has fallen, it is in fact much better, but because different measures are used and teachers, by using clearer national guidance, have become better at assessing children's attainment.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

68. Teachers and their assistants are sensitive to the children's needs and this characterises the teaching, which is good. Children become more confident and outgoing as a result. There are instances of excellent teaching in the reception year when children surpass the national expectation for their age. Children in one lesson, for example, participated vocally and sat spellbound, when listening, in games designed to develop their self-confidence and the ability to speak out in front of others. Very skilful teaching helped all children make first-rate progress, including several children with special educational needs who became very confident as the lesson progressed. Good achievement, on balance, is made over the two years. Many children start with a lack of confidence and limited skills in relating to adults and the rest of the class. One session in the nursery typified this low starting point. Children were asked to look at photographs taken of them during the year and finish the sentence, "I remember I was happy when....". Despite the clear demonstration of possible answers by the teacher and other adults, many children found this very hard and some even resorted to random comments like, "I fell over and hurt my knee" or "I like sweets". Teachers target the development of children's self-esteem successfully in both the nursery and reception classes. This causes children to enjoy their learning greatly and show very good attitudes in all that they do. This was evident, for example, in a nursery dance lesson in which children whooped with joy when dancing to an African drum beat. It also applied to a reception class lesson when children visibly grew in stature when telling Croaker the glove puppet all that they knew about the letter sounds in words.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

69. Work in this aspect of children's learning is incorporated in each lesson every day. It is very common for children to be practising communication skills when making

strawberry milk shakes in the nursery kitchen, searching the Internet for information about toys or writing postcards from an imaginary beach holiday. They have very good attitudes to their work due to the enthusiastic and structured support that they receive from teachers and their assistants.

70. The teaching methods employed demonstrate the importance that is placed on speaking and listening as a means of communication in their own right and for eventual proficiency in reading and writing. However, there are instances, particularly in the nursery, when teaching does not give a strong enough lead in the kind of words that children could use and how they might say their sentences. By the end of the reception year some children are confident to speak out in front of the class, but many are still tentative in their communication. For example, when playing in the puppet theatre, some reception children found it hard to invent speech for the finger puppets of more than two words at a time. Others, in a different class, found it equally hard to talk expansively about the front cover of the book they were reading. Some higher attaining children speak with great confidence and insight, encouraged well by the adults around them. For example, one child, when thinking about the life cycle of butterflies said, "Days of the week are like a life cycle". In the nursery class many children clam up when it is their turn to speak or find it hard to contribute very much due to limited general knowledge about seashore artefacts like shells, for example. Moreover, many children play happily around the outside rock pool and chatter informally about crabs, sting rays and starfish, but find it hard to speak in sentences about them in class.
71. The good quality of the teaching of reading and writing is firmly and successfully based on those methods advocated in the National Strategy for Literacy. Teaching is well versed in such methods and children often make good progress in lessons. Opportunities for early reading and writing are all around in the nursery class. For example, children wrote postcards home from their holiday using their own marks to represent words showing that they were beginning to form some letter correctly. Children's reading of single words and their ability to say sounds that go to make up words are developed satisfactorily. Currently, average attaining children in the reception class can read single words like the days of the week and are beginning to show confidence in spotting words within words like 'in' in 'looking'. Most children are sure of the sounds that begin words, but are not so sure about final and middle sounds. A few higher attainers can read a small book at one go and revel in talking about the story. This demonstrates the good effect of the teaching. Children's enthusiasm for writing is widespread. Many children in the nursery class enjoy attempting to write their own name. Children in the reception classes hold pencils correctly and higher attaining children can write simple sentences unaided comprising of several recognisable words. Average attainers can write a complex string of letters to represent the words they want to communicate, but not all are recognisable as common letters. Children's reading and writing is greatly assisted by the opportunity to use 'story sacks', which are collections of objects and resources relevant to a story such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Children respond well to the good teaching they receive and they all make good progress, including those that are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Teachers and their assistants make useful observations of the progress made by various children during the lesson, but there is no system employed and record keeping is not consistent across the classes. Consequently, some children go unnoticed and their progress is not evaluated regularly enough.

## **Mathematical development**

72. Children are achieving satisfactorily in this aspect of their development, but only about two-thirds are on course to meet the national expectations by the end of the reception year. This is below the national expectation. Some higher attaining children in the reception classes can already handle numbers up to 20 with confidence and talk about hundreds and thousands, but a sizeable minority have a weak understanding of numbers, and have difficulty counting patterns and shapes. Children achieve satisfactorily from a level below the national expectation at the start of their year in the nursery, but are held back by their limited understanding and inability to talk about numbers with confidence.
73. Good teaching creates many richly resourced activities to promote mathematical awareness. In the nursery, for example, children played an exciting game of guessing the shapes inside different shaped boxes. Many were intrigued with the cylindrical shaped box, but only a few guessed out loud and it was a long time before a child took the initiative to shake the box to get a better idea of its contents. The teaching was active in following up children's ideas in the general activity time, but not determined enough in getting children to speak in sentences and hazard guesses in the whole-class session. Teaching in the reception classes is more dynamic and creates a greater thirst for knowledge among the children. In the best teaching lessons are full of fun, games and two-way conversations. In one lesson, for example, the teacher was superb in noticing how children answered and in picking up on mistakes as an indication of a thought process. The energetic teamwork between the teacher and the assistant was crucial in this respect. Sometimes higher attainers show their abilities well. In one reception class lesson they knew that 100 was far away from the correct answer of eight. One child marvelled at the fact that, "The number stick for that one would stretch right down to Mrs Purchase's office". Teachers use computers well to extend children's thinking. One higher attainer, for example, busily worked away independently at a counting game until the top level of the program was reached. Despite these very good and sometimes excellent features, teaching is good on balance because the purpose of the learning is not always advertised at the beginning of the lesson and this makes it hard for children to gauge their own progress at the end. Even in the best lessons the final part does not involve the children enough in an appreciation of how well they have done. This lack of involvement limits their progress in talking about mathematics.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

74. The children enjoy learning about the world around them. They achieve soundly as a result of good teaching, but most children are not on course to reach the expected level in their learning by the end of their reception year. Despite the rich provision made for the children to widen their horizons, limited spoken language prevents a significant minority from achieving the expected levels. They are often excited by the activity, but cannot discuss well enough with other children to make the most of the experience. For example, in a nursery class discussion about sea creatures only about six children knew about shells and jellyfish and were confident to talk about them. They even claimed that they had seen mermaids as well. Despite the well-resourced lesson and the active encouragement of the teaching, most of the other children did not offer more than a few words.
75. The provision of activities designed to compensate for many children's relatively weak knowledge of the world around them is a real strength of the teaching in both the nursery and the reception classes. For example, children in the nursery class have, among other things, talked to fire-fighters, made firework biscuits, posted letters in a real post-box, made vegetable soup, flown kites and stroked snakes at Blackpool Zoo.



