

INSPECTION REPORT

ST IGNATIUS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119610

Headteacher: Mrs M E Kenyon

Reporting inspector: Mr C R Warn
4293

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 December 2000

Inspection number: 225207

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Ignatius' Square Meadow Street PRESTON Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body at the above address
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Ainscough
Date of previous inspection:	10 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Chris Warn 4293	Registered inspector	Geography	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
Bernard Morgan 15522	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils or students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
Brian Allaway 4287	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Science</p> <p>Art and design</p> <p>Design and technology</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>Special educational needs</p>	
Yvonne Crizzle 1951	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Areas for learning for children in the Foundation stage</p> <p>Equal Opportunities</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	<p>How well are pupils or students taught?</p>

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Ignatius' Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in the centre of Preston with 168 pupils aged from four to eleven. The number of pupils in the school is rising. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is very high compared to most primary schools, with 59% of pupils on the register and 5.4% with statements of special educational needs. The majority of pupils identified for external support have moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The percentage of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is 28%, which is higher than in most primary schools. Ten per cent of children come from Traveller backgrounds, and some of these attend the school for only parts of a year. Forty five per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is a very high proportion compared to most primary schools. Local data indicates that the school serves areas of relatively high social and educational disadvantage. The majority of pupils have below average skills in language and literacy when they enter the Reception class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Ignatius' is a rapidly improving school. Good leadership and management have ensured that good progress has been made since the school was last inspected in March 1997. Standards have improved significantly by the end of Key Stage 1 in writing and mathematics from being well below average to approaching the national average. The same has happened with standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science. However, standards in reading remain below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 remain well below average. The progress pupils make from a very low baseline in the Reception year to the end of Year 6 is good in mathematics and science and is satisfactory in English and other subjects, with the exception of geography and design and technology. The school's targets for attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 next year suggests that standards will continue to improve, although they will remain below average, especially for English. Standards of behaviour have greatly improved and are now good. The school has been extremely successful in ensuring equality of opportunity for all of its pupils and has included every pupil fully in its life and work. Almost all of the teaching is satisfactory or better, and over half is good and sometimes very good. Pupils are very well cared for and respond with enthusiasm. Substantial recent improvements to the buildings have produced a very pleasant learning environment. Given the current standards attained by pupils the school provides satisfactory value for money. The school has the capacity to improve further.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led and managed by the head teacher, with the active support of staff and governors.
- There are examples of good teaching in every year and the overall quality of teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection.
- Standards of attainment are rising steadily in mathematics and science.
- Children aged under five are making good progress towards their early learning goals.
- Pupils make good overall progress, especially in Years 2, 3 and 4.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- Pupils behave well and there is a high degree of cultural and social harmony.
- All pupils are very well supported in their spiritual, moral and personal development.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are fully committed to ensuring that the significant

improvements made in recent years will be sustained into the future.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in reading and writing need to be raised further, especially at Key Stage 2.
- Appropriately challenging work should be consistently provided for all pupils and particularly for more able pupils.
- More opportunities need to be provided for pupils to develop and use their information and communication technology skills.
- Increased time is needed for teaching during the week, with more space for the foundation subjects, especially design and technology and geography where standards are too low.
- Pupils' work needs to be marked in a way that helps them to see more clearly how well they are doing and how their work could be better.
- Attendance and punctuality need to be improved further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Substantial improvement has been made since the last inspection in March 1997 with the consequence that the school is now more effective. Standards of attainment are rising at both key stages, especially in mathematics and science. The strengths of the school identified in the last inspection report have been maintained and more have been added. In particular, the quality of teaching has improved considerably with the proportion of lessons judged to be satisfactory or better rising from 86% to 98%. The school has worked hard to respond to the areas of weakness set out in the last report. The management of the school has been greatly strengthened and is now very effective. There is now a strong whole-school focus on raising attainment. Standards of behaviour have greatly improved and are now good, even for pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The curriculum for children aged under five has been completely revised and updated to match current requirements. Investigative and practical work is now an established feature of science and mathematics and is a factor in the success of these two subjects. There remains a lot to be done to boost standards further in literacy, information and communication technology, design and technology and geography. Improvements to the inside of the buildings have transformed the appearance of the school, although there is still a lack of outdoor play space.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	E*	E
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	E	E	D	D

Key

well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
in the lowest 5% nationally	E*

Children aged under five are making good progress and most are on course to meet nationally expected early learning goals, especially in their mathematical, physical, personal, social and emotional development.

Standards in the national tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics for the three years 1998-2000 were well below the national average. In comparison with schools that have a similar proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals the test results for 2000 were well below average for reading, below average for writing and in line with the average for mathematics. Standards were below average in information and communication technology skills and understanding. However, given the exceptionally high proportion of pupils who are on the special educational needs register and the low standards of attainment that pupils have when they enter the Reception year, these results show that pupils make considerable progress during Key Stage 1, especially in mathematics and science.

In comparison to national standards in the end of Key Stage 2 tests the performance of pupils in this school is well below average in English and mathematics and just below average in science. In comparison with schools that have a similar proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals the test results for 2000 were well below average in English, in line with the average for mathematics but below average in science. When additional consideration is given to the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the levels of attainment at the start of the key stage, progress is good in science and mathematics but barely satisfactory in English. Standards were judged to be in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2 in history, art and design and physical education but below this level in information and communication technology, geography and design and technology. Insufficient music was available to be seen to judge standards in this subject.

Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress. Almost a third have improved sufficiently over the last year to move a stage down the register or off the register completely.

The targets set for standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2001 are suitably challenging, given the known capabilities of the pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are good. Pupils generally have very positive attitudes to the school and many show a great deal of enthusiasm and a strong desire to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is invariably good, even for pupils who have identified behavioural difficulties. There is a high degree of friendliness, good manners and consideration for others. Pupils work and play well together. However, the number of pupils who are excluded for fixed lengths of time is greater than in most primary schools of this size. The school makes sure that exclusions are used as a positive action to help pupils to learn how to overcome their behavioural difficulties.
Personal development and relationships	This is an important strength of the school. The personal development of pupils is good, thanks to the thoughtful and energetic work of members of staff. The relationships within this school, especially between pupils, are very good.
Attendance	The attendance rate fell in 1999-2000 to below 90%, which makes it unsatisfactory. There has been improvement since September 2000, but this needs to be sustained. The school is working very hard to do this. Parents need to ensure that pupils arrive at school on time, and pupils need to arrive at lessons more punctually to avoid learning time being lost.

The very good relationships, positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour all contribute to the substantial progress that most pupils make. A very special feature of this school is the remarkable way in which children from Christian, Hindu and Islamic communities work and worship together in a true sense of partnership.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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 overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with notable strengths in both key stages. Examples of good teaching can be found in every class. Good and very good teaching was a particular feature of the end of Key Stage 1 and the first half of Key Stage 2. Ninety eight per cent of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better and 52% was good or better. Twelve per cent of teaching was very good or excellent. Teaching in 2% of lessons was unsatisfactory. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy is good overall, but there are some weaknesses in the teaching of English that need to be addressed in order to improve standards of reading and writing further. The teaching of science, art, history and physical education is generally good. No specific design and technology, geography or information and communication technology teaching took place during the inspection and only one music lesson could be seen. Lessons are carefully planned with a variety of learning activities. Class control is very good and pupils who are on the special educational needs register are given intensive and effective support. Teachers meet the basic learning needs of all pupils well, but there is scope for some pupils to be given more challenging tasks to do to extend their thinking skills further and to give them opportunities to write at greater length for a wider range of purposes. There is insufficient information and communication technology equipment available for teachers to use new technology to enrich classroom learning to any marked degree. Pupils know what they are expected to do in each lesson, but in many cases they do not have a sufficiently clear picture of their own learning targets or how well they are progressing.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	An appropriate curriculum is provided for children aged under five. At Key Stages 1 and 2 all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, but there is insufficient coverage of information and communication technology, geography, and design and technology. The length of the taught day is shorter than in most primary schools. These weaknesses make the overall provision unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good. Nearly two thirds of pupils have special educational needs. They are intensively supported by learning support assistants and the learning support co-ordinator. They have access to the full curriculum offered by the school and to suitably pitched books and worksheets. Their individual educational plans are accurately drawn up and are used well to help guide lesson planning.

Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision is satisfactory. Just over a quarter of pupils are learning English as an additional language. They have access to the full curriculum and to a teacher and a trained assistant when they need specific help.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Opportunities are very good for pupils' spiritual and moral development, good for their social development and satisfactory for their cultural development. Teachers work hard to include all pupils in all activities and to raise their confidence and self-esteem.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Support for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. There are good arrangements for monitoring behaviour and rewarding success. Staff respond very well to the occasional incidents of bullying, and parents have confidence in the way in which this is handled. The school works hard to try to overcome the barriers to good attendance. Greater attention needs to be given to ways of marking work more thoroughly and collecting more precise information about pupils' progress in order to plan and teach the next steps in learning effectively.

Steps are being taken to help parents to become more involved in their children's learning, including an imaginative course called "parents as educators". More needs to be done to provide parents with a fuller picture about what their child is learning and the progress being made. A good range of activities is offered outside lesson times.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership and management ensures a clear direction for continuing improvement. Staff, governors and senior managers work extremely well as a team. Staff with a responsibility for subject leadership are working hard to develop improved schemes of work that meet newly published guidelines.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their roles well. They understand the strengths of the school and what else has to be done to improve it further. They are fully involved in strategic and financial planning and are becoming more experienced in monitoring how well plans are progressing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Staff and governors have access to some very detailed performance data to be used to inform future action. There is a systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Financial resources are very well used to support learning. Specific grants are used for their intended purposes. There is a need to increase the stock of books in the library and to introduce more information and communication technology equipment that can be used in each classroom to support learning in all subjects.

The school is benefiting from additional staffing and technical support provided by the Education Action Zone. In the last two years most of the interior of the school has been completely refurbished to produce a vastly improved environment for learning. This has been a major undertaking that has taken a great deal of skilful management. The school has a team of teaching assistants who offer useful help to specific pupils during practical and group activities. The budget is extremely well administered. Governors are beginning to make judgements in relation to best value, particularly by assessing the impact of expenditure on meeting improvement targets. All of these factors, linked with improved teaching and generally rising standards, means that the overall effectiveness of the school is good.

PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving results • high standards of behaviour and the general absence of bullying • a safe, caring and attractive learning environment • a strong emphasis on promoting high moral standards • the positive and purposeful way in which the school is led • the approachability and friendliness of members of staff • the high quality of teaching • the substantial building improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the inadequate outdoor play areas • traffic congestion outside the school entrance when pupils were arriving at or departing from school

Inspection evidence confirmed the strengths of the school identified by parents. The very positive endorsement of the work of the school by parents is itself another strength. The things that most concern parents are largely a product of the restricted site of the school. Governors have plans to deal with these problems, which should be pursued with urgency.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Context of the inspection

1. The school is smaller than the majority of primary schools, so care has to be taken in considering the results of the relatively small numbers of pupils in each year group who take the tests. With under 20 pupils being entered for the end of Key Stage 2 tests, each pupil counts for just over five percentage points in the tables. Results in 1999 and 2000 have been depressed by a higher than usual number of pupils who were absent during the time of the tests. A considerable proportion of pupils joined the school in 1998 from a neighbouring school that closed. Their results were influenced by the different learning conditions in that school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is very high compared to most primary schools. This proportion has increased over the last year from 49% to 59% of pupils within the school. Recently some pupils who have identified special educational needs who live outside the normal area served by the school have been admitted. The percentage of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is also high. Ten percent of children come from Traveller backgrounds, and some of these attend the school for only parts of a year. A very high proportion of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Local data indicates that the school serves areas of relatively high social and educational disadvantage where conditions for learning outside school hours can often be difficult. All of these factors are important influences on the standards that are reached.

The school's results and other performance data

2. The ability level of children on entry to the Reception year is well below average for their age in terms of their language and literacy skills. Compared to other primary schools in central Preston, these ability levels (as measured in baseline tests) are declining significantly. The weakest area on entry is reading, with two thirds of pupils performing below the average level of attainment for children aged under five. More boys than girls currently enter the school with reading and speaking difficulties. The standards of attainment for children aged under five have risen considerably since the time of the last inspection, thanks to a much improved curriculum and teaching that is now focused on reaching more precise objectives. The following comments summarise the extent to which children are on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year in each of the following areas of learning:

Personal, social and emotional development

Overall standards are good, and most children reach or exceed expected standards. Children gain greatly from the rich opportunities made available to them to develop their social, listening and learning skills, to settle into stable routines and to develop self-confidence.

Communication, language and literacy

Given the generally low baseline that children start from, satisfactory progress is made. Even so, by the time they enter Year 1 the majority of children are still performing at standards that

are well below average in this area of learning, especially in reading, writing and using language to organise their thinking.

Mathematical development

Their mathematical development is satisfactory, with standards being reached in counting, calculating, shape and space that are in line with the national expectation.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Overall standards are unsatisfactory. Pupils have too few opportunities to improve their designing and making skills or to use computers and programmable toys. They are more successful at learning about time and about the values and beliefs of others, but have a relatively poor sense of place and direction.

Physical development

The standards achieved are good, especially in movement and spatial awareness.

Creative development

The standards achieved are satisfactory, with particular strengths in singing, imaginative play and using colour and textures. Some valuable computer handling skills are established.

3. The standards reached in English by the end of Key Stage 1 are below the national average. This is evident both from the recent test results and from standards seen in lessons during the inspection. However, they represent the outcome of satisfactory progress from a very low starting point at the beginning of the key stage. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading have remained well below the national average since the last inspection. The 2000 results show a small improvement on those of 1999. In writing standards have improved considerably since 1998 when they were at a very low point. This upward trend in standards has been secured against a falling trend in the levels of attainment of pupils entering the Reception year since 1998.
4. The standards reached in tests in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 are now close to the national expectation, having risen substantially from 1998. This represents good progress from the start of the key stage. In comparison with all schools nationally, attainment has risen dramatically from 1998 to 2000, and lesson observations confirm that this trend is still continuing. This is a fine success story, especially considering that there were notable weaknesses in mathematics at the time of the last inspection.
5. The standards reached in science by the end of Key Stage 1 are just below the national expectation. The strongest area of performance is in investigative science and physical processes, both of which were areas of weakness at the time of the last inspection.
6. In 2000, boys achieved less highly than girls in tests at the end of Key Stage 1. There was no evidence of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds performing differently, but in general those who were entitled to take free school meals performed less well than the other pupils.

Pupils with identified learning needs made good progress with the help of teaching assistants. In general pupils made the greatest progress in aspects of learning that involved them in practical and experimental activities such as mathematics, science, art and design and physical education. When given the opportunity to use new technology to enhance their learning, outcomes are good, but these opportunities are not prolific enough.

7. The standards reached in tests in English by the end of Key Stage 2 are well below the national average. The percentage of pupils who reached or exceeded Level 4 in the English test dipped from 55% in 1999 to 42% in 2000. Even allowing for all of the circumstances outlined in paragraph 1, and taking into account the pupils' previous Key Stage 1 results as a benchmark, this result was lower than it should have been by at least six percentage points. A positive feature, however, is the fact that the proportion of pupils who reached Level 5 was in line with the other primary schools in the Preston Education Action Zone. It is mainly boys who perform at the lower levels in English. A much higher proportion of girls reach Levels 4 and 5 than boys. The teacher assessment scores for 2000 do not correlate sufficiently well with the test scores, with an underestimation of the percentage of pupils getting less than a Level 4 and an overestimation of those getting a Level 5. The need to improve English results is the most pressing thing to be done in the school. Important strategies for this include providing more opportunities for pupils to use their reading and writing skills in a broader range of contexts and raising the status of reading for information and enjoyment. In the 'literacy hour' each day there is an excessive emphasis on rehearsing technical skills in relative isolation from the uses of literacy in the other subjects of the curriculum.
8. The standards reached in tests in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with those expected nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding Level 4 at 58% is now in line with the national average but the proportion reaching Level 5 at 11% is below average. The average point score for mathematics (calculated by converting level grades into points) showed a very big increase for the second year running in 2000. Boys have outperformed girls in mathematics in each year up to 2000, when there was no gender gap. An early involvement by the school in trialling the National Numeracy Strategy materials was an important factor in the success story. In comparison with schools nationally that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the attainment in mathematics at St. Ignatius' is above average. The progress made from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 is very good. The need to make such improvement in mathematics was a key issue for action in the last inspection. There is ample proof that this has been done successfully.
9. The overall standards reached in tests in science by the end of Key Stage 2 are slightly below the national average in terms of point scores. The proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding Level 4 is above average at 79%, but the proportion reaching Level 5 at 16% is below average. As in mathematics, the progress made from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 is very good. The trend over time shows a dramatic improvement with both boys and girls both performing well. All girls reached Level 4 in 2000.
10. The great majority of pupils with special educational needs achieve results that are in line with the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language reach a comparable standard to other pupils in the school. In general, the pupils who tend to under achieve are those on the free school meals register regardless of ethnicity. Until 1999, girls performed less well than boys, but the reverse is the case in 2000.

The standards reached by the most able pupils in the school could be raised further by giving them more challenging tasks to perform and allowing them more scope to develop their thinking skills.

Trends in results over time

11. The progress made by pupils at the Foundation stage has improved since the last inspection, when it was constrained by an inappropriate curriculum. This problem has now been dealt with, and children have benefited accordingly. There is still more to be done to raise standards of reading and to establish the basis for more ambitious writing targets. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world remains below average, but standards in physical and creative development have moved upwards. Since the last inspection the overall ability of children entering the Reception year has declined according to baseline test scores. This means that each year teachers have more to do to keep standards constant by the end of the Foundation stage. This is being achieved.
12. Since the last inspection the standards reached in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 have remained at a relatively constant level below the national average. Slightly better test scores were gained in 1997 and 2000. Further intervention is needed to raise standards in reading, with more opportunities for independent reading being a key priority. Since the last inspection standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 fell to a very low level in 1998 and then recovered in 1999 and 2000. They are now much better than in 1997, although they remain below average. Standards in mathematics are now much higher than at the time of the last inspection and have been close to the national average in 1999 and 2000. Over the same period standards in science have also improved from well below average in 1996 to well above average in 2000. There has been some improvement in standards in history, art and design and physical education, but a decline in standards in geography. Standards in design and technology remain very low. There is evidence of improved information and communication technology skills, but from a very low level in 1997 to a standard that is still below what it should be. There is insufficient inspection evidence to judge whether standards have changed in music.
13. Since the last inspection the standards reached in English at the end of Key Stage 2 have remained well below the national average, although there were peaks in 1997 and 1999 when the test results were better. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils with special educational needs has risen from 36% to 59%. This factor alone means that much greater progress has been required just to keep standards constant. However, even allowing for this, and for other factors, standards in English could be higher. In contrast, standards in mathematics and science have risen considerably despite the doubling in the proportion of pupils who have identified learning difficulties since 1997. The changes in the standards achieved in the other subjects of the curriculum at Key Stage 2 are similar to those at Key Stage 1.

The school's progress towards its targets

14. The target for the proportion of pupils expected to reach or exceed Level 4 in English at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2001 is 60%. This is a challenging target considering that 42% of pupils reached this standard in 2000. Inspection evidence shows that intensive support and

imaginative teaching will be needed to lift results up to this figure. The provision of additional teaching support for this purpose by the Education Action Zone is very valuable, although this support needs to be more closely integrated with the work of the class teacher for Year 6. This figure of 60% is achievable if all pupils reach the standards predicted from their past test scores. In 2000 the target for mathematics was exceeded and the school is on track to meet its 2001 target of 60%. The 2000 target for science was greatly exceeded and pupils are well on track to reach the 2001 target of 75%.

Standards of work seen

15. The standards of work seen in lessons in the core subjects at Key Stage 1 reflected the patterns of attainment shown in the recent test results, with greater strengths in numeracy and science than in literacy. Standards of listening were good, but opportunities for pupils to give articulate and considered spoken answers to questions were too infrequent. Whilst pupils were often seen to read with accuracy, they often lacked fluency and good expression. Opportunities for extended writing were limited, with the consequence that pupils were often engaged only in writing brief statements or phrases. In mathematics lessons pupils were working productively at standards that were appropriate for their ages and abilities. In science many pupils were able to demonstrate a good understanding of concepts, processes and outcomes.
16. The standards of work seen in lessons in the core subjects at Key Stage 2 were below expected levels in English, but in line with them in mathematics and science. In English pupils made satisfactory progress although standards of reading were sometimes restricted by insufficient access to a broad enough range of books and articles. Higher order reading skills were not sufficiently encouraged. Older pupils were not seen to be writing with expected levels of fluency and insight. In mathematics the pace, amount and standard of work was in line with the recommendations in the National Numeracy Strategy. In science pupils were progressing well. Most of the older pupils had a secure understanding of the concept of fair testing and how it is necessary to control some variables within a scientific experiment.
17. The standards of work seen in information and communication technology were in general below those expected of pupils at both Key Stages 1 and 2. This was mostly because of the limited opportunities provided. Instances were seen of small groups of pupils using computers productively, but no lesson planned to develop pupils' information and communication technology skills in a methodical way was taught during the inspection period.
18. The standards of work seen in lessons in the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1 were satisfactory in art and design, history and physical education. Only one music lesson could be seen during the inspection and standards here were good. No lessons that specifically involved the teaching of geography or design and technology were available to be seen.
19. The standards of work seen in the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 were good in art and design, and satisfactory in history and physical education. No lessons involving design and technology, geography or music could be seen during the inspection.

20. Skills in literacy are applied well in some science lessons where pupils write down their observations accurately using the correct terminology. There are often good opportunities for oral work in history, but writing is frequently restricted to the completion of short statements on worksheets or in an exercise book. Some pupils use information and communication technology successfully to help them present their writing attractively, although errors of spelling and syntax are sometimes left uncorrected. There is scope for using the contexts of subjects such as geography and history within English lessons as a way of developing subject and language skills together. This would help to raise standards in literacy whilst easing the time restraints on the foundation subjects.
21. Numeracy skills are less evidently taught through other subjects. In science pupils use charts to present findings, but measurement and graphical data are insufficiently used. In a Year 3 art and design lesson geometric patterns were reproduced well using printed shapes, showing an emerging understanding of symmetry. Evidence from pupils' written work in geography suggests that the use of maps, plans and calculation is under-developed. In a Year 1 music lesson pupils could count a beat and clap to it successfully.
22. All pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and many make good progress from the levels of attainment that they reached at the start of Key Stage 1. They benefit from intensive and often effective support from teaching assistants. Sometimes this support is so intensive that they become rather dependent upon it and do not always develop their independent thinking and enquiry skills sufficiently. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make comparable progress to other pupils in the school. The higher level of absence of some of the children from Traveller communities impedes their progress and attainment to some degree. Boys and girls make equal progress, but boys start at Year 1 and finish at Year 6 at lower levels. Approximately 15% of pupils in each year have high levels of literacy, numeracy and reasoning skills as shown by tests. These pupils do not, in general, make enough progress, mainly because they are not given sufficient scope to extend their thinking and problem-solving skills by applying them to more demanding tasks. More learning support needs to be directed at the needs of these gifted and talented pupils. At the time of the last inspection some pupils' progress was impeded by the poor behaviour of a minority of children. This is no longer the case as there is now very good classroom control in every class.

Conclusion

23. Taking all contextual factors into account, pupils' overall level of attainment is in line with expected standards in the Foundation stage and at both Key Stages 1 and 2. Attainment is above the standards expected in mathematics and science, but below in English. Work is in hand to rectify this. Attainment is in line with expectation in history, art and design and physical education, but below expectation in design and technology, geography and information and communication technology. Insufficient evidence was available to judge overall standards in music. The weaknesses in some of the foundation subjects are largely the product of insufficient teaching time. Improving attainment in English, information and communication technology, geography and design and technology are key priorities for the school to tackle.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

24. Pupils are keen to come to school. They enjoy lessons and play well together at break and lunchtimes. They are developing very positive attitudes to school and many show a great deal

of enthusiasm and a strong desire to learn. Behaviour in lessons is invariably good, even for pupils who have identified behavioural difficulties. Pupils under five years of age behave well, are happy and quickly become secure in the school's routines. The high quality of the provision for pupils' personal and social development is a key factor in achieving this positive outcome. There is a high degree of friendliness, good manners and consideration for others to be seen during lessons, in assemblies and within the general life of the school. Pupils speak confidently to visitors about their work and personal interests. Pupils' personal development is actively supported and promoted using a range of well-designed policies. These are consistently operated and very well managed by all staff who have the best interests of pupils very much at heart. High standards reflect closely the school's Christian aims and ethos. There is a school council whose members work in a very responsible and thoughtful manner to discuss and consider matters raised by fellow pupils.