In the reception class children have planted bulbs, studied their growth from being a baby and made discoveries at the Sea Life Centre at Blackpool. Some higher attaining children write independently about how different types of toys move, using words like 'push', 'pull' and 'twist'. Average and higher attaining children are developing ideas about the past in the study of toys that they played with five years ago. Sound achievement results from teaching that concentrates well on first-hand experiences and gives plenty of opportunity for focused discussion. In the study of toys children also had the experience of exploring a website to cost out various toys and compare prices between suppliers. Children use technology well. They have used a digital camera effectively to record their exploits in and out of school.

### **Physical development**

76. The children are likely to meet the nationally expected levels by the end of their year in reception. This represents good achievement, brought about by good teaching, from a relatively below average start when they first entered the nursery class. Many of the children have not had the opportunity to develop the finer skills of pouring, balancing and cutting accurately, for example. They have ample chances to exercise fully in the school hall and in the well-equipped outside play area. They are achieving well because they get off to such a good start in the nursery class and continue the momentum of this achievement throughout their time in the Foundation Stage. They thoroughly enjoy their work and are very enthusiastic in all lessons. The nursery programme to develop children's physical faculties is detailed and extensive. When they start in the nursery class many children, including those with special educational needs, find it hard to spoon some mixture into a container and others find difficulty in skipping to music in the school hall. As a result of the many interesting activities available children refine their manipulative and larger physical skills. They also get ample chances to ride on bikes and climb on apparatus. By the time they are in the reception class many average and higher attaining children can use the floor and apparatus in the school hall very well. In one excellent lesson, for example, children could move apparatus into place and then move with agility beyond their years over, under and around it using both their hands and their feet. In a few lessons, in the reception classes, there is too much talk by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson and children do not get enough time to enjoy the physical exercise.
77. Their achievement is greatly enhanced by the outside play facilities. They can play outside in all weathers thanks to the very colourful rainwear that the school has recently acquired. They particularly enjoy fishing in the rock pool to catch pretend sea creatures. Learning is good because teachers work so productively to provide experiences for children to develop physical skills. The teaching provides plenty of opportunities for the children to develop good control over pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and other tools. Children, for example, have good control when cutting dough in the nursery class and drawing toys with charcoal in the reception classes.

### **Creative development**

78. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good and the children are on course to reach the expectations for their age by the end of the reception year. Their achievements are good despite the problems some children have with speaking effectively with adults and other children, which makes imaginative play difficult. Achievement in the nursery is particularly good when adults get involved in role-play with the children. For example, on one occasion a teaching assistant was most active in helping children play on the beach dressed in their all-weather wear. Children's achievement in painting and drawings is good by the time they reach the end of the

reception class. High attainers, for example, know that charcoal is made out of pieces of burnt wood and chose it from among other drawing tools to draw with. They are already conversant with techniques like hatching and smudging. Children also use computers well to produce artwork. For example, they have drawn crabs with the correct number of legs, showing perseverance and good physical skills in controlling the mouse to draw the ten legs. Their singing is enthusiastic and tuneful. By the end of the reception year many children can sing simple songs from memory and recognise simple repeating patterns in music. This is a good achievement since at the beginning of their nursery year many children found it hard to join in with songs.

79. Six teachers teach this age group of children: two in the nursery class and four in the reception year. The quality of teaching is good on balance, with some very good and occasionally excellent teaching in the reception classes. The adults work well with the children, drawing out ideas and ensuring understanding through conversation and incidental discussion. The classes are well managed and the team of staff work reasonably well together despite the distance between the nursery and the reception classes. The strength of the teaching is the way in which children are organised and motivated in activities that are full of fun.
80. The school provides a rich and interesting curriculum and staff regularly assess children's efforts well so that they know how to plan the next stages of the work. Very good support for children with special educational needs is supplied by assistants. Children who are learning English as an additional language also receive close attention and make good progress. The teachers keep many good individual records for children, but do not yet use this information to work with teachers in the infants to set goals for the end of Year 2. The assessments are also not focused enough on children's speech patterns to help raise the standard of children's communication. Parents are fully involved in their children's introduction to the school and as a result they settle in quickly. The school also provides very good information for parents to keep them up to date with their children's attainments and achievements. The co-ordinator leads a successful team of dedicated practitioners. A great deal of hard work has gone into establishing a good nursery outside play area. However, the indoor provision is limited and several of the areas are not well designed; for example, the sitting area for the whole class is too cramped and children often get restless because they are too close together. Furthermore, the height of the wallboards makes it difficult for children to appreciate the displays on them.

## **ENGLISH**

81. By the end of Year 2, current standards in speech, reading and writing are similar to those in most primary schools. Standards have gone up this year and are at a similar level to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils' overall achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. The school has steadily increased the proportions of pupils achieving the standards expected for their ages during the last three years. This has been accomplished through the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Literacy. Girls and boys achieved similar standards during this period.
82. By the end of Year 2 speaking and listening standards are as expected for pupils' ages. Very good relationships with teachers and the pupils' good attitudes to learning develop their listening skills well. Staff also teach listening skills effectively through their own good examples whenever a pupil talks to them, and through high expectations of concentration in lessons. As a result, good standards of listening give a firm foundation for learning in most lessons. The school gives pupils satisfactory

opportunities to develop their speech and drama skills. Teachers know the importance of speech in pupils' language development and so provide many opportunities for them to talk about the content of the lesson. However, they do not usually get pupils to talk enough about how they are learning and what they think they have achieved. For example, in a number of discussions of learning at the end of lessons, teachers talked too much and pupils not enough. Because of teachers' concentration in the literacy hour on reading and writing skills, they also sometimes miss opportunities to improve the clarity of pupils' speech. For example, at the beginning of literacy lessons, teachers do not always give enough time for pupils to read aloud with or after them or to talk in pairs to share ideas. In a few good lessons teachers encourage pupils to learn effectively by talking about what they know, using pupils' speech to take learning on. Weekly music lessons and enthusiastic singing throughout the school enhance pupils' listening skills and help to improve the clarity of their speech. Two or three times a year all pupils get a little taste of speaking in public when their class presents an assembly to the whole school. As a result, nearly all pupils speak reasonably confidently.