25. The school has a higher level than normal of exclusions. In the academic year 1999-2000 there were thirteen fixed period exclusions, twelve of which involved boys. Evidence from the inspection shows clearly that the school had acted consistently in using this sanction in support of its clearly established standards. Care is taken to ensure that there is a very carefully structured programme of support to enable the reintegration of pupils to school after such actions have taken place. Parents express confidence in the school's approach to the promotion of good behaviour and the high levels of care shown to pupils. No evidence of bullying or harassment was seen during the inspection. The procedures to deal with any such incidents are very effective. Parents expressed a high level of confidence in the school's capacity to handle these matters in a fair and speedy manner.
26. Relationships within the school are very good. There is a high level of mutual respect. A very special feature is the remarkable way in which pupils from Christian, Hindu and Islamic communities work and worship together in a true sense of partnership. The staff, led by the clear example of the headteacher, work very hard to foster and promote these relationships in a way which reflects great credit on them. Teachers also know pupils well and use this knowledge to support their personal development effectively. Whilst there are examples of opportunities being given for pupils to develop independence and to take initiative, as for example by helping as monitors in classrooms and in assemblies, these opportunities are generally too few. Similarly pupils are not sufficiently involved in establishing their own learning targets or in understanding how they are progressing towards them.
27. Levels of attendance in 1999-2000 fell to below 90%, which is unsatisfactory. The school is keenly aware of this and is working in partnership with others, including the Education Welfare Officer, to tackle cases of unauthorised and condoned absence. With the support of the Education Action Zone, the underlying factors have been identified and action is now in hand to bring about improvement. Much work has been done, with some success, to impress on parents the need for not only regular attendance but to ensure that the school is made aware of any absence and is given a proper reason for it. There have been recent improvements as a result of these actions. The overall picture now shows the position to be above 90% from September 2000. On occasion, pupils' punctuality both at the beginning of sessions and at the start of lessons is unsatisfactory. It is important to continue to ensure that parents are reminded of the need for regular and punctual attendance and also to maintain and extend such initiatives as the breakfast club and rewards for improved attendance. Registration procedures are dealt with promptly and efficiently.

28. The last inspection noted that there were a number of aspects of pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development that required attention and improvement. Evidence from this inspection shows that much has been achieved. The very good relationships, positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour are all now contributing to the substantial progress that most pupils make. These features are now a considerable strength of the school when formerly they were a weakness.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

29. There are six classes in the school. Pupils in the Reception year and each of Years 1 to 3 are taught as separate year groups. Pupils in Year 4 are taught together with some Year 5 pupils. The remaining Year 5 pupils are taught alongside all Year 6 pupils. The six class teachers include the deputy headteacher, who is released for a day each week to undertake management roles. The headteacher does not have a regular teaching commitment. There are three other full-time teachers who provide support for pupils with special educational needs, pupils learning English as an additional language and outreach work. A further part-time teacher is employed by the Education Action Zone to support Key Stage 2 literacy work.
30. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are many good features, including careful planning, a methodical emphasis on skills acquisition and capable class control. There are still features to be improved, especially related to the teaching of literacy, offering greater levels of intellectual challenge to some pupils, and marking work more thoroughly. The quality of teaching is satisfactory for children aged under five and at Key Stage 1. It is good at Key Stage 2.
31. Forty seven lessons were observed involving all teachers other than the headteacher. During the inspection no lessons took place involving the teaching of geography or specific elements of the information and communication technology or design and technology curriculum. Only one music lesson could be observed. Of the lessons seen, the teaching was satisfactory or better in 98% of lessons and very good or excellent in 12%. It was good or better in 52% of lessons. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection where 86% of lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better and only 6% very good. The improvements have been most marked at Key Stage 2. Examples of good teaching can be found in every class. Good and very good teaching is a particular feature of the end of Key Stage 1 and the first half of Key Stage 2. Helpful ideas about improving teaching strategies have come from a link with a Beacon school in Preston.
32. The teaching of pupils who are aged under five has more strengths than weaknesses. Children are managed well and relationships are very good. The teaching successfully enables children to strengthen their self-confidence and their readiness for learning. All children, including those who enter the Reception year with weak literacy and language skills, make good overall progress. Teaching assistants make an important contribution to this.
33. The overall quality of teaching at both Key Stages 1 and 2 in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory, although there are many good aspects. There are particular strengths in lesson planning, setting objectives that pupils understand, teaching phonics and other basic skills, explaining things carefully, managing pupils well and using time efficiently. Aspects that are

weaker include expecting too little from more able pupils, making insufficient use of information and communication technology, and not using assessment accurately enough to encourage pupils to overcome difficulties. In the majority of cases the strengths outweighed the weaknesses. The quality of teaching in the core subjects was at its best in Years 2 to 4.

34. Teachers' competency in teaching literacy throughout the school is satisfactory overall with some good features particularly at Key Stage 2. Lessons have well-defined learning objectives and are suitably planned to meet the needs of different abilities. However, the element of challenge for all pupils is not always sufficient. In the better lessons teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can do, as demonstrated by a higher quality of discussion which draws out pupils' ideas well. The teaching strategies used enable all pupils to make broadly satisfactory progress in most aspects of their learning and in relation to their prior attainment. The lack of proper advice about how to improve their performance restricts pupils from making satisfactory or good progress in all strands of literacy.
35. Teachers' competency in teaching numeracy throughout the school is good in numeracy lessons, science and music. They are confident in the use of the nationally designed programme for the teaching of mathematics which is used in conjunction with the Lancashire scheme of work for mathematics. Lessons are well prepared and many offer scope for investigation and conceptual development. More opportunities to apply numeracy skills in other subjects need to be sought.
36. The impact on pupils' learning of the teaching of information and communication technology is lower than it should be. At the time of the last inspection there was minimal use made of information and communication technology in teaching. Evidence from schemes of work and wall displays shows that the position has improved a little, and during the inspection small groups of pupils were seen to be using computers to access information or to practice their skills. There was no whole-class teaching using information and communication technology provided during the inspection week, and few references to such events are made in the schemes of work of any subject. More opportunities for whole-class learning using information and communication technology are required. This would be greatly helped if an electronic whiteboard or a digital projector were to be available, backed up with sufficient teacher expertise.
37. Teachers' knowledge of the lesson content is particularly good in mathematics, science, history, art and design and physical education. There are some shortcomings in their understanding of how to teach writing to higher standards, and how to encourage more extensive reading. Teachers' technical expertise in teaching phonics is satisfactory. Their teaching of investigative skills in science and mathematics is good. Teachers' expectations of conduct, attentiveness and work output are invariably good in all years. Their expectations of average and below average attainers are also good, but there are some shortcomings in their expectations of the capability of more able pupils to achieve more advanced outcomes. Examples of where teachers did have high expectations for all of their pupils were found in art and design in Year 3 and history in Years 4 to 6.
38. There are strengths in the way in which teachers use methods that enable all pupils to reach basic levels of knowledge and understanding in all subjects. The standard approach of an introductory session taught using inter-active questioning and instruction enables pupils to

proceed purposefully with individual or group activities before the teacher summarises points at the end. This approach successfully consolidates earlier learning. There is a strong reliance on pupils listening to teacher expositions and questioning which sometimes needs to be supplemented by more visual materials, more reference to books and a greater access to information and communication technology based learning materials. This is particularly apparent when pupils are learning about things that are outside their direct experience, such as life in past times or distant places. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils are sometimes constrained by the use of closed questions and worksheets that have restricted tasks to complete. Sometimes lessons are so tightly programmed as to leave insufficient scope for extended reading, writing or enquiry work that involves personal initiative. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good and there is plenty of encouragement offered, including rewards for good work and co-operative attitudes.

39. Some lessons would benefit from a more punctual start. Once under way, time is used intensively and activities proceed at a brisk pace. In many instances more use could be made of teaching assistants, who sometimes sit passively during the introductory and plenary parts of a lesson. Some cases were observed where teaching assistants worked too intensively with a small group of pupils, encouraging some over-dependency by doing too much for them. Equally, some support work is very effective, as in Year 3 where the teaching assistant works well as a partner with the classroom teacher to support the learning of all pupils. In general, teachers need to increase the level of challenge that they provide for those pupils who are capable of more sophisticated thinking by inspiring them to learn from a wider range of resources and to respond with deeper levels of analysis. For example, in a science lesson involving the identification of materials that conduct electricity, some pupils wished to go on to explore which metals were good or bad conductors and why, but no opportunities were provided for them to do this. The support given for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is effective in enabling them to gain essential key skills and concepts. Pupils in all years have some work set for them to do at home, and teachers make use of this where appropriate in subsequent lessons.
40. The overall quality of marking is unsatisfactory and many of the concerns stated in the last inspection report about this aspect of teaching remain to be addressed. Although books are frequently checked, marking and spoken feedback is not sufficiently related to learning targets or to advice about how to improve. This makes it harder for pupils to know just how well they are doing or to take more personal responsibility for their learning. The starting point for improving this feature of teaching is to ensure that pupils have a greater knowledge of their own learning targets and what achieving them involves.
41. The enthusiastic and friendly teaching approaches used helps pupils to sustain concentration well. Good behaviour and relationships in lessons have been achieved through encouragement and praise rather than by threat or punishment. Pupils gain greatly from working in a well ordered, safe and pleasant classroom environment. This helps pupils to develop their self-confidence and to establish organised work habits. Some pupils receive small group teaching in a specially equipped learning support room for part of a day. Here they are able to receive specific help linked directly to the targets within their individual education plans.
42. The school uses its Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) to purchase support for pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL). There are 66 pupils on the school

roll who come from homes where English is not the first language spoken. These pupils are provided with additional timetabled support from a teacher of EAL who works at the school on a part-time basis. There are detailed general plans for the ways in which all targeted pupils in each class will be supported, but as yet no specific individual action plans.

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

The quality and range of the curriculum

43. The curriculum meets statutory requirements by providing teaching time for all subjects of the National Curriculum. The curriculum offered is equally accessible to every pupil and is followed by all, regardless of ability. The length of the taught day is shorter than in 95% of primary schools nationally. By using most of each morning for teaching literacy and numeracy skills, some other subjects have insufficient time allocated to them to cover all parts of the intended programme of study. There is an adequate coverage of science, art and design, music and physical education. Geography and history are taught in alternate half-termly units for approximately an hour a week. This is barely enough time to teach the basic minimum curriculum. In the case of history some additional learning takes place in religious education time. Geographical education is poorly provided for, in part because there is a lack of expertise among the teachers. The under-provision for geography, and to a lesser extent history, leaves pupils short of information and ideas that would enrich their social and cultural development.
44. Information and communication technology is used principally to support the learning of individual pupils and small groups of pupils. There is very little time allocated for the systematic learning of information and communication technology skills. The curriculum coverage for information and communication technology has improved, but it is not yet satisfactory. There is too little provision for design and technology, especially projects that take pupils through the full designing, making and evaluation processes. There is scope for some aspects of some subjects to be featured in literacy and numeracy time, such as interpreting written meaning in historical texts or using fieldwork data in geography as a context for number skills development.
45. The school is adopting the majority of components of schemes of work published in 2000 by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This has strengthened some subjects such as history very considerably by improving the continuity and progression of pupils' learning and by identifying ways in which the different needs of pupils at different levels of attainment may be met. These schemes of work are also helping teachers to find new ways of applying key skills to subject contexts. By July 2001 it is intended that the curriculum offered by the school will be greatly strengthened by the routine use of these Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes of work.
46. At the time of the last inspection the curriculum provided for children aged under five was inappropriate. Since then it has been completely revised and now supports pupils far better in working towards the achievement of the early learning goals. As in other years, there is still a lack of emphasis on a knowledge and understanding of the world and on creative development.

47. The school's strategies for teaching literacy skills have both strengths and shortcomings. The systematic development of aspects of word and sentence structures, spelling, grammar, syntax and other technical skills is good, but pupils do not have sufficient scope to employ and experiment with these skills in a range of contexts. There are weaknesses in the strategies being used to teach reading and writing, especially to average and above average ability pupils. Books do not have a high enough status in the school. There is insufficient opportunity for, or encouragement of, reading and writing for pleasure. There is an under-emphasis on literature, drama, individual reading and the use of information and communication technology for drafting and publishing.
48. The strategies used for teaching numeracy skills have been very successful in raising attainment. The 70 minutes each day that is provided for this purpose at Key Stage 2 is a relatively generous time allocation. Fuller use could be made of this time if aspects of other subjects, such as plans, graphs, co-ordinates, three-dimensional shapes and simple statistical data, were to be used as a context within numeracy teaching time.
49. The enrichment of the curriculum by additional out-of-hours learning opportunities is good. As much as could be expected is done to increase pupils' learning opportunities outside lessons, given the circumstances of the school. There is a local historical and geographical trail that uses the surrounding streets and a park. The Education Action Zone is funding free travel for some educational visits and is also underwriting the cost of a residential course for older pupils. There are some successful and popular after-school clubs for such activities as chess, newspaper writing, badminton, netball, football and recorder playing.

The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education

50. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex education and attention to drug misuse is good. Much of this work takes place within the teaching of religious education and science. It is coherent, well planned and appropriate to the ages and the needs of pupils. Parents approve of the approach adopted by the school.
51. The curriculum is considerably strengthened by the links that the school has with other local schools through the Education Action Zone. This partnership is establishing a helpful network for the exchange of good practice and documentation. Contacts with a partner secondary school are leading to a better continuity of learning from Years 6 to 7. Some community resources are tapped, as seen when a retired former teacher provided pupils in Class 6 with a first hand account of life in Preston half a century ago. At present the school is unable to establish links beyond the locality using the Internet.

How well the school cultivates pupils' personal development

52. Opportunities are very good for pupils' spiritual and moral development, good for their social development and satisfactory for their cultural development. Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils are included in all activities and to raise their confidence and self-esteem.
53. Pupils are provided with rich and numerous opportunities to strengthen their insights into their own beliefs and values. They also develop insights into the beliefs and values of others,

especially those of pupils in the school who come from different faith communities. A very special feature of this school is the remarkable way in which children from Christian, Hindu and Islamic communities work and worship together in a true sense of partnership. Acts of worship held in the hall and also in classrooms are very well conducted and are inspirational. Pupils also learn by example from the adults in the school. There is a quiet prayer room that some pupils like to use for short periods of reflection.

54. The school has a highly effective moral code that is promoted consistently throughout its daily work. Pupils are taught from an early age to be considerate, unselfish and helpful. They are encouraged to act positively by receiving a great deal of praise for doing things well. They quickly gain a secure understanding of the principles that distinguish right from wrong. These principles are used both to guide personal actions and also as a reference point for discussing wider ethical issues. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were debating how they might have reacted if they were farmers whose land, crops and livestock had been seized by Viking invaders. They considered whether in such circumstances it would be right to kill in self-defence.
55. The school is a very secure, orderly and caring community. It offers a calm social and emotional environment for pupils to develop good relationships with other pupils and with adults working in the school. They quickly appreciate the distinctive ethos of the school and soon develop a sense of belonging to its community. As a consequence they grow visibly in self-esteem and self-confidence. Parents have remarked about the positive changes that they have seen in their children once they started to attend this school. There is a very well organised and effective school council composed of delegates from each class. During a meeting of this council, pupil representatives argued a cogent case for improved outdoor play conditions. However, in lessons teachers are sometimes inclined to be too protective and to do too much for pupils without letting them take enough personal responsibility. There is plenty of scope for enabling pupils to show more initiative and to develop their independent learning skills further.
56. Pupils are successfully taught to appreciate the cultural traditions represented within the school and the locality. There are thoughtful displays that celebrate the traditions of the Traveller communities and the Christian, Islamic and Jewish faiths. In a history lesson pupils in Years 5 and 6 were asking very well prepared questions about life fifty years ago in central Preston to a retired teacher. This event both sharpened their understanding of the local heritage and led them to appreciate the experiences of senior citizens. Pupils in Year 3 were gaining valuable insights into the beauty of Islamic art by seeking to replicate some of the patterns they had observed, using paint and stamped shapes. These examples are a pointer to the ways in which opportunities to promote pupils' cultural development could be enlarged if more time was available for humanities and creative arts subjects in the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

57. A safe and secure environment is provided for all pupils. Good arrangements are in place to enable the school to meet its responsibilities in relation to health and safety practice. Appropriate security safeguards are in operation to assure that pupils remain safe during the working day. Medical arrangements for such matters as first aid and the care of pupils who are unwell during the working day are also well handled. Effective procedures are in place for

such things as the keeping of relevant records, risk assessments and fire drills. Child protection procedures have been properly established using advice from the Local Education Authority. These procedures work well, with the headteacher acting as the 'named person' in co-operation with personnel from the appropriate local agencies.

58. A successful behaviour policy has been developed which adopts a positive approach to rewards and sanctions. Members of staff know it well and use it consistently. This has resulted in a significant improvement in attitudes and behaviour, both in and out of lessons, since the last inspection. The school tends to exclude more pupils than most primary schools of the same size. Evidence from the inspection shows, however, that the school only uses this sanction as a last resort and takes great care to ensure that appropriate advice and planning goes into arrangements for the pupils' return into school. In recent months the number of pupils who have been excluded has fallen. The school actively promotes and rewards good behaviour. Pupils have responded well to this approach and particularly value the public recognition of their successes in assemblies.
59. There is a relevant range of policies in place to promote the personal development and welfare of pupils. These include a policy for sex education which is thoughtfully integrated into the curriculum in such a way as to meet the individual needs of pupils as they arise. Considerable attention has been given to the monitoring and promotion of improved levels of attendance and punctuality, with the active support of the Education Welfare Officer and personnel from the Education Action Zone. Whilst levels of attendance over the past year have been unsatisfactory, there is evidence of some recent improvement. The school should continue to place a high priority on encouraging parents and pupils to strive for better attendance and punctuality.
60. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are in place and are reviewed appropriately. Parents are kept well-informed of the progress that their children are making and are strongly encouraged to be involved in the formal reviews of their progress as required. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are especially well supported and this enables them to be fully included in whole-class activities and so to make appropriate progress.
61. The results from a baseline assessment of the ability and skills of pupils who are aged under five on entry into the school are used carefully to help teachers plan for their specific learning needs. A considerable amount of data is collected about pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, which is carefully analysed. The Education Action Zone has recently assisted the school by providing a very thorough statistical survey of St. Ignatius' results in comparison to other local schools and the national picture. This information has been used to set future performance targets that are directly related to the potential achievements of the pupils taking the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2001 and 2002, based upon predictions linked to their previous results.
62. There is therefore a rich source of information about past performance and future predicted test results. However there is, in comparison, far less diagnostic information about how well pupils are currently performing within lessons and during a year. The problem stems from a lack of precision in the setting of learning targets that are linked to National Curriculum level descriptions. Pupils' work is checked frequently and is annotated with marks and comments,

but these often fail to give them enough guidance about how well they are doing and what they have to do next to improve further. Teachers need to keep a more exact record of the standards that each pupil in their class is reaching throughout a year. This information can then be used to help the class teacher, support teachers and teaching assistants to focus attention on those aspects that will make the greatest difference to the progress of each individual pupil.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

63. Parents say very clearly that their children like coming to school and that staff know them well and have their best interests at heart. Parents have a very high degree of confidence in the school's capability to take great care of their children. They also say that the school is helping their children to develop positive attitudes to work, and that standards of behaviour have much improved since the time of the last inspection. A small number of parents have, however, expressed concern about the inadequate outdoor play area and traffic congestion at the school entrance when pupils are arriving and leaving. Both of these are largely a product of the restricted site and its location in a conservation area. Governors have plans to deal with these matters. These should be vigorously pursued so as to provide all pupils with a safe and appropriate area for both informal play and physical education. Evidence from this inspection supports all of these parental views.
64. Prospective parents are provided with useful information about how the school is organised and the ways in which they can support their child's learning. The prospectus fully meets statutory requirements. The arrangements for the induction of pupils aged under five are good. Parents are appreciative of these arrangements. These pupils settle in quickly to the school's routines and soon develop a positive approach to learning. Great care is also taken to ensure that parents of pupils who transfer from other schools understand the policies and procedures.
65. The school keeps all parents well-informed about its activities, including routine administrative matters, in an effective manner. A clear and helpful home-school agreement has been adopted which has been well received by the majority of parents, although it has yet to be actively responded to by all of them. The school aims to see more parents becoming involved in supporting their children's learning and is working hard to encourage this. An example of positive action to achieve this aim is the use of an imaginative course called "*Parents as Educators*" which has been greatly appreciated by those parents who have taken part in it. The annual report made by governors to parents meets all requirements and provides a useful insight into the school's work.
66. Annual written reports to parents about individual pupils' attainment and progress meet requirements. However, they contain insufficient information about the targets that are being set for the next steps of learning and how well pupils are approaching them. Parents have frequent opportunities to meet with members of staff to discuss their child's progress, on both a planned and informal basis. Parents welcome all of these opportunities and comment favourably on the approachability and friendliness of members of staff. Parents of pupils with special educational needs receive regular reports on progress and are fully involved in the reviews of pupils' needs.
67. Opportunities for homework are provided for all pupils, using a suitable range of activities. These include work on reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils complete the work set

on time as requested. There are, however, a number of parents who do not actively support pupils in working at home. Examples of the consistent setting of work and its marking were seen during the inspection. Of particular note was the good practice seen in Year 3 where the teacher routinely set tasks to do that helped pupils to prepare for the next steps in learning. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire strongly supported the school's approach to homework.

68. Parental support is welcomed and a small number of parents offer help in classes and visits. Though limited, this support is greatly valued by teachers and is used well to promote pupils' development. Similarly, the work of a small group of parents has resulted in the school being able to enhance learning by the purchase of books and contributing to the setting up of the library, the purchase of mathematical games and information and communication technology equipment. The work of these parents encourages pupils and teachers greatly.
69. There are active links with a range of local organisations as well as close ties with the Church and the Parish. A useful partnership with the Education Action Zone is being used to strengthen existing links with parents. Valuable curriculum and accommodation advice has been received from the Local Education Authority. Whilst there is scope for further development of working with parents, much has been achieved since the last inspection. In particular the very positive endorsement of the work of the school by parents is of itself a strength.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

70. The school is very well led by the headteacher who has created the conditions for others to perform well as a team, so enabling the school to move forward rapidly during the last three years. She is well supported by a newly appointed deputy head and a very efficient administrator. Staff, senior managers and governors work very well as a team to ensure that the school continually gets stronger. The ethos and sense of purpose is superb. The resources and accommodation are well managed. Subject coordinators are working hard to upgrade schemes of work to incorporate the features set out in the national guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school is involved with many significant local initiatives and partnerships that collectively strengthen it further. The most notable examples are links with the Preston Education Action Zone, a Beacon school and a partnership of small schools. There is the prospect of further investment in the school from European Union money. The main management issues at present are to raise attainment in English, increase opportunities for using information and communication technology, challenge pupils further in some of their lessons, improve attendance and deal with imbalances in the curriculum.
71. The improvements to the building, the ethos, the standards of behaviour and the levels of attainment in mathematics and science are examples of the positive impact of good leadership. The school development plan identifies important areas for further improvement and links them to detailed action strategies that are costed and able to be measured. Staff and governors are closely involved with the production of the school development plan through their contribution to the evaluation of current strengths and weaknesses and their collective determination to work together to achieve future improvement. There is a clear understanding of what more needs to be done to raise standards further. As a consequence there is the capacity for sustained future school improvement.

72. There are well-defined aims and values which are warmly applauded by parents. There is a strong commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity which is manifestly evident in practice.
73. The headteacher has taken direct personal charge of a large number of initiatives since her appointment in January 1998. She has also undertaken an effective and systematic monitoring of teaching, a significant factor in the improved quality of teaching since the last inspection. This intensive leadership and management work has led her to a point of near exhaustion at times. The appointment of a new deputy headteacher has enabled some delegation of responsibilities to occur, particularly with respect to the curriculum and assessment. There is scope for a further devolution of some of her administrative roles in order to allow more time to deal with raising standards in literacy, information and communication technology and some of the foundation subjects.
74. The learning support coordinator plays a significant and valuable role in organising ways of meeting the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs. Good subject co-ordination has played a substantial part in the successes in mathematics and science. The strategy for teaching literacy is efficiently managed in terms of planning, training and resource provision, but requires more attention to ways of boosting levels of attainment. Information and communication co-ordination has led to some helpful but isolated improvements since the last inspection. The time is right for a major initiative to raise the importance of information and communication technology throughout the curriculum as a means of extending and enriching learning. Whilst this will require new equipment and software, there is also scope for making fuller use of the potential of the computers that are already in the school. Recently the history coordinator has made considerable progress in modernising the scheme of work, with positive effects on standards of attainment and progress. Similar work is waiting to be done for geography.
75. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and bring valuable expertise to complement the work of the professionals. They understand the strengths of the school well and have a secure overview of what else has to be done to improve it further. They take appropriate responsibility for the schools' strengths and weaknesses. Many give generous amounts of time in order to meet their responsibilities thoroughly. They are fully involved in strategic and financial planning and are becoming more experienced in contributing to the creation of development plans and to monitoring how well these plans are progressing. The governors have responded well to the points for action set out in the previous inspection report.
76. The headteacher, staff and governors are making increasing use of test and teacher assessment data to identify where successful and less successful practice lies, and what to do with this knowledge. The high level of insight into the state of the school's performance is evident in the annual report to parents and some of the statements made to support the inspection. There are still significant weaknesses in the availability of reliable and valid information about how well individual pupils are progressing within Key Stages 1 and 2 which can be used to focus support where it would prove to be most beneficial.
77. The arrangements for the induction of new members of staff are good. They are well briefed about the policies, routines and ethos of the school and quickly become valued members of a

very co-operative team. One teacher spoke about the high level of confidence experienced after working in the school for a few weeks. The foundations for effective performance management have been laid. Further care however needs to be given to the induction needs of a member of staff employed by the Education Action Zone who works for part of the week within the school, as the lines of responsibility for her professional development are not fully defined.