83. Standards in reading are average by the end of Year 2. Pupils make steady progress in reading throughout the school. This is because teachers make learning enjoyable. One of the strengths of teaching is pupils' thorough grounding in basic reading skills. They link writing and reading well and interest pupils in language through games and exercises. For example, in Years 1 and 2 pupils use their white boards quickly and accurately in simple games. They are keen to get answers right, and learn spellings quickly and easily at the same time. Teachers also tell and read stories excitingly. Pupils are therefore keen to learn to read by themselves, and to answer questions about stories. Slower learning pupils make steady progress because of effective adult support at school, for example in the 'catch up' groups in Year 1. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good, because of the extra attention they get in reading groups in class. A weakness in the teaching is that teachers do not always ensure that higher attaining pupils reach the levels of which they are capable. This is why few pupils reach levels in writing above those expected for their ages by the end of Year 2. A further weakness is that teachers do not usually involve pupils enough in evaluating their learning and discovering targets for improvement, particularly at the end of lessons.
84. A strong feature of the development of reading has been the big investment in, and reorganisation of, books so as to improve the quality and range of reading material for teachers and pupils to choose for both home and school use. This has evidently made a positive impact on standards that were below average last year. Teachers also ensure that pupils use reading books that match their attainment. Pupils' library skills are above average. This is because the school provides a short course for all Year 2 pupils on how to find information. Pupils of all abilities know how to use indexes and contents pages to look things up. Higher and average attaining pupils also use catalogue card indexes and a simple number system to find books.
85. Teachers have begun to address two significant shortcomings in its provision for reading. The school has identified big variations in pupils' individual reading development at home. For example, some higher attaining Year 2 pupils read for up to half an hour each evening. Many average and lower attaining pupils read only a few minutes a week. The main challenge is to arrange more effective support for pupils who have little help at home and particularly for those who are beginning to struggle or to lose interest. Hesitancy and lack of expression suggest that many pupils do not have enough practice in reading aloud. This is partly because teachers do not give enough emphasis to such practice at the beginning of literacy hours.

86. By the end of Year 2, standards in writing are similar to those in most primary schools. The school's determination to raise writing standards is paying off. Standards in handwriting are above those expected for pupils' ages. Nearly all pupils have clear, fluent and readable joined writing in pencil. Satisfactory standards enable them to use writing effectively to learn in most subjects, for example science, geography, and history. By the end of Year 2 pupils have worked in a good range of forms: notes, labels, instructions, poems, cards, letters, diaries, stories and summaries. Higher and average attaining pupils order ideas accurately and begin to use complex sentences. Lower attaining pupils often make very good progress in handwriting in Year 2, from printed sentences running words together at the beginning of the year to joined writing with well-spaced words at the end.
87. A major strength of teaching and learning is pupils' effective use of talk in pairs, groups and with their teachers to enrich their writing. This both improves the detail of their writing and develops pupils' ability to talk about the content of the lessons effectively. The school is also good at encouraging pupils to write about their own and other pupils' experiences. Spelling standards are now as expected for pupils' ages by the end of Year 2, as a result of a drive to improve them using a new method. However, weaknesses in speech continue to slow down the development of spelling for the lower and average attaining pupils. This is because their spelling copies inaccurate spoken expression. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 wrote 'fad', 'dack' and 'licks' for 'found', 'dark' and 'likes'. Teachers also develop writing well by giving pupils a real purpose to write. For example, Year 1 pupils wrote sincere prayers of thanks and Year 2 pupils designed information books with different ages of younger children in view.
88. The quality of teaching is good. However, there are important differences in teaching quality between the classes. For example, the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 ranges from very good to satisfactory. Very good management of pupils, thorough teaching of basic skills and effective use of well-prepared resources, are the main attributes of the most successful lessons.
89. Good relationships between pupils and teachers build a positive atmosphere for work in nearly all lessons. This establishes good listening from the start in which pupils readily learn both from the teacher and each other. For example in a Year 2 literacy lesson all pupils quickly learned how to write information text through carefully listening to the teacher's explanations as she showed clearly how it was done. Further strengths of teaching are teachers' effective use of the best and most recent guidance and their good knowledge of the National Curriculum and National Literacy Strategy. Teachers also use large electronic classroom computer display boards very effectively to present, highlight and modify text and images. Such very good use of the latest technology enhances the quality of pupils' concentration and understanding and their enjoyment of new learning.
90. As a result of the help and support they get from teachers and classroom assistants, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language do as well as other pupils, because teachers make sure they understand new work and vigilantly involve them in new learning. As a result, pupils who have a limited knowledge of English when they first come to the school make rapid progress. Teaching staff and children give full and sensitive support to all new pupils, particularly those who arrive with little English.

91. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' learning and a clear view of priorities for development for each year group. The school makes effective use of national initiatives, for example to develop pupils' reading, writing and spelling skills. Teachers are also very ready both to abandon strategies that are not working well, and in the face of pressure to change, to retain systems that have proved their worth. Parents are very well involved in their children's learning. They support them very well at home and many attend the information evenings put on by the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92. Standards of work are in line with national averages by the end of Year 2. Taking into account pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1, which is below average, by the end of Year 2 all pupils have made good progress.
93. Currently, standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2. This good achievement reflects the effective procedures developed by the school to raise pupils' attainment through the analysis of pupils' half-termly tests and monitoring the progress in Years 1 and 2, and the effective use of additional support staff. This ensures that strengths and weaknesses are analysed and remedial action taken, and that most pupils receive relevant work at an appropriate level. Additionally, the consistently good quality of teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 is based on carefully structured work that builds on pupils' prior learning, together with good opportunities to revise previously taught work. Pupils respond really well to the lively interactive approach using the large electronic white boards. They are motivating because pupils can clearly see when the teacher demonstrates and introduces new ideas or when they themselves move figures around for the teacher to check their understanding. Several pupils, particularly the below average attaining pupils, were heard to say "Ah, I get it now." These factors enable pupils to approach new work confidently in lessons.
94. There have been fluctuations in the school's results in the national tests between successive years. The unconfirmed 2002 results show that pupils have attained in line with national expectations, with improved performance, particularly by girls, who outperformed boys. In the years in which pupils attained below the national expectation, variations were attributable to changes in methods and teaching styles with the introduction of the National Strategy for Numeracy and the overall high numbers of below average attaining pupils, particularly in the 2001 cohort. Improvement is due in part to the effective introduction of the National Strategy for Numeracy. Pupils respond well to the structured approach to learning that this provides, and consequently enjoy mathematics lessons. All teachers plan carefully structured lessons, and give effective demonstrations and clear instructions so that pupils know exactly what is required. This enables the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, to achieve well. Parents are pleased with this achievement and also with the information they receive about how well their children are learning.
95. In Years 1 and 2, teaching focuses on strengthening pupils' understanding and application of mathematical skills, whilst simultaneously developing knowledge and understanding of shapes, measure and simple problem-solving techniques. Hence, by the end of Year 2, pupils have good skills in number. Nearly all pupils recognise numbers to 100, odd and even numbers and the patterns they make, and can add a single digit to a two-digit number. Pupils understand about doubling and halving in relation to time and the majority knows what half an hour before or after a given time is; the high attaining pupils have a basic understanding about a quarter past the hour.

Pupils achieve success when using centimetres and grams, and identifying the properties of plane shapes. They develop a sound understanding of data handling, for example, using tallying to record items, favourite pets, a survey on traffic, or a chart recording healthy foodstuffs to promote good teeth. Most identify the correct number operation to use in a simple problem, but experience difficulties when more than one stage is required. For example, most Year 2 pupils successfully added two amounts of money but could not calculate the change required. High attaining pupils could make the answer 16p by  $10+10=20\text{p}-4\text{p}=16\text{p}$ . High attaining pupils can add two-digit numbers together, successfully differentiating between the tens and units and making good use of pencil and paper jottings to record working out. Higher attainers have good basic number skills but lack quickness and flexibility to think of alternative ways of using addition and subtraction. Teachers provide challenging work that interests and motivates pupils and overall the matching of work for different groups of pupils is generally precise and supports good progress of all pupils. In concluding plenary sessions, pupils generally comment on how well they had done but few explain processes with any degree of confidence, even those who are capable of reaching a higher level of attainment.

96. Pupils acquire confidence in mental calculations, developing a good range of strategies to speed their answers. Overall, pupils' use and application of mathematics is under-developed. Pupils use the correct number operation when solving simple clear cut problems but make mistakes when more than one process is required. The lack of opportunities to apply knowledge gained in mathematics in a variety of open-ended tasks results in pupils becoming over-reliant on their teachers, rather than gaining confidence in their own abilities. This is a reason why too few pupils achieve higher levels in national tests. Computers are used effectively to reinforce work, such as in recording data. A good range of software to support understanding and using simple number notations and identifying shapes and making images from these, motivate and support the pupils with special educational needs. This also applies to those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. There are examples of mathematics being applied in other subjects for measurement and calculation purposes, for example in design and technology in the making of a bird scarer. This application of mathematics is satisfactory.
97. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some good lessons observed in both Year 1 and Year 2. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, resulting in a good class ethos where pupils work hard and concentrate for good periods of time. Teachers generally give clear explanations so pupils know exactly what to do, and approach their work confidently. However, on occasions some teachers do not explain the learning objectives from the start of the lesson and this affects the quality of the work achieved. The school has invested well in new equipment to support the introduction of the National Strategy for Numeracy, and teachers and pupils use learning resources effectively. This good level of resourcing enabled all to use equipment without interruption and resulted in good achievement in this lesson. Most teachers ensure that lessons have a brisk start, successfully engaging pupils' attention. In the majority of the lessons observed, the balance between teachers' talk, pupils' responses and sufficient time available for pupils to practise skills, was good.
98. Termly targets have recently been introduced into Year 1 and Year 2. At best, targets closely match the needs of individual pupils, but in many instances are too broad to impact on pupils' current work so that pupils are unsure of their progress. Throughout the school, pupils' work is marked and dated by the teacher, but there are few comments to indicate the next stage of learning or to gauge progress against the

pupils' individual targets. Teachers use questions effectively to assess pupils' understanding in lessons. Pupils' progress is also effectively monitored through regular assessments and annual tests. The effectiveness of the deployment of classroom assistants varies. They frequently sit passively during the opening part of the lesson. Some then support pupils very effectively as they work in groups, contributing significantly to pupils' progress. Others are unsure of their role, and consequently work less effectively to help pupils to learn.

99. Subject leadership is good overall, but has some weaknesses. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and gives constructive support to colleagues. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms to ensure the effective introduction to the numeracy hour has been effectively undertaken with both written and verbal productive feedback given to all staff. Monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work has been carried out to ensure that activities match the learning intentions. However, within the school development plan, the identification of appropriate priorities, which are measurable, to further raise standards is a weakness. Using an appropriate range of recently introduced assessments, senior managers have begun to systematically analyse the attainment and progress of individual and groups of pupils, successfully using this information to identify target groups and the additional support they require. However, this rigorous assessment is not used as a tracking device throughout the school, nor to drive up standards year on year. This is a weakness in the school's strategy to systematically raise pupils' attainment and achievements.

## **SCIENCE**

100. Pupils' achievement is good by the end of Year 2. Their attainment has kept in line with national improvements since 1997 and currently virtually all Year 2 pupils meet the expected level. This year's assessment of seven year olds' attainment identified over one third of pupils that reached a level higher than that expected for their age. This, and the proportion of pupils that meet requirements, compares favourably with similar schools.
101. The good progress that has been made since the last inspection has ensured that standards have improved steadily. In 1997 lessons were characterised by the overuse of worksheets, in some cases, that denied pupils the opportunity to write things for themselves. Teachers' marking was too superficial and the information gained from assessments was not used well enough to help teachers plan new work. The school has made good improvements in these respects. By the end of Year 2 pupils now practise their writing skills well. They think carefully about what they do. For example, the conclusions written by average attaining pupils are often prefaced by hypotheses and evaluation like, "I think the tinfoil will stay the coldest", or "I found out that..." Pupils with special educational needs show a good understanding of scientific ideas, but struggle more to write down their ideas. Nevertheless, their achievements are good. Higher attaining pupils are good at describing what they have done, but are substantially no better than the average pupils at explaining and evaluating because they are not challenged to do so in greater depth. This is a limitation in otherwise good teaching.
102. A prominent feature of provision is the way in which pupils show good attitudes to their work. The annual science week, for example, allows pupils to conduct investigations over several days, giving good opportunities for research, observation and reflection. The week in 2001 was typically exciting because it included work on ice, shadows and the power of water. Pupils had particular fun in testing the potential of high-powered water pistols. These inspiring opportunities are all part of a well-

planned programme of activities that ensure that pupils' time in Year 1 and Year 2 is spent profitably and they learn at a good pace. Seasonal work is incorporated to good effect. Pupils grow cress to eat at a party and grow sunflowers in a competition to find the tallest bloom. Unfortunately some pupils learn more about slugs than sunflowers, but all enjoy the experiences. Parents take a great interest in this work and, in helping their children to complete special projects, they learn a lot about the science curriculum.