78. The statutory performance targets for attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 have been set by the governing body after consideration of information supplied by the DfEE which shows the predicted test results for pupils based on their performance at Key Stage 1. The targets for 2000 were exceeded by 6 percentage points in mathematics and 11 in science, but were missed by 6 percentage points in English. Based upon prior attainment scores, 60% of pupils are expected to reach Level 4 or above in English and mathematics. The target for English is challenging but achievable. The 2001 target for mathematics was nearly reached in 2000. The 2002 target for the percentage of pupils who are expected to reach Level 4 or above in English is 43% and for mathematics is 56%. The sizeable dip in the 2002 targets, especially for English, reflects the low overall ability of the cohort, with two thirds of pupils on the special educational needs register. These figures are correctly matched to the information available from DfEE produced tables that predict future performance on the basis of Key Stage 1 test scores. Thus, although targets are set at figures that are well below the national average they accurately reflect the anticipated progress that pupils should make based on national trends from the end of Key Stage 1.
79. The priorities for improvement within the school development plan have been appropriately costed. Specific grants, including Standards Fund money, have been spent on their intended purposes. Pupils have benefited from wisely targeted spending. There is a need to increase the stock of books in the library and to introduce more information and communication technology equipment that can be used in each classroom to support learning in all subjects. Nearly £25,000 has been kept in reserve because of a continuing threat of compulsory expenditure on windows and outside areas to comply with Conservation Area planning requirements. It is important to have this matter resolved quickly so that more money can be spent on resources for learning, especially books and new technology equipment. The effectiveness of financial control and administration is excellent.
80. The best value principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition have all been applied well within the management of financial resources. This has been particularly apparent when dealing with building contractors. Care is taken to compare standards with other schools and to consult widely before purchasing resources. Asset management planning is suitably linked to school improvement strategies.
81. The number, qualifications and experience of the teachers and support staff match the demands of the curriculum except for staff expertise in the teaching of information and communication technology, design and technology and geography. The standards that pupils reach are enhanced by the quality of the teaching provision except in these three subjects and in some aspects of literacy. At present, more cost-effective use could be made of teaching assistants during whole-class teaching sessions. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language have suitable and generally effective support.

82. Recent substantial improvement to the interior of the building has transformed it into a pleasant and stimulating environment for learning. Rooms and corridors are bright and have good displays of pupils' work. The only interior space not to be upgraded is a large but isolated room that is reached by a long stone staircase. This room is not used for any purpose other than storage, but could be refurbished to become another classroom or a community learning area. A seventh classroom would make it possible for all year groups to be taught separately, so avoiding the splitting of Year 5 pupils into two groups, one of which is taught alongside Year 4 and one alongside Year 6. Having Year 5 and 6 pupils in the same class makes it harder for the class teacher to give concentrated attention to pupils preparing for their end of Key Stage 2 tests. The school grounds are small and cannot be expanded. There is a lack of all weather play space. This causes great concern amongst pupils and parents. A new protected play area for children under five is being constructed.
83. Much has been done since the last inspection to improve the resources for learning. These improvements have particularly affected the core subjects, physical education, art and design and music. The number of computers has increased from a very low level in 1997 to a level that, although better, is still inadequate. There is no provision for using information and communication technology for whole-class teaching, so computers tend to be used only for individual or small group work. In general, insufficient use is made of audio-visual resources, especially video programmes, as a means of providing pupils with a better understanding of things that are outside their direct experience. Pupils with language difficulties would especially benefit from seeing more pictures, diagrams, graphs and models. The book stock in the library had been added to in the last two years from a low level. The library remains under resourced and is at present under-used for independent reading and enquiry work. The relatively low level of investment in books and information and communication technology equipment is having a predictable detrimental effect on standards in reading and information and communication technology. It is also reducing opportunities for pupils to learn independently and to be individually challenged by the content of books, CD ROMs and software programs.
84. Although there is still much to do, St. Ignatius' Catholic Primary School has substantially improved since the last inspection whilst the overall ability levels of its pupils have reduced. Strengths outweigh weaknesses, even allowing for some under-achievement in the key areas of English and information and communication technology. The overall standard of pupils' attainment is rising as is the quality of teaching. Leadership and management is strong and the school has the capacity to improve further despite increasingly adverse contextual circumstances. For all of these reasons the overall effectiveness of the school is judged to be good. Given the current levels of attainment and the relatively high cost of educating each pupil, the school offers satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

85. St. Ignatius' Catholic Primary School has improved considerably since the last inspection in March 1997. In order to continue this improvement the headteacher, staff and governors should address the following issues as a matter of priority:

- i. Improve standards of attainment in reading and writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their reading and writing skills in a broader range of contexts, especially at Key Stage 2;
(see paragraphs 16, 20, 34, 101, 102, 103, 106)
 - raising the status of books and reading for information and enjoyment.
(see paragraphs 6, 12, 101)

- ii. Provide appropriately challenging work for all pupils in all years, and especially more able pupils, by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their thinking and enquiry skills in all subjects;
(see paragraphs 16, 22, 26, 115, 119, 121)
 - helping pupils to set and understand their personal learning targets and giving them more responsibility for reaching them;
(see paragraphs 62, 104)
 - providing training for teaching staff to make fuller use of teaching assistants, and for these assistants to contribute more fully to the extension of pupils' learning activities.
(see paragraphs 39, 116, 124)

- iii. Providing more opportunities for pupils to develop and use their information and communication technology skills by:
 - placing a greater emphasis on the teaching of basic information and communication technology skills in all years;
(see paragraphs 17, 44, 147, 151)
 - identify places within the schemes of work of all subjects where information and communication technology can accelerate and enrich learning;
(see paragraphs 20, 74, 151)
 - acquire more equipment to meet these needs;
(see paragraphs 36, 150)
 - identify and meet staff training needs.
(see paragraphs 36, 38, 81, 151)

- iv. Increasing the time for teaching during the week, so creating more space for the foundation subjects, especially design and technology and geography where standards are currently too low, by
 - lengthening the taught day to provide more time for the teaching of foundation subjects;
(see paragraph 43)
 - raising standards of attainment in design and technology and geography.
(see paragraphs 134, 137)

- v. Teachers should mark pupils' work better and track their progress more precisely in order to help them reach ambitious personal learning targets.
(see paragraphs 40, 62, 106, 116, 119)

- vi. Continue the drive to raise the current levels of attendance and punctuality.
(see paragraph 27)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	10	40	44	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	168
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	74

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	89

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	46

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	8.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	2.5
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	14	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	14
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	20	20	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (63)	71 (54)	96 (67)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	13	14
	Girls	11	13	14
	Total	17	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (63)	93 (93)	100 (63)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year [ie 1999].

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	12	7	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	7	8
	Girls	4	4	7
	Total	8	11	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42 (55)	58 (55)	79 (64)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	4	5	7
	Total	11	14	16
Percentage of pupils	School	58 (23)	74 (55)	84 (64)

at NC level 4 or above	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)
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Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year [ie 1999].

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	54
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	82
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	13	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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	198

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	337,784
Total expenditure	332,944
Expenditure per pupil	2,006
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,948
Balance carried forward to next year	40,788

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	168
Number of questionnaires returned	26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	35	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	27	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	35	12	8	0
The teaching is good.	68	32	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	36	8	4	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	27	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	46	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	65	27	4	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	75	21	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	35	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	33	12	0	4

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

86. Although the sample is relatively small, these questionnaire responses indicate a high level of parental satisfaction with the work of the school. Particularly significant is the high proportion of pupils who are said to strongly enjoy coming to school, the confidence that parents have in the way the school is managed and how well their children are taught and the standards of behaviour.

Other issues raised by parents

87. In written and oral replies, some parents expressed concern about the limited outdoor play space and the possible hazards caused by traffic congestion outside the school gate at the end of the taught day.

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

88. Children in the Reception class make good progress and most of them are on course to reach the nationally expected early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Overall standards in personal, social and emotional development and physical development are good and give children a secure base for their future learning. Their developing listening and social skills and positive attitudes to school life are a strength. Low attaining children make good progress through effective support and clear teacher explanation. Children who have special educational needs are included in all aspects of learning in the Foundation Stage and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The school's ethos supports young children very well in helping them to have a feeling of confidence and security in their surroundings and a sense of well-being. The pattern of progress made by children aged under five is a direct reflection of the considerable areas of strength and the fewer areas of weakness in the teaching.
89. The standard achieved in the **personal, social and emotional development** area of learning is good. Most pupils reach or exceed the expected goals by the end of the Foundation stage. Children are interested and enthusiastic and behave well. They quickly learn the routines, share and play together successfully and enjoy each other's company. Relationships between children and staff are very good which helps them to gain confidence and make good progress. Teachers help them to listen carefully to instructions and in this way children gain a good understanding of right and wrong, how to behave and how to use the different work and play areas. Teaching supports children to sustain good levels of concentration. This is evident when they work together in teacher-led activities and during group work where they are not under the immediate supervision of an adult.
90. The standard of attainment in the area of learning of **communication, language and literacy** is broadly satisfactory. Children make satisfactory gains over time and in some lessons progress is good. Whilst the majority are in line to meet the early learning goals, some are expected to exceed them. In general they do not have well-developed speaking skills although listening skills improve quickly. Some of the children who have English as an additional language have limited vocabulary and fluency. The previous inspection report said that 'children can only concentrate for short periods of time'. This is not the case now. Teaching has clearly supported them well to sustain their concentration, as has children's own keen desire to learn. Teaching makes a strong point of ensuring children learn the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet. They successfully learn to read specific words linked to topics and characters in familiar stories. Teaching helps children to develop reading well by using displays in the classroom imaginatively and interactively. Children who enter the room promptly for the morning session demonstrate a keen interest in the displayed work to see what has changed. When they notice something different they are very sure to tell their teacher. Children who arrive later miss the opportunity to develop their observation and speaking skills in this way. Some children begin to form letters correctly, while many are at the stage of making marks. During group work they listen to a cassette keenly and successfully identify sounds linked to transport, such as, an aeroplane, a bicycle bell and a motor car. They confidently talk about their own experiences of using their bicycle or travelling in an aeroplane. When teachers ask questions, the children are not always clear about how they should reply.

Teachers persevere and enable children to return to the original question, understand what is meant by it and respond to it appropriately.

91. Children who already have a good idea of reading demonstrate a developing interest in books. Average learners make broadly satisfactory progress, although key words learnt earlier are not well remembered. The low attaining children are confused by three letter words and assign a word to each letter. The sounding out of initial letters is used to an extent that words such as 'the' and 'I' cannot be read using this strategy. The over-use of this strategy restricts fluency and continues to hold back development in reading as children move from the Foundation stage to National Curriculum work. All children develop a satisfactory understanding and appreciation of rhyme when they work with the teacher using the big book '*Pass the Jam*'. Teaching supports them very well in helping to recognise and name items in the pictures and match rhyming words.
92. The standard reached in the area of learning of **mathematical development** is satisfactory. The great majority of children in lessons are on track towards meeting the early learning goals. Teaching makes good use of resources that enable children to have a range of experiences to support work in number and shape. They count accurately from zero to five and many are secure in counting up to fifteen and some beyond. Counting from a high to a lower number presents a problem for a few, but all persevere and support each other cheerfully. When they play number games they are not at all concerned when it is their turn to 'miss a go' and take turns to throw the dice and count on in group work well. Teaching supports them well in co-operative play. They count the spots on the dominoes with accuracy, taking care to match the dominoes before placing them next to each other, and in this way develop their counting and observation well. They have experience of working with two and three-dimensional shapes and some recognise squares and circles, while others know properties of the cuboids and cylinders, such as, faces, corners and straight edges. They use the 'feeley bag' and ask and answer questions appropriately before reaching their decision of what the shape could be. In this work some demonstrate sophistication in their questioning and deduction.
93. The standard reached in the area of learning of **knowledge and understanding** of the world is unsatisfactory. The majority of children in lessons are not on track to achieve the expected early learning goals. They have limited experiences of the world around them and require more access to images of different places, events and environments. They would also benefit from using more images from computer software. Such improvements would strengthen children's cultural development. Where opportunities are provided, children use them well. For example, children gain an understanding that signs and words convey meaning and often important information. Teaching encourages children to think about 'time', such as in the story '*Jasper's Beanstalk*'. The story is well told and this enables children to develop a sense of time over a short period and to sequence events.
94. The standard achieved in the area of learning of **physical development** is good. Many pupils are reaching or exceeding the expected early learning goals. They develop spatial awareness well as they learn how to use space in 'free' movement, such as, walking, skipping, jumping and changing direction, and in 'limited' movement using hoops. Children choose different methods of travelling in and out of hoops well and help put them away quickly and sensibly. Teaching ensures children have experience of appropriate physical activity before the main lesson and clearly the 'cat and mouse game' is a favourite. Children develop their skills further

as they join with the teacher to play ‘*What’s the time Mr. Wolf*’ and although become excited are sufficiently controlled to enjoy and learn from the work. Teaching ensures all adults support children well through encouragement, demonstration and positive feedback about their developing skills. The well-planned lesson enables children to calm down by engaging them in curling and stretching activities. It is evident that children and adults enjoy working together. The school has purchased some suitable outdoor resources for children of this age and eagerly awaits the completion of the outdoor play area.