103. Teaching is generally good and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. It results in pupils acquiring a good level of knowledge by the end of Year 2. Some satisfactory lessons have relative weaknesses, which prevent attainment from being even higher. In a Year 1 lesson about forces, pupils were moving objects with water pistols, but teaching did not expect them to talk enough about how the tests could be designed more fairly and what they understood by ideas force. This limits the progress of higher attaining pupils, in particular, but also affects the learning of all pupils. In Year 2 the same issues are sometimes present. Fascinating lessons are designed to teach pupils about keeping teeth healthy, for example. In one case pupils were making fruit salad to demonstrate the value of eating healthily. In all the excitement the original objectives for the lesson were lost and teaching failed to help pupils summarise what they had learnt by evaluating new ideas for themselves. In general, lessons are well planned and exciting, but pupils get too few opportunities to say what they have learnt and what processes they used before well-intentioned teaching evaluates for them in the closing stages of the lesson. This limits pupils' progress including for those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Many pupils are weak at explaining and evaluating what they have done. These lessons do not extend these skills very far. Good knowledge is gained often at the expense of communication skills.
104. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The school has rightly identified that pupils could do better in talking about their learning in science. The fact that several other members of staff assist the co-ordinator means that the resolve to improve is spread across the school. In tackling the issues contained within the last inspection report the school has not yet ensured that teachers' marking consistently gives pupils an idea of what could be improved in their work. The very rich curriculum, including the exciting annual science week, and the co-ordinator's annual action plan that describes the impact that it will have on pupils' learning are all very positive features of the school's provision. The assessment of pupils' work is well catered for, but not the guidance to help them improve even further. Teaching is not regularly observed by the co-ordinator so the issues about oral communication have gone mainly unnoticed.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

105. Pupils generally attain the nationally expected level by the end of Year 2. This represents satisfactory achievement. Standards have fallen since the last inspection when they were higher than was expected for pupils' age. This is because the time for art and design has been slightly squeezed by the introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Moreover, different arrangements for the teaching of painting exist now that classrooms are carpeted. This results in small groups for painting, which means that learning takes much longer for the whole class. A system of assessment, whereby teachers could discuss the merit of individual pieces of children's work and judge whether it met required standards, was not in place at the time of the last inspection. This is still the case, which is another reason why standards are different. Without a simple system of assessing standards they are liable to fluctuate from year to year.



106. Occasionally, pupils in Year 2 still produce work of a high standard. They have, for example, made some bold clay figures in the style of Anthony Gormley's 'Field of Dreams' and some delicate pansies created by dropping coloured inks onto pieces of white cotton. The use of computers is also much more sophisticated than it was in 1997. Pupils have, for example, drawn some very striking pictures, using art software, on an underwater theme that incorporate many ideas in a well-balanced and imaginative way.
107. Generally, standards are as expected because teaching, while being satisfactory, is variable throughout the school. It is variable from Year 1 to Year 2 and within the year groups themselves. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, but it can range from sound to very good. In very good lessons, pupils are able to produce some startling work. Some coloured drawings of lilies in Year 1, for example, captured the essential detail of the flowers in a most powerful way. Each pupil seemed to have expressed successfully his or her own unique view of the blooms, because the teaching emphasised the need to look closely and use a personal style.
108. A deciding factor in the quality of lessons is the involvement of pupils in their work. They are excited about their tasks and show good attitudes and perseverance, but the degree to which they discuss their own work, and that of others, varies. In some lessons they are taught to appraise the work produced while in others the teaching does most of the evaluation, leaving pupils little scope to express their own ideas. Pupils with special educational needs or those that are learning English as an additional language make similar progress to the rest of the class. Sometimes it is good, as expressed by the ICT-generated pictures, for example, and at other times it is satisfactory, but limited by the lack of discussion.
109. Co-ordination is satisfactory. It is still enthusiastic and guided, usefully, by regular attendance at local meetings of other co-ordinators. Pupils are given more choice of art materials now after minor criticisms made in the last inspection report. Teachers' plans are still monitored closely to ensure that the school's curriculum is taught comprehensively. Teaching is not observed and the school lacks a system to store examples of pupils' work in a way that can help staff to discuss and maintain high standards. These two gaps in co-ordination mean that pupils' achievements are liable to vary annually.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110. Pupils reach the standards expected for their ages by the end of Year 2. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Progress since the last report has been satisfactory. The school has begun to use a good set of guidelines based on the latest national plans for the subject. These ensure that pupils steadily build up new skills and understanding in a consistent way, resulting in an improved curriculum that is broad and balanced.
111. By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory understanding for their ages of design processes. This is because skills are taught through an extended piece of work. For example, Year 2 pupils' skills in designing, making, finishing and evaluating developed well together in a project to create a moving wheeled vehicle with axles. By the end of Year 2 pupils have expected levels of skill in: developing and communicating ideas; using appropriate tools, equipment, materials and components; and evaluating their work. Pupils like the work because of the challenge and opportunity to solve problems, experiment and use their imaginations.

112. Teachers also provide good opportunities for pupils to find out how things are made by letting them take things apart. For example, Year 1 pupils carefully separated weft and warp threads and looked at the detail of pattern in material before weaving symmetrical or repeating patterns of their own. Teachers also get pupils to check out possible designs by choosing and assembling a range of items prior to their first design drawing. This provides pupils with good insight into the requirements of the task. For example, when making bird scarers, Year 1 pupils first discussed design proposals and carefully chose materials. They then tested whether their components would give the results they wanted. Pupils then drew detailed designs prior to assembling and making, and discussed ways of improving the finished items. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, measured accurately and finished their scarers with care.
113. Staff ensure that all pupils have the necessary skills to complete the work. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher revised rules for joining materials, and carefully demonstrated safety aspects. Detailed discussion and clear demonstrations enabled the average and higher attaining pupils to do a lot of the work independently. As a result, the teacher was free to give good individual help to those pupils who were struggling with problems. All the pupils produced finished designs and scarers that met the design specification and were of satisfactory quality. Pupils clearly enjoyed this work. Their response to the need to persevere and sometimes to overcome failures made a real contribution to their spiritual development. The school also makes good use of visits to develop pupils' skills in design. For example, after a history visit to Helmsore Mill, pupils learned to weave rugs and make bold and colourful designs in wool.
114. The school links design and technology work appropriately to a few other subjects. This gives added point to pupils' learning. For example, Year 1 pupils designed collages with moving parts to show how they would get lunch to the keeper, after they had read a story about a lighthouse. Pupils use skills taught in literacy lessons in the design process, for example, listing requirements, labelling diagrams and writing up evaluations. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply skills taught in mathematics, especially those of measurement. Pupils do not have opportunities to use computers in the design process.
115. The co-ordinator supports colleagues effectively, for instance, by passing on new ideas from training and ensuring that teachers have all the resources they need before starting new work. Detailed curriculum plans for each module of work give good support to teachers and ensure that pupils' skills develop steadily. There are good assessment opportunities linked to some of the projects, but not all teachers use them. The school is not therefore able to evaluate pupils' attainment and achievements over time. The co-ordinator does not have enough opportunities to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. The school has successfully maintained its satisfactory standards since the time of the last inspection. The satisfactory results are due to good teaching and successful learning. Pupils' achievement is good because they start from a low level of knowledge and skills in Year 1, particularly in the way they are able to talk about their learning.

117. By the end of Year 2, pupils can write independently on what they like and dislike about their town. They are also aware of places beyond their own environment. They know the basics about their own country because mapping skills are taught effectively so that pupils can label countries and capitals within the United Kingdom. The pupils gained a great deal from their visit to Martin Mere (a local wildlife sanctuary), and this helped them to consolidate their use of geographical terminology. They were able to produce, for example, detailed maps, including keys, showing walk-about routes, symbols and hides. Very good teaching, on this occasion, ensured that pupils understood how to plot the map of their journey from Blackburn to Martin Mere giving them a good, elementary, understanding of distance and scale.
118. The good teaching helps pupils to learn about where they live and the connection between people and places. In Year 1 they can use simple geographical terms when they draw and label plans of their classroom; they know how to make a simple key using coloured shapes. Pupils in Year 2 make good progress in drawing detailed plans of the rooms in their houses that include accurate keys. Teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding are well used in planning challenging lessons, so that the pupils enjoy the work, work hard and contribute fully in lessons. Effective questioning encourages pupils to think why things are happening and teachers give them time to extend their answers. For example, when studying different playgrounds in Year 2, pupils were asked to design their own revamped version of the school playground. They were successfully assisted in this challenge by the use of photographs of playgrounds that they had visited. Good teaching skilfully developed the pupils' thinking into an appreciation of what adults and children might want from a playground and what rules might have to apply when it was built. In the end the pupils justified their design decisions well.
119. ICT is effectively used to advance pupils' learning in geography. They can use the mapping program to make a town more beautiful. Able pupils know how to select and drag images into chosen places on the screen. Teachers have successfully promoted the use of writing as a means of communication. This represents good progress since 1997 because this was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' cultural development has been enhanced by the good use of visitors to the school. For example, a theatre group performed a play about re-cycling, which broadened the pupils' understanding of how humans can affect their environment.
120. There is a new co-ordinator, who has monitored teachers' plans successfully and collected some pupils' work to judge the progress being made, but no observations of lessons have been undertaken and this limits the co-ordinator's ability to judge teaching and learning. The assessments of pupils' work in not thoroughly undertaken in Year 1 and Year 2. Furthermore, teachers' marking does not give pointers for improvement.

## **HISTORY**

121. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in history is in line with national expectations. The school has successfully maintained this level of attainment since the last inspection in 1997. Pupils' achievement is good and their learning is successful as a result of the good teaching they receive that includes lots of exciting first-hand experiences such as visits to Wigan Pier and Helmshore Mill. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants and they make good progress. The lively teaching and the vast array of interesting historical resources on show, for example, carry along pupils that find learning difficult. They learn some interesting

information and gain a reasonable understanding about the past even if their written work does not fully display their understanding.

122. By the end of Year 2, pupils know about famous characters in history, such as Guy Fawkes. They understand what homes were like 100 years ago and the differences between bath-times in 1900 and 2000. Seven year olds know about the development of transport from 1930 to 2002 and they have the skills to interpret a historical time chart on space that shows the first satellite, man walking on the moon and the first civilian (non-astronaut) passenger on a space station. Pupils are also able to recognise the differences between their own lives and those of past times. They do this so successfully because teaching is lively and results in pupils having very good attitudes to their work. For example, pupils in Year 2 learned about changes through time when they studied toys from different ages. The teacher used a variety of methods to motivate pupils, such as pretending that someone had mixed up the toys and put some in the box that were not old. The pupils enjoyed sorting out the toys into new and old. Effective questioning challenged the pupils to sort the toys by reference to the materials from which they were made.
123. The good achievement in Year 1 was demonstrated in one lesson about life in the 1900s. Pupils were challenged to act out an old-fashioned washing day. Resources, including a washboard, scrubbing brush, block soap and wooden pegs, were provided to give the pupils an understanding of how things have changed over time. The teacher made the lesson fun by dressing in period costume and joining in with the drama. Pupils learnt that people in the past worked very hard on household duties and that they would be too tired to play afterwards. On a visit to the Helmsshore Textile Museum they learnt about social and technological change through observing spinning and weaving machines. They took photographs of the water wheel and the hammers that made the cloth soft. These quality first-hand experiences help pupils talk well about the content of their learning and make up for their slow start in speaking and listening.
124. Teachers use their good knowledge and understanding to set tasks that challenge the pupils, but there are not often extra challenges to tax those pupils capable of higher attainment. They get the same work as the rest of the class and are expected to complete it at a higher level often without guidance on how this might be achieved. Cross-curricular links with literacy and art are strong. Teachers make good use of the electronic white boards to download relevant data from the Internet, such as Bruegel's painting of 'Children at Play', when the pupils were studying old toys.
125. Co-ordination is good. The availability of resources has been improved since the last inspection and as a result pupils are a lot more interested in their work. Some lessons have been observed, work samples have been analysed and a good photographic record is kept of pupils' work, but no judgements have been made about the lack of extra challenge for higher attaining pupils or pupils' learning in general.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

126. Very good provision and well-trained and knowledgeable teaching has enabled pupils to make rapid and very good progress in word processing, in graphics and in handling data since the last inspection. The majority of pupils attain standards in ICT that are above national expectations for their age by the end of Year 2, compared with those standards attained in the last inspection which were in line with expectations for their age. Improvement in the quality of teaching, a good scheme of work and curriculum planning which ensures progression in knowledge and skills, greatly improved

resourcing and facilities, and an effective ICT co-ordinator, place the school in a strong position to improve standards further.

127. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well in lessons because of good teaching and effective support by additional staff. Also, in many lessons, lower attaining pupils in particular are benefiting from the visual impact of electronic white boards which are used to very good effect by both adults and pupils to explain processes, demonstrate skills and correct any misunderstandings noted. The constant involvement of pupils in this process keeps them involved and very interested in all aspects of work relating to ICT as well as supporting the development of skills and knowledge in other subjects. Time to practise and reinforce new skills and develop further understanding is planned well in other subjects. In many lessons lower attaining pupils are paired to work with pupils who have achieved good computer skills. In a lesson on tallying and recording data on a graph of favourite pets and food these pupils achieved well as a result. In another lesson, a pupil for whom English is an additional language was successfully paired with a higher attainer to work out a number of moves, rests and turns using a programmable toy. As a result the pupils' learning of English developed well.
128. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils can use the mouse competently to pick up screen items and move them around to a given target. Pupils are becoming increasingly familiar with different parts of the keyboard and with a minimum of help they can save, retrieve and print their work. They use word processors to write poems, draft and edit stories and reports in history and alter the arrangement of the text. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, high attaining pupils independently selected colours for their text and tried different layouts, fonts and sizes before making the final choices in their story about 'Gruffalo'.
129. High attaining pupils are adept at using encyclopaedias on CD-ROMs in order to find information on their topics, for example, finding out about different animals and labelling these in preparation for their science lesson. Pupils construct databases containing a range of information about members of the class, favourite pets, and healthy foodstuffs. Although higher attainers are able to interpret simple questions from block graphs they have yet to make up their own questions to test other pupils' understanding and interpretation. Pupils are able to use art programs to 'paint' and 'draw' attractive and well-constructed multi-coloured animal landscapes. Ideas and work produced on home computers often form the starting point for whole-class work, thus encouraging pupils to experiment at home and refine their initial work in school. For example, filling-in techniques were effectively developed and improved upon by the whole class from one produced at home. The higher attainers are beginning to effectively combine text and pictures to produce interesting and well-constructed reports and posters on the wool and weaving industry in Victorian times, following up a visit to a museum. All classes make very good use of digital cameras and pupils use these with confidence to record events. Images are usefully downloaded from the Internet and clipart taken from various programs. Higher attainers are able to type at a good rate for their age, a few punctuating correctly as they do so. The higher attainers in Year 2 can log on to the Internet and can access information independently. They then used this information on toys in a history lesson. The most able pupils can send and receive e-mail to and from each other, as each class has an e-mail address.
130. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. The structure of most lessons includes a very good balance between demonstration, very clear instructions, time for practise and reviewing the understanding of the intended learning outcome. In

the best lessons, the pace was very good, and skilled questioning checked pupils' understanding and identified the next stages of learning. The benefits from staff training combined with very helpful guidance and advice from the subject co-ordinator have contributed significantly to teachers' good knowledge and understanding. Whole-class lessons are planned carefully ensuring that the time is spent efficiently and constructively with appropriate planned time for pupils to practise their new skills during the week. Staff have good relationships with pupils and encourage them to ask questions and to seek help when needed. As a result pupils' attitude to the subject is very good. The success that many pupils achieve in ICT helps to raise their self-esteem and boosts their confidence in their own abilities. This includes those who are learning English as an additional language.

131. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work in ICT. They listen well and concentration of all groups of pupils is good and often very good. They work very hard in lessons, share ideas well and are very proud of their successes. Pupils throughout the school build well on the skills they have previously learned and use them in relevant, interesting and enjoyable ways. The many displays around the school of different subjects supported by ICT are well used and referred to in lessons. The use of electronic white boards acts as a very good stimulus in many lessons and pupils are very keen to practise and reinforce skills during the week. They write down, appropriately, how well they think they have done when they have completed a given task.
132. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in this subject. Computers enable them to achieve things that many find difficult with paper and pen, such as writing pieces of text and presenting their work legibly and in an attractive way.
133. The management of the subject is very good. Pupils' good attainment and very good achievement, the establishment of computers, laptops and electronic white boards can be significantly attributed to the dedication and very hard work of the co-ordinator. The commitment of all staff to developing their skills and confidence through intensive training, and the whole school commitment to developing ICT skills across the school to the highest standard are reflected in the improved standards and progress since the last inspection. The scheme of work and guidance for staff is very good, results in very good teaching and learning and is reflected in displays and the moderated portfolio of pupils' work. The advice on how ICT can support the development of skills and knowledge in other subjects is used particularly well in English, mathematics, science, history and art. ICT is under-used in design and technology. Some monitoring of the teaching of ICT has been effectively undertaken by the co-ordinator in a rigorous and systematic way. The written outcomes of the detailed analysis of standards and review of the successful implementation of the action plan contribute to future whole-school priorities for the school development plan. Parents are very pleased with the ICT provision and many enjoyed the meeting designed to inform them about the new technology in school.

## **MUSIC**

134. The satisfactory standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 2, the sound quality of teaching that results in satisfactory learning, and the good attitudes pupils possess are the same as at the time of the last inspection. The school has maintained successfully this satisfactory level of achievement.
135. Lessons contain some of the essential ingredients to engage pupils' interest and help them learn well. Singing is a central feature of learning and teaching is often confident and energetic in this respect. Instruments are used well by pupils to accompany

singing. Pupils are often asked to try out different sounds on their instruments before the final choice is made. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were trying to play percussion instruments to represent the rain. They thought carefully about how to create a sad sound that typified their feelings about rain and how it stopped them playing outside. Pupils with special educational needs in reading and writing often succeed well in these situations. This was the case in this lesson. In this way lessons satisfactorily meet their objectives, but some factors prevent them being good, or better. Pupils' learning, for example, is not developed systematically enough. Pupils are often not taught the correct terminology and encouraged to use the proper words when they speak in lessons. They are also not involved enough in talking about their own learning. At the end of lessons, teachers invariably summarise what has been learnt without getting the pupils to talk about what they have discovered or found hard, for example. This lack of involvement, on the part of pupils, in discussing their learning often makes them passive recipients who can become temporarily bored with the proceedings. Sometimes the teaching assistant is passive as well, which undervalues their potential for talking about what is being learnt.