95. The standard of attainment in the **creative development** area of learning is satisfactory. Most pupils are working towards reaching the expected early learning goals. Children make productive use of opportunities for imaginative and exploratory play. For example, they shape playdough well to make cakes, buns and biscuits, using rolling pins and cutting tools. They stick pasta onto a paper plate carefully and a few add a bit of design as they stick pasta bows around the rim of the plate. They develop skills of cutting and sticking reasonably well. They successfully build towers and bridges using building blocks. Some begin to develop an understanding that some building blocks will not balance safely or at all and that placing the blocks evenly and carefully is necessary if a tower is to remain tall. They use, with help, a computer to create an image of a cake with candles. These are all examples of good practice.
96. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Children are managed well and relationships are very good. Teaching supports children well in developing their confidence and through clear instruction guides them in what they need to do throughout the day. However, more attention is needed to meet the learning requirements of all children, particularly those who are high attainers, even though these needs have been identified through early assessment. On-going assessment is an area for further development. The induction initiative using an activity pack, meeting parents and home visits clearly support children well when they first begin school and helps establish sound links with parents. Teaching assistants make a satisfactory contribution to the work in the Foundation stage. However, the school needs to consider more carefully their deployment and level of involvement through better planned activities. There is scope for this in the afternoon when sessions are presently too unstructured. There is a need for the requirements of the Foundation stage to be familiar to all staff who work with this age group.
97. Children under five who have English as an additional language (EAL) make broadly satisfactory gains in developing their language skills. Teaching makes reasonable use of children’s personal knowledge and offers them opportunity to express themselves in an informal setting. They very quickly offer their own ideas about a topic but sometimes use incorrect names. They are immediately helped to use a correct name and to repeat it several times. The quality of support varies within whole-class lessons. Class teachers and the EAL teacher need to consider how they can combine their skills more effectively to provide better opportunities for pupils to develop essential skills in literacy.

ENGLISH

98. In the national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, pupils attained standards in reading which were well below the national average and also well below the average for schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. This has been the trend since 1997. The picture is similar for writing although in 1998 and 1999 standards in writing declined further. Although there has been some recovery in the proportion

of pupils reaching Level 2 in 2000, standards are still well below the national average and the average for similar schools. No pupils reached Level 3 in 2000. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English was sufficiently low to place the school within the lowest 5% of schools in England in comparison with the national average. The trend since the last inspection shows alternating rises and falls in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4. There are many adverse factors to take into account. A significant number of pupils come into school with low baseline scores in literacy skills. The proportion of pupils identified as having a special educational need is far above average and the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is high. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very high. Given all of these factors, there is still evidence that some pupils are not making as much progress in English as they could.

99. The previous inspection report said that “pupils with special educational needs were supported well and make good progress”. This remains the case, and is particularly remarkable given the doubling of the proportion of pupils with identified learning difficulties since the last inspection. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are particularly well supported, with a consequence that they make satisfactory progress. Throughout the school, in reading, pupils have few useful strategies to help them to read fluently. In writing there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills, practise handwriting and develop essential spelling skills. All pupils make broadly satisfactory progress in some aspects of their learning and in relation to their prior attainment but some could reach higher levels of attainment. The lack of proper advice about how to improve their performance restricts pupils from making satisfactory or good progress in all strands of literacy.
100. Standards in listening are good across both key stages. Pupils listen to their teachers well and follow instructions carefully. Standards in speaking are less well developed mainly because opportunities for pupils to give extended replies are too limited. When pupils get the chance to offer their ideas and ask questions it is clear that they have some interesting things to say. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils demonstrated satisfactory understanding of a range of vocabulary linked to the weather. They knew that ‘glare’ and ‘bright’ are linked to the sun and that glare also means to stare. They also knew that a ‘glare’ from a teacher would be enough to tell them what to do without the need for any words. Older pupils discuss persuasive text in an advertisement and identify alliteration, imperatives and extravagant adjectives, such as ‘you mustn’t miss this opportunity’, with keen interest.
101. Attainment in reading is below average by the end of Key Stage 1 and well below average by the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate an interest in reading but do not have enough reading experiences with which to develop fluency and expression. They need more opportunities to develop an understanding of challenging texts and to use information books, including dictionaries. High attainers use reading strategies such as phonics and picture cues successfully. However, even for these pupils, over-use of initial letter sounds prevents them from developing fluency and expression. While the majority read with good levels of accuracy, they do not take account of punctuation either to pause for breath or to use expression for dramatic effect. By the end of Key Stage 2, accuracy is still very much in evidence and some have interest in particular authors. From a young age pupils learn about fiction and non-fiction, authors, titles and illustrators, but this is not developed systematically. Higher order reading skills, such as interpretation and deduction, are developed poorly. Although older pupils generally offer a clear explanation in connection with the purpose of a

contents page and index, they have limited experiences of actually using them. Pupils read in school during the 'literacy hour' and within groups, but they do not have sufficient opportunity to discuss texts, look up the meaning of unfamiliar words and apply their ideas using inference, deduction and prediction. Books do not have a particularly high profile in classrooms and too little use is made of the library.

102. Standards in writing are below average by the end of Key Stage 1 and well below average by the end of Key Stage 2. While teachers' lesson plans are generally satisfactory, often too much time is taken up by oral work which is generally heavily led by the teacher. This approach leaves too little time for writing activities. It is clear from the national tests that writing is a major weakness, yet teaching fails to take this properly into account when planning lessons. Consequently, the opportunity to record in writing new knowledge gained through listening is sometimes missed. Overall, pupils have an unsatisfactory knowledge of spelling and punctuation. The over-emphasis on initial letter sounds tends to be used throughout Key Stage 1 and well into Key Stage 2. This strategy does not support spelling well. When pupils attempt to spell a word, they tend to sound rather than name the letter. From the way in which they spell words it is clear that essential skills have not been taught sufficiently well. Younger pupils develop unsatisfactory skills in handwriting. Many pupils form letters poorly. The size and shape of letters and the spacing between words is irregular. There are overall weaknesses in presentation of written work.
103. As pupils move on into Key Stage 2, writing opportunities are still too limited. Pupils do not have enough scope to develop their skills and many examples of handwriting remain unsatisfactory and, for many, poor. Pupils learn about sentence construction and simple punctuation well. Older pupils learn about persuasive texts, and how to write interesting opening paragraphs for a story to attract the interest of the general public or a specific group. Older pupils do not use joined script regularly and when they do, it does not have the fluency and style that could be expected of them. Pupils' word processing skills are weaker than they should be. Where they have been used to support written work, presentation improves greatly, although spelling errors are sometimes still glaringly in evidence.
104. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally satisfactory and often good in Key Stage 2. Their good relationships and the general feeling of well-being created by the school, supports them well. They are keen to be involved in individual and group tasks and generally sustain concentration well. However, their knowledge of their own learning is a 'closed book' to them as marking does not alert them to their errors and so they do not have an understanding that they could do better.
105. Class teachers identify pupils and notify the English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher and also make use of a reading test conducted for Preston Education Action Zone. Although there is some liaison and the group and support work is closely linked to classwork, information gathering is rather informal and relies too much on the outcomes of brief conversations between teachers at odd moments. In view of the part-time work of the EAL teacher, and to ensure more diagnostic assessment, the school needs to introduce methodical ways to collect important information about what pupils know, their specific learning needs, and the rate at which they make progress. This would help the EAL teacher to respond more systematically to pupils and so enable them to reach higher standards in the short term.

106. The quality of teaching of the National Literacy Strategy is satisfactory overall with some good features, particularly at Key Stage 2. Pupils are generally managed well. Lessons have specific learning objectives and are planned to meet the needs of different abilities. However, the element of challenge for all pupils is not always sufficient. The over-use of worksheets and the short allocation of time for writing limits opportunity for further challenge and too little account is taken of the specific needs of higher attaining pupils. Resources are organised to meet the needs of the lesson well, although this does not support pupils in making choices for themselves. Dictionaries are rarely used and there is a strong tendency for teachers and adults to explain the meaning of unfamiliar words and give spellings readily. In the better lessons, teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can do, as evidenced in the improved quality of discussion which draws out pupils' ideas well. However, too often in both key stages, teachers tend to remain the centre of the activity long after they have conveyed the purpose of the lesson and essential details which would be sufficient to enable pupils to use their initiative and begin working on their own. A major weakness in teaching is the poor quality of marking. Although written work is generally checked, with comments from time to time, it is clear from the pupils' exercise books and worksheets that they are not supported well enough in making adjustments and corrections to their work. In general, they do not re-write or re-draft work or make notes. Teachers use texts from letters and adverts to explain and demonstrate how text can be changed for a specific purpose, but pupils do not have opportunity to do this for themselves. The school believes that 'skilled teaching assistants are essential to raise standards.' However, both teachers and teaching assistants sometimes tend to create an atmosphere of dependency which needs to be relaxed so as to enable pupils to tackle more of the work for themselves. The management of English and literacy has been successful in establishing a systematic approach to the teaching of many basic skills across the school. However, there are major management challenges still to be met in raising standards further.

MATHEMATICS

107. Results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 showed that the number of pupils who attained the expected target of Level 2 was well above the national average. However the number of pupils who attained the higher levels of 2B and above was below the national average. The number of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 was well below average when compared with all schools nationally, but was average when compared to similar schools. When taking pupils' prior attainment into consideration, pupils' performance in the tests was above average. This indicates good progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. Apart from 1998, when attainment dipped, pupils' attainment in mathematics has been on an upward trend since the last inspection and is now close to the national average. An analysis of test data over the past three years shows that boys at the age of eleven perform better than girls, although the gap has greatly narrowed. Year 5 pupils are on track to meet the target set by the school of 60% of pupils reaching or exceeding Level 4 in mathematics in 2001.
108. Evidence gathered during the inspection largely concurs with the recent test results and indicates that standards in mathematics are close to the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. Currently very few pupils attain Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 or Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2. The headteacher and mathematics coordinator have conducted an analysis of test results, have observed the quality of teaching and have drawn up strategies to improve pupils' attainment further. For example, an analysis of Key Stage 2 test data indicated a weakness in data handling and the mathematics coordinator has taken steps to

rectify this. Inspection findings suggest that there are more Year 2 and Year 6 pupils likely to attain Level 3 at Key Stage 1 and Level 5 at Key Stage 2 in 2001 than in 2000.

109. Discussion with the pupils and classroom observations indicate the very positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy on pupils' attainment. The school was used to trial the National Numeracy Strategy and the teachers have successfully implemented many of the planning and teaching approaches recommended by it. Evidence gained from examining the pupils' books indicates that their written recording and calculating strategies, which underpin mental and oral skills, are practised regularly by the pupils.
110. By Year 2 many of the pupils can identify odd and even numbers, explore relationships in number patterns, add and subtract, measure using metres and centimetres, identify halves and quarters and understand the value of hundreds, tens and units. They are also developing an awareness of the passage of time, and some pupils can describe the main features of a clock. Pupils are very competent in naming regular two- and three-dimensional shapes and use terms such as 'faces', 'edges' and 'corners' accurately. In a mathematics game pupils were required to describe the features of a three dimensional shape to their peers before disclosing it. In describing a cylinder the pupil perceptively said '*Its got two circles, no corners, two round edges and a curved surface*'. Full and accurate descriptions were given by many of the pupils in this activity. Some of the higher attaining pupils understand the value of numbers to 1000 and can explain the value of negative numbers. There is an appropriate emphasis in most classes on explaining the mental processes used to arrive at an answer. By Year 2, pupils can use a computer art package to construct rectangular patterns. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress throughout the key stage.
111. Pupils' numeracy skills are successfully developed in some other areas of the curriculum. For example, measurement was used purposefully in a design and technology activity that involved making greetings cards and in drawing of graphs in science. However, links to other areas of the curriculum are largely incidental and are not always planned systematically. In some classes opportunities to use mathematics for practical investigations are too infrequent.
112. Good progress is seen when lessons are carefully tailored to meet the needs of different ability groups. For example a group of Year 4 and 5 pupils were constructing calculations using the inverse operations of - and +. The higher attaining pupils were given opportunities to construct their own number sentences using five digit numbers. This open-ended activity enabled the pupils to demonstrate clearly what they knew and understood about the relationship between addition and subtraction.
113. In a Year 5/6 lesson on problem solving the pupils ably extracted the relevant mathematical operations from the text, disregarded unnecessary information and calculated accurately. The higher attaining pupils constructed their own problems and demonstrated ingenious methods of calculation. They were highly motivated by their tasks and enjoyed the challenge of sharing their work with a partner. In this lesson all pupils were provided with appropriate work and were well supported by teaching assistants and a volunteer helper. Completed work indicates that those pupils who are currently in Year 6 are on track towards meeting the school's targets for mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2001. By Year 6, pupils have undertaken calculations using decimal fractions, multiplication using three digit numbers, data handling and

calculations using thousands. They have a reasonable understanding of ratios, equivalent fractions and symmetry. The pace and amount of work covered during the current term is in line with the recommendations in the National Numeracy Strategy.