136. The standard of singing throughout the school is good because it is practised so well in assemblies, collective worship and hymn practice. Pupils love singing songs, the words of which they have learned by heart. This commitment by the school to singing advantages the talented pupils: they succeed particularly well in this respect. The co-ordinator leads pupils well, on the piano, in a spirited and encouraging fashion. The school also presents pupils with good opportunities to sing during the year, with other local children, for example at Ewood Park Football ground.
137. The school has a new co-ordinator who has produced a good action plan that includes a helpful indication of how learning will benefit from the suggested improvements. The subject is well resourced, but ICT plays a very little part in learning. Teachers' plans are checked, but lessons are not observed to judge teaching or learning. The school does not possess a simple assessment system to help teachers and the co-ordinator judge how well pupils are doing. The school acknowledges all these shortcomings as areas for improvement.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

138. The school has maintained standards in physical education since the last inspection and by the end of Year 2 pupils attain standards that are above national expectations for their age in gymnastics, games and dance, and this represents good achievement. In some lessons there were excellent examples of inclusion, with statemented pupils with severe physical and learning disabilities playing a full and active part with the help of the support assistant and these pupils achieve well. Teachers are aware of the language needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and provide good support underpinned by day-to-day assessment to check that these pupils' understanding of instructions are appropriately interpreted. These pupils also achieve well.
139. In Year 1 pupils imitated the movements of a cobra to some snake charm music played on a flute. Initially they were quite stilted in their movements, but due to good encouragement by the teacher and watching other pupils demonstrate their ideas, most pupils could interpret ideas and incorporate these into an imaginative sequence. Pupils devised a sequence of movements swaying and growing slowly with controlled movements. Some chose to be an Indian dancer and move with graceful agility, using their hands well to imitate classic Indian dance moves. The higher attaining pupils made very good use of the space, incorporating swirling movements in a spiral

fashion, frequently changing directions and using both high and low levels. The Year 2 dance was a follow-up to their class assembly on aliens and pupils moved well for their age. They used their limbs to good effect to show the type of alien they were portraying. They danced with good rhythm and changed the mood quickly in response to the music. Pupils quickly mastered building up a sequence of movements in pairs and the higher attainers went on uninvited to develop their sequence in fours, mirroring each other's movements. Overall, the creative movements were of a high standard, due to a good balance of instruction, coaching and time for pupils to reflect, explore and experiment.

140. In a Year 1 class pupils were improving co-ordination and control in ball control skills when catching and throwing accurately to a given target. Most could catch with some degree of accuracy but throwing to a given target and judging the distance and speed was at an elementary stage. The higher attainers, partly through football coaching, were developing good skills for their age and many hit the target on several occasions. In the lesson pupils observed demonstrations by the teacher and other pupils, and received individual coaching. This resulted in the pupils having time to put what they had learnt into practice in a team game and the overall achievement at the end of the lesson was good. Pupils applied brilliantly the teamwork ethos taught in personal, social and health education. They collaborated extremely well as team members with a healthy competitive spirit.
141. Demonstration was used well to improve pupils' performance and some good individual coaching took place. However, overall, by the end of Year 2, pupils' skills at evaluating their own work and that of others are relatively weak. Pupils' attitudes in physical education lessons are good. The majority of pupils worked enthusiastically and enjoyed their lesson. The majority of pupils are aware of health issues relating to the importance of exercising well before undertaking physical activity. Pupils could talk about the effects rigorous movement was having on their heart. One boy, for example, commented on how his limbs ached following so much exertion.
142. Overall, in both Year 1 and Year 2, pupils are well presented for physical education and games lessons. Lessons begin promptly and pupils are very attentive and settle very quickly. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and often excellent. Pupils move to begin group work quickly and efficiently. Good learning habits are evident and, in some lessons, pupils' behaviour is impeccable. Lessons start and end with good exercises for warming up and relaxing the pupils' muscles and pupils realise the importance of these exercises. Staff and pupils pay due care to safety factors in moving in confined spaces and when moving apparatus.
143. The quality of teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 is overall good with some very good elements of teaching observed in both dance and games. In the better lessons, planning was very clear and shared with the pupils. In a Year 1 games lesson a very good balance between instruction, coaching, demonstration, teacher and pupil self-evaluation, and time to practise developing skills and techniques, enabled the majority of pupils to work with rigour at a good pace and make significant improvement by the end of the lesson. In addition there is a significant contribution from specialist football coaching which helps to raise standards in ball skills and further develop teachers' skills and confidence in aspects of games. Pupils used and put away equipment in their teams. They did this in a most independent and mature manner. This is because they have been trained well and teachers plan time effectively for pupils to put out and clear away apparatus safely and in minimal time.



144. Resources are good in both range and quality and have greatly improved through national initiatives such as 'Top Sports'. There are no extra-curricular activities for sports.
145. The co-ordinator leads the subject very enthusiastically and works hard to support staff and to secure outside specialist coaching. The policy and planning of physical education are good and provide helpful guidance to staff to ensure pupils make appropriate progress in skills in the different elements of games, athletics, gymnastics and dance. Effective timetabling enables pupils to develop skills in seasonal games. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to observe lessons and this limits what is known about pupils' learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

146. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education, by the end of Year 2, are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The school has successfully maintained these standards. Teaching is good overall and pupils across the school learn well, including those pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. For example, all pupils achieved well in a Year 1 lesson when they explored their feelings about what makes them happy. All pupils talked well about their thoughts irrespective of their previous attainment.
147. Year 2 pupils are aware of different religions and they understand that each has festivals and artefacts that are special to them. They recall the Harvest Festival as a day to remember. Seven year olds traditionally study the topic of Christian Pilgrimage. They gain understanding of the importance of a faith by listening to the story of Bernadette of Lourdes. Their knowledge and understanding are broadened well to include the religions of Islam and Sikhism. Pupils understand, for example, about the significance of the Pillars of Shahadah for Muslims. Achievement is also good in Year 1 where pupils learn, for example, about Sikhism by listening to stories about Guru Nanak and his response to God.
148. The good and sometimes very good teaching is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory with some good features. As a consequence, pupils' attitude to their work is very good. They take pride in presenting their work and they enjoy the variety of approaches the teachers encourage them to use. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were thinking deeply about sharing happiness. The teachers' probing and sensitive questions were successful in getting the pupils to describe what made them happy. The pupils listened well to the song 'Hallelujah' and reflected on what the words meant to them. They responded well by saying, "God loves us and we should love and care for each other". This kind of teaching ensures that lessons make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Teaching is satisfactory by comparison when pupils are not challenged so hard to think deeply about what they think. This restricts the achievement made by higher attainers, in particular. They do not develop their ability to describe, evaluate and communicate at such a fast pace.
149. The subject co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator is very well qualified and has a wide range of specialist knowledge with which to support the staff. Teachers' plans are monitored carefully to ensure that the correct units are being taught in the agreed fashion. Lessons contain good cross-curricular links with English, art, personal, social and health education and ICT. Lessons have not been observed yet, therefore no judgements have been made about how teacher's plans are fulfilled in practice.

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. For example, the number of books in the library for research purposes has been increased. The lack of research was a specific criticism made in 1997.