114. Throughout the school, most pupils make satisfactory progress. The vast majority of pupils are prepared to work hard and have developed a liking for the subject. Their positive attitudes, good behaviour and general eagerness all contribute to the effectiveness of their learning in a significant way. They enjoy 'quick-fire' mental calculation sessions and respond well when given a time limit in which to finish their work. The higher attaining pupils enjoy the challenge of extension activities when these are provided.
115. Overall, the quality of mathematics and numeracy teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory, with some examples of good and very good teaching, especially at Key Stage 2. Examples of good teaching were seen in both key stages. In a lesson where the teaching was very good the teacher shared the key objectives for the lesson and the key vocabulary with the children. The pupils were highly motivated and responded well to searching questions which probed their understanding and challenged their thinking. In this situation the teacher was clearly aware of the standards the pupils were reaching and knew how they could improve further. A common characteristic of the good teaching was the brisk pace of the oral/mental work and well resourced activities.
116. In most cases activities were matched appropriately to the different levels of ability within the group. On a few occasions the higher attaining pupils could have responded well to an even greater challenge. All lessons were planned appropriately with very clear and precise objectives and in a few cases an evaluation of the lesson enabled teachers to readjust the teaching of the subsequent lesson to take account of what the pupils knew and could do. Satisfactory teaching could be improved further by increasing the pace of the work and by ensuring that pupils finish the planned work. In almost all cases the plenary sessions were used imaginatively to review and reinforce the main points of the lesson. Teachers are confident in the use of the nationally designed programme for the teaching of mathematics, which is used in conjunction with the Lancashire scheme of work for mathematics. However a scrutiny of the pupils' books indicates that whilst teachers mark work frequently, the marking does not often indicate what they need to do to improve their work. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school. However, their deployment during whole class teaching sessions is not always maximised to the full.
117. The mathematics curriculum is generally broad and balanced. Short term planning is brief, but is manageable and useful. The mathematics coordinator has an appropriate understanding of the subject. She is using her knowledge to good effect, has monitored the teaching of mathematics and has given feedback to colleagues on the quality of teaching and learning. Adequate procedures are in place to assess pupils' understanding of the work covered and half-termly assessments are used to inform curriculum planning. There is a satisfactory range of resources, but the use of information and communication technology to support the teaching of mathematics is at an early stage of development. In conclusion, significant progress has been made in the teaching of mathematics and in the pupils' attainment since the last inspection in 1997.

SCIENCE

118. Standards of attainment in science have improved considerably since the last inspection. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above in the teacher assessed tasks at the end of Key Stage 1 has risen from well below the national average in 1999 to well above it in 2000. However, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was below the national average, but was in line with the average for similar schools. Results in the end of Key Stage 2 tests have been well below average during the period 1997 to 1999 but have improved in 2000 to be close to the national average. When pupils' prior attainment is taken into consideration, the number of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 is above average which indicates good progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. The attainment of boys has, over the past four years, generally been higher than that of girls. However, in the 2000 tests there is little difference between the performance of boys and girls.
119. Findings from the inspection support the judgement that the overall trend of attainment in science is improving significantly, from being well below average in 1996 to just below average in 2000. Many Year 2 pupils are already working at Level 2 and are in line to achieve the nationally expected level at the end of the year. Likewise, if the good progress that is currently being made in Key Stage 2 is maintained, many pupils are likely to achieve Level 4 and a few pupils could achieve Level 5. Even so, the number of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of both key stages could be improved still further. In order to achieve this, the work needs to be more closely matched to the specific needs of more able pupils. Marking needs to be improved to ensure that all pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work.
120. Pupils' learning throughout Key Stage 1 is generally good, including those pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language. By Year 1, pupils can link the intensity of a reflection to the brightness of the light source and the reflective nature of the surface. They can discuss their findings and record their observations and are beginning to develop skills of observation and prediction. By Year 2, pupils have made good progress and can explain some of the characteristics of living and non-living things and can discuss healthy and non-healthy foods. They know how to make an electrical circuit and many of the children can identify the reason why an electrical device will not work if there is a break in the circuit. These pupils use the appropriate technical vocabulary very well and refer accurately to 'circuit', 'battery', 'crocodile-clip', 'wire' and 'bulb'. In this lesson most of the pupils were able to explain what prediction meant... *'It's a thought in my head'...* *'It's what I think will happen'*. The pupils' scientific knowledge is at least in line with national expectations and a few pupils exceed this level. However, a significant number of them find difficulty in recording their observations because their writing skills are below average.
121. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have an understanding of what constitutes a fair test and know why it is necessary to control a variable in an experiment. They build on what they have learnt in Key Stage 1 well and many pupils record their findings appropriately. For example, Year 3 pupils developed their understanding of circuits by devising and including switches in their circuits. In Years 4 to 6, most pupils knew how to increase the power supply to make a bulb brighter or to change the speed of a motor. Key Stage 2 pupils also talk with confidence about the importance of a healthy diet, have investigated the importance of cleaning their teeth and have explored the effect which micro-organisms have on decaying food. Most pupils provide clear accounts of what they have found out, and use their knowledge to evaluate the results. In a few cases some of the higher attaining pupils are not receiving sufficient challenge

in their work and their good powers of reasoning are not used to the full. For example, in an investigation which required some pupils to test a range of materials which would conduct electricity, a few pupils stated at the outset that some types of metal were the only things which conducted electricity. This could have been the starting point for their investigation. More accurate use of assessment and marking could have enabled these pupils to develop their knowledge at a faster rate.

122. The teaching of science makes a satisfactory contribution to the development of literacy and numeracy skills. In all classes pupils have opportunities to discuss their ideas with each other and with the teacher and teaching assistants. Teachers use appropriate subject specific vocabulary and structure pupils' recording processes well. Charts are used to present findings, but measurement and graphical data is not used sufficiently in either key stage. The lack of data-logging equipment minimises the use of information and communication technology.
123. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and much of it is good or very good. There are examples of very good teaching in both key stages. All teachers plan their work carefully. Lesson plans record what pupils are expected to learn and, in the best examples, indicate appropriate activities to cater for the needs of all pupils. In the best cases teachers evaluate their planning and use their findings to inform the planning of their next lesson. Where teaching is very good, expectations are high and are matched well to the next stage of learning. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils were asked to look at an incomplete electrical circuit and decide why it didn't work. Questions such as '*Why do you think that?*' '*What will you need?*' and '*I don't know, you try it!*' were used very well to challenge pupils' thinking. In this case the pupils' responses provided the teacher with a clear understanding about what they needed to learn next.
124. In the main, teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs, but in some cases lower attaining pupils are too dependent on adult help to provide answers and for completing tasks. In some instances the technical vocabulary involved in an investigation is too complex for these pupils.
125. Almost all pupils enjoy their science lessons and are thrilled when their prediction is verified following an investigation. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They persevere well and work together effectively. They show particular interest and involvement when they are given some responsibility for organising some of their own learning. For example, when Year 2 pupils identify and select equipment they think they need to complete an electrical circuit.
126. The school development plan identifies clear objectives to improve pupils' attainment further in science. Two science coordinators, who work jointly, have produced an appropriate scheme of work and a long-term plan based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Local Education Authority guidance. They have a clear view of how the subject is planned in each class and receive evaluation reports from teachers at the end of each unit of work. The next stage in the monitoring of science is to undertake observations of teaching and to ensure that the agreed school policy is evident in practice. The coordinators are also planning to introduce appropriate targets for different groups of pupils.

127. The school has made considerable progress in science since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment has risen considerably and the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Almost all of the points for development in science identified in the last report have been addressed well. The only outstanding issue is to develop further the ability of pupils at Key Stage 2 to apply concepts of measurement and to use data handling in a wider variety of ways in science investigations. Pupils also need to be provided with more frequent opportunities to use information and communication technology to gather information and to present their findings.

ART AND DESIGN

128. Only two art and design lessons were available to be seen during the inspection. From the evidence from these lessons plus the scrutiny of previously completed work and from discussions with pupils, it is clear that standards of attainment in art and design in the school are in line with those expected for pupils at the end of both key stages. Pupils make good progress in developing art and design skills in Key Stage 1 and variable progress as they move through Key Stage 2. Standards in art and design have improved since the last inspection.

129. At Key Stage 1, pupils use a wide range of media including, paint, pastel, pencils and printing ink to create imaginative and observational art work. They mix paint and explore shape, texture, line and tone with an appropriate level of skill for their age. For example, some Year 1 pupils used chalk and pastels to make pictures which illustrated their ideas about night and the dark. These pupils have also looked carefully at the features of portraits by Van Gogh and Picasso. They have observed skin tones and have used oil pastels and paint to produce pictures of a high quality. They organise resources well and take great care when mixing paint. Year 2 pupils used charcoal to produce observational drawings of leaves and have used paint to make illustrations of electrical appliances used in science activities. An information and communication technology art and design package was used by these pupils to produce designs which were imaginatively linked with shape work in mathematics. Some of the younger Key Stage 1 pupils have used clay to make thumb pots. However, three-dimensional work using resources such as clay and papier mache is currently under-developed.

130. In Year 3, pupils have undertaken still life drawings of two people. This work was of a high quality and emphasised the importance of the relationship between two figures. These pupils have also completed Rangoli patterns to celebrate Diwali. This activity was one way in which the school successfully includes a range of cultural traditions celebrated by pupils within the school community. Year 3 pupils also undertook a printing activity which focused on the intricacies of Islamic design and produced their own high quality designs. Activities such as these provide pupils with valuable opportunities for their spiritual and cultural development.

131. Progress in Years 4 to 6 is slower because insufficient emphasis is given to observational work and the use of paint. Pupils have a limited range of resources to choose from. At the time of the inspection, pupils in these three year groups were designing pop-up cards to celebrate Christian and Muslim festivals. This activity was linked to a design and technology project and pupils' attainment was in line with age-related expectations. Some attractive displays of previously completed art work are used well to celebrate the pupils' achievements. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils had looked closely at a range of fabric designs and had used them as a stimulus for constructing their own carefully executed designs.

132. The quality of teaching in the two art lessons observed during the inspection ranged from very good to good. Curriculum planning clearly identified what it was that the children were to learn in the lessons. Resources were organised very well. Pupils were encouraged to observe very carefully and to think about what they were doing. The teachers communicated the purpose of the lesson well and gave clear explanations about the resources available and how they should be used. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on portraiture, the teacher provided a range of examples of the work of other artists and asked the pupils what colours they could see in the skin tones. This led on to clear instructions about the processes involved in mixing paint. Careful open-ended questioning enabled pupils to make their own decisions about what happens when different colours mix. Pupils enjoy art and design activities, concentrate well and take a pride in their accomplishments. When required to do so the pupils work very well together, manage resources carefully and make considered choices from a range of media.
133. Resources for art and design are adequate except for three-dimensional work. Some work in art and design is linked well to the science syllabus in Years 1 and 2. The use of sketchbooks is under-developed. The co-ordinator has produced a useful draft scheme of work based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance which focuses on learning objectives, key skills and assessment opportunities.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

134. No specific design and technology lessons took place during the inspection. However, some elements of design and technology were covered within art and design lessons. The overall standard of attainment, as deduced from the examination of pupils' work and teachers' documentation, is unsatisfactory at the end of both key stages. This is mainly because of an inadequate coverage of the subject within the curriculum and insufficient opportunities for pupils to work with tools, equipment, materials and components to make quality products.
135. At Key Stage 1, pupils also have relatively few opportunities to use a variety of constructional equipment to design, make and disassemble artefacts. In a lesson seen during the inspection, a group of Year 1 pupils were designing and making greetings cards and were involved in making prototypes by folding and cutting paper in different ways to make 'pop-up' cards. In this case the teaching was good because the teacher demonstrated a variety of ways of making folds and how scissors should be used correctly. The pupils were also asked if they could improve their design. During the inspection some pupils in Years 5 and 6 were undertaking a very similar greetings card making activity, but were not demonstrating skills that were significantly more advanced than those being employed by Year 1 pupils.
136. The school is aware that this area of the curriculum is in urgent need of improvement. The design and technology action plan indicates that the construction of a scheme of work, improvements in teachers' subject knowledge and improved resources are essential items to be developed. The recently appointed coordinator is currently undertaking training on an Local Education Authority course for design and technology coordinators and has produced a draft policy, a draft long-term curriculum plan and a scheme of work based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's and Local Education Authority's guidance. The school has undertaken these developments recently, and now has the capacity and the determination to make the necessary improvements to this area of the curriculum as a matter of urgency.

GEOGRAPHY

137. Geography is taught for approximately an hour per week during alternate half-termly units. No geography was being taught within the school during the six-week period that included the inspection week. Consequently the judgements made in this report have been based only on the sampling of pupils' work and the evidence in teachers' records. At the time of the previous inspection in 1997, pupils' attainment was well below average in geography at the end of Key Stage 1. This remains the case, mainly because of an under-emphasis on the subject within the curriculum. In 1997, pupils made good progress to reach standards that were in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. However, since then the subject has been given less time and a lower emphasis has been placed on the acquisition of geographical skills and concepts. Consequently, standards in the subject as revealed through pupils' written work have declined at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection and are now below expected levels.
138. By the end of Key Stage 1, some pupils are beginning to gain an awareness of where some countries and towns are from activities such as "*Where in the world is Snap?*" (the imaginary travels of a soft toy), but this knowledge is weak. There is little evidence of evolving map skills or of the use of information and communication technology to begin to develop spatial understanding.
139. The class teacher of Year 3 has discovered that most pupils in her class have a minimal knowledge of distance, direction or where places are located. She has begun to counteract this by using computer-generated weather maps to help pupils describe what weather a location is experiencing from its symbol. She has also secured a higher level of understanding about the seasons and how people respond to different weather conditions. By the end of Year 4, pupils have a limited ability to identify where important places are on a map. This ability needs to be strengthened by more frequent reference to maps within general class teaching. In Years 4 and 5, pupils have been involved in making decisions about the best place to site a settlement. This included some useful deductive reasoning. However, they had problems in applying their general principles to the real life case of Preston. All classes have an opportunity to follow a local trail that includes a range of urban environments as a means of appreciating some of the geographical factors that shape a neighbourhood.
140. Although these activities help to develop some useful geographical skills and concepts, they do not in themselves add up to a coherent and progressive scheme of work. Therefore, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' understanding of what places are like and how people live in different environments is still relatively weak. They have a quite poorly developed understanding of patterns and processes in physical and human geography and are not used to using Ordnance Survey maps or aerial photographs. Their understanding of environmental change and sustainable development is also lower than average. New Qualifications and Curriculum Authority model schemes of work are just beginning to be used to form the basis of an improved geography syllabus. In addition to this, more curriculum space will be needed to realise the proper potential of the subject, as well as some additional investment in staff training and more teaching resources, including information and communication technology software.

HISTORY

141. By the end of both key stages standards of attainment in history are in line with those expected for pupils of their age. This was also the case at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the topics covered in the syllabus, but their overall knowledge of key historical people and events is less secure than it should be. All pupils make satisfactory progress, although some are capable of making faster progress towards more ambitious outcomes.
142. Year 1 pupils are able to look at old and new toys and identify some of the features that characterise them. Year 2 pupils can recall parts of the story of Florence Nightingale in considerable detail and some have gained a basic understanding of where the Crimean War took place and approximately when. For many pupils the maps of Europe that they coloured in their books showing Florence Nightingale's journeys proved to be difficult to interpret.
143. In Year 3, pupils successfully develop the ability to describe life in Roman times using different resources. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 are able to discuss with considerable insight the difference between settlers and invaders and can empathise with the settlers whose land was seized by the Vikings. There is evidence at this point in Key Stage 2 of some good conceptual thinking, although this thinking is yet to be captured in any sustained writing. Year 6 pupils have undertaken some perceptive enquiry work on ways in which the everyday life of local people has changed over the last half century. They demonstrated some good questioning skills when a retired teacher came into their lesson to act as a historical witness.
144. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory and in half of them it was good or very good. In a Year 5/6 lesson, the teacher managed pupils' first-hand questioning of a person who had a vivid memory of the locality as it was in the past very effectively. In a class discussion with Years 4 and 5 on the reasons why the Vikings left Scandinavia to plunder the settlers in Britain, the teaching used relatively sophisticated terminology and concepts that challenged more able pupils. In this lesson all pupils were able to understand some of the passions that drove both invaders and settlers to act as they did. In a Year 3 lesson the teacher successfully encouraged pupils to explain how life changed during Roman times using materials seen on a video programme. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, more able pupils were not given sufficient scope to develop their reasoning or enquiry skills. In some cases too much time was spent using worksheets that had limited information on them and which required only one level of response.
145. In all cases, pupils responded positively to the lesson content, although they became more involved when they had practical things to do or could engage in discussion and questioning. Behaviour was always good, and where opportunities were available for small group working, pupils conducted themselves responsibly, as when investigating different generations of toys.
146. Since the last inspection the time available for history has been reduced, mostly because of the expansion of literacy and numeracy work. As yet there is not enough interaction between literacy and history teaching. Until July 2000 the curriculum was very restricted, with all of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 studying Henry VIII. Overall coverage of history was very patchy and pupils had large gaps in their knowledge. Since September 2000 a new subject coordinator has worked hard to upgrade the schemes of work to bring them in line with the Qualifications

and Curriculum Authority guidelines. This work is already yielding results, with improved standards of attainment being evident within samples of written work. There are still some important things to be done, which include allocating more teaching time to the subject, giving a greater emphasis to using historical source material, encouraging pupils to understand more fully the causes and consequences of historical events, and making more use of audio-visual materials. Pupils' work also needs to be marked in a way that helps them to understand how well they have done in relation to their learning targets, and how they could improve further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

147. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is below the national average. This was the case at the time of the last inspection, and although standards have improved a little, they remain unsatisfactory. Progress in both key stages by all pupils is unsatisfactory. This is due to the limited opportunities to develop essential skills systematically. Far more emphasis needs to be placed on developing information and communication technology skills in all years. There is a serious absence of sufficient focus on the subject. At Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate early skills in mouse control and begin to learn how to use specific keys reasonably well. They learn how to print their work. They use the 'colour box' to fill in the different rectangles and create attractive pieces of work linked to their shape work in mathematics.
148. At Key Stage 2, some pupils acquire skills in some aspects of word processing at a satisfactory level and have a reasonable understanding that information and communication technology can be used to assist with learning when they write sentences about their visit to Bluebell Wood. Pupils in Year 3 use it to create the opening paragraph of a story. From the work that is displayed it is clear that the computer assists them well in the presentation of work as handwriting skills are generally weak. However, the spelling errors which are many and varied in handwritten work are still evident in word processed work. Pupils' knowledge and skills in control technology and data handling are weak.
149. Pupils respond well to the work and willingly use computers when they are asked to do so. They work on their own and with a partner agreeably. Pupils are confident in seeking assistance and apply instructions accurately. The activities are quickly completed. These experiences are too short-lived, infrequent and insufficiently integrated into the curriculum to benefit pupils as well as they should do.
150. Lessons involving the specific teaching of information and communication technology skills were not available to be observed, so the quality of teaching could not be judged. It is clear from documentation that planning to teach skills and knowledge is unsatisfactory and that teachers have only a limited understanding of what is involved. The infrequent and short inputs of information and instruction are barely useful in the long term, although successful in enabling pupils to complete the activity. Satisfactory use of software to support sentence work, for example, was observed but, in general, the work is not linked to the curriculum well enough to enable pupils to apply it to their wider learning. The previous inspection report said that 'the lack of regular and systematic teaching of a full range of information technology skills and knowledge seriously restricts progress and attainment' and this is still the case.

151. Although schemes of work exist for each key stage which take account of pupils' few useful prior learning experiences, the school does not allocate specific teaching time to the subject. There is a lack of monitoring to ensure that the subject is properly integrated into planning. The coordinator is knowledgeable and has produced easy-to follow manuals for the guidance of both pupils and teachers. At this early stage in her career appropriate guidance on how to better manage the subject is necessary. The school knows there is urgent work to be done. The starting point is to increase opportunities for teaching basic information and communication technology skills to all pupils on a more systematic basis. The next step is to identify places within the schemes of work of all subjects where these skills can be applied to extend learning opportunities. There is a need to increase the number of personal computers available for pupils to use, and also the range of educational software. To support these moves, staff's expertise in the use of information and communication technology will need to be increased through in-service training.

MUSIC

152. Only one music lesson was available to be seen during the inspection period, which means that there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards of attainment and the quality of teaching. However, in the lesson observed the quality of teaching was good. Pupils of all ages sang in tune with clear diction in assemblies. In the previous inspection report, standards by the end of Key Stage 2 in music were below national expectations.

153. Pupils' attitude to music is good. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils responded well to improving their performance and made good progress. They clapped and chanted to a steady beat. They developed an understanding of how to create musical pattern. They linked the short and long claps well to the 'yellow' and 'red' balloons. They offered their ideas on how to read the music when the balloons were removed. One pupil suggested they use silence to indicate the gap by spacing hands apart. This was a good idea, but no opportunity was provided for pupils to try it. They sustained good interest in the work and successfully realised a sense of collaborative accomplishment. In assemblies, pupils sing pleasantly and clearly. They sing in local community settings, such as the Preston music festival and the local radio station.

154. The lesson was planned and structured effectively. There was appropriate challenge and guidance and this successfully enthused pupils for the work. Good account was taken of the skills and knowledge acquired previously. The pace of the lesson was brisk and it had a sense of purpose. There were sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their performance. Good use was made of questioning which enabled many pupils to offer their ideas and opinions, although these were not always tried out. The attention given to counting the beat helped to strengthen numeracy skills. Pupils were managed very well and all were encouraged to participate fully and this enabled them to work confidently.

155. Although music is regarded as being an important means of raising pupils' self-esteem, it has not been taught with any rigour. The provision for the subject is due for a planned review next term. There is much to do and the coordinator clearly looks forward to developing the subject in line with the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The coordinator feels confident in the quality support available from the Local Education Authority and the Preston Education Action Zone. Resources, except for information and communication technology, are adequate and of good quality, but are generally not used extensively enough.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156. By the end of both key stages, standards in physical education are in line with those expected for pupils of their age. Despite the limited external grassed areas, pupils experience the full breadth of the programme of study in physical education which includes dance, gymnastics and games. Only Year 6 pupils undertake swimming activities, and not all these pupils learn to swim the nationally recommended distance of 25 metres. The school is considering ways in which swimming provision could be rearranged to cater for the needs of Year 5 pupils.
157. By the age of seven, pupils are aware of the need to change appropriately for physical education and they know why they warm-up and cool-down before and after physical activity. They are developing good body control by illustrating different ways of travelling and refining their movements and have an increasing awareness of aspects of health related fitness. They work safely, use space well and work purposefully to improve their skills. The youngest Key Stage 1 pupils confidently remember and repeat simple skills with increasing control and co-ordination when they demonstrate different ways to move across a hoop. They remember and execute simple movement phrases. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils describe what they have done and observe and copy what others have done well. In some cases the pupils use what they have learnt to improve their movements. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the key stage.
158. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate an awareness of the importance of correct posture and the relevance of health and safety issues. They also understand some of the benefits of strenuous activity. All pupils are dressed appropriately for physical education. In a Year 3 lesson on throwing and catching the pupils were reminded about the correct ways of catching and were also encouraged to give each other tips about how they could improve their performance. Many pupils demonstrated that they were capable of varying the height and speed of their throw and could put these skills into a sequence. Year 4/5 pupils extend their skills of throwing and catching by practising and refining their work. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in physical education, they are supported well by their class teachers and by teaching assistants who are frequently present in lessons. Extra-curricular games activities are provided on a seasonal basis for some of the Key Stage 2 pupils.
159. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and often good. In all cases the lessons were planned appropriately and structured to meet the needs of all pupils in the class. The good teaching used teacher demonstration well to set high levels of expectation. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the teacher led the warm-up by limbering up, running on the spot and stretching with the children. Where the teaching was good the teacher established a very well controlled learning environment where basic health and safety rules were applied meticulously and where children received very positive but constructive feedback about how they could improve their work. Satisfactory teaching could be improved further by reducing the time spent in teacher instruction and by allocating more time for pupils to be actively involved in physical activity.
160. The physical education coordinator has observed the teaching of physical education throughout the school, has made useful observations and has given constructive feedback to colleagues. The physical education curriculum is underpinned by a well-structured and helpful scheme of work. The school has an appropriate action plan for future developments in physical

education and is keen to raise the profile of the school as an active sports community. The school has a basic range of equipment and apparatus for physical education and the coordinator is aware that an improvement in provision would provide further opportunities for the pupils to extend their gymnastics skills.