

INSPECTION REPORT

**BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119604

Headteacher: Mr J Whittle

Reporting inspector: Mr F. Carruthers
21285

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd May 2002

Inspection number: 225579

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 – 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Farringdon Lane Ribbleton Preston Lancashire |
| Postcode: | PR2 6LX |
| Telephone number: | 01772 792572 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr A. G. Spencer |
| Date of previous inspection: | April 2000 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 21285 | Mr F Carruthers | Registered inspector | Science Music | What sort of school is it? How high are standards? What the school should do to improve |
| A13786 | Mrs S Walsh | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 19041 | Mr R Linstead | Team inspector | English History English as an additional language | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 23204 | Mrs C Wojtak | Team inspector | Mathematics | How well are the pupils taught? |
| 25352 | Mrs G Taujanskas | Team inspector | Design and technology | How well is the school led and managed? |
| 4676 | Mrs M Griffiths | Team inspector | The Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design Geography Physical education Pupils with special educational needs Equal opportunities | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average sized Catholic primary school, with 398 boys and girls on roll in the main school and a further 68 children, aged three and four, attending part time in the nursery. This roll is almost exactly the same as at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils are of white ethnic origin and there are 14 pupils from other ethnic backgrounds such as Indian and Black African. Three pupils have English as their second language and none of these is at the early stages of learning English. These are below average proportions compared to schools nationally. There are 118 pupils on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs, which is 29 per cent of the school roll and above the average of schools nationally. Seven pupils have statements of special educational need and their needs range from specific learning difficulties to visual and physical impairment, though at the time of the inspection none with physical impairment was present. Levels of social deprivation locally are above the national average and this is reflected in the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, which is 32 per cent. The levels of attainment of the children on entry to the nursery are well below average and are very low in communication, language and literacy. The school is involved in a local project which is funded through the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Collective worship and religious education are the subject of a separate inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school gives a sound education for its pupils. The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected and no longer has serious weaknesses. From a low level of attainment on entry to the nursery, pupils achieve well over time so that the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected levels in mathematics and science in the current Year 6 is similar to that found in most schools. However, standards should be higher in speaking and reading. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Teaching is good overall and the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory with a number of good features. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The good, and at times very good, quality of teaching and learning in junior classes helps pupils to achieve well
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in literacy
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work. This is the result of good support and care for their well-being and very good provision for their personal development
- The school continues to enjoy good relationships with parents
- Because senior staff and governors now monitor the school's performance well and have a good grasp of how well it is doing compared with other schools, the school's priorities for improvement are clearly understood by all and there is a good shared vision for the school's development
- The school provides good resources and technical support to further pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT)

What could be improved

- Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, that is the nursery and reception classes
- Pupils' skills of speaking throughout the school
- The levels of challenge and expectations that staff have for higher attaining pupils to do better in English, mathematics and science throughout the school

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 2000 when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Since then the school has made good improvement. There were six key issues at the last inspection. The school has made good progress in four of them, namely raising standards in science and in ICT, and improving the quality of teaching and learning, and of the leadership and management of the school. Satisfactory progress has been made in two others, raising standards of writing across the school and of mathematics in infant classes. Several minor issues have also been resolved. These were: developing literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum; improving standards and teaching in geography; raising standards in swimming; improving the quality of marking and provision for multicultural education; and improving information in the school's prospectus and the annual reports on pupils' progress. Two minor issues still require attention: improving the consistency with which homework is set; and confirming that the governors' annual report to parents has all the legally required details.

The school has made good improvements to the levels of support for pupils, by employing more teaching assistants. It has improved the provision for pupils' personal development and the range of extra-curricular activities. The school has become involved to good effect in local and national initiatives such as those promoting ICT and links with parents. However, the excellent provision in the Foundation Stage found at the last inspection has not been maintained since the loss of specialist teachers to promoted posts elsewhere in the local education authority. Standards of pupils' skills of speaking are currently worse than those found at the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| English | D | C | E | D |
| Mathematics | C | C | E | D |
| Science | E | D | D | C |

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In 2001, standards in Year 6 in English and mathematics were well below the national average and below the average of schools with a similar intake of pupils. In science they were below the national average and matched the average of similar schools. Evidence from sampling pupils' work in all three subjects across the school shows rising standards, and the school is set to reach its target for 72 per cent of pupils in the current Year 6 to achieve the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics. Standards in science in the current Year 6 are similar to those achieved in 2001. This constitutes good overall improvement since 2001 and is the result of the school's concerted effort to address the serious weaknesses found at the last inspection. From a low level of attainment on entry to the nursery, the pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6. Nevertheless, standards of speaking skills are too low throughout the school, and there are insufficient pupils achieving above the nationally expected levels.

Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage, that is the reception year, are well below expected levels and should be higher. Standards at the end of Year 2 were very low in 2001 tests and teacher assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science. As a result of improved teaching and provision since the time of the last inspection, standards are better than this in the current Year 2 but are still well below average. Low skills of speaking are affecting the standards achieved in other subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics, and the full impact of improvements to teaching and to

provision in general is yet to be felt. Too few pupils are achieving above the nationally expected levels for seven year olds.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Pupils develop a real interest in their work and this is evident, for instance, in the high numbers of pupils who attend out-of-school clubs and learn to play a musical instrument. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. The overwhelming majority of pupils behave well and bullying is not a cause of concern to parents, pupils and the school. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good. Relationships between staff and pupils are particularly good and pupils learn to be very responsible. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory but rates of unauthorised absence in reception and Year 1 classes are high. |

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are strengths of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is good overall. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory overall but there are shortcomings in teachers' planning, and the pace of children's learning is often too slow. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory in infant classes and good in the juniors. Skills of literacy and numeracy are developed well through the national strategies and through teaching in other subjects such as science and geography. However, there is not enough attention given to improving pupils' skills of speaking. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, and those few with English as an additional language receive appropriate support. Teachers assess how well pupils are doing and make good use of the information to plan further work, but higher attaining pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work. Pupils develop most skills well; they concentrate and put a good amount of effort into lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good in Years 1 to 6. In addition there is a very good range of activities outside lessons. There are shortcomings in the curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Pupils receive good levels of support from class teachers and assistants. They benefit from arrangements to group pupils for literacy and numeracy by their attainment. They also receive very good support from the co-ordinator for special educational needs when in small groups withdrawn from main classes. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional | Satisfactory. Pupils' achievement over time is similar to that of most |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| language | pupils in school. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good and provision for their spiritual and cultural development is good. This is a strength of the school. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Levels of care and support for pupils are good. There are very good procedures to encourage the pupils to behave well. Staff monitor the progress of pupils' academic and personal development well. |

Links with parents are satisfactory overall with good features. For instance, information in annual reports on pupils' progress is thorough and provides parents with the idea of targets for their children to achieve in the future. Parents' contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory overall. The school has prioritised improvement in this area by appointing a co-ordinator for parental links.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Satisfactory with a number of good features. The headteacher is now successfully providing a key direction for the school. He and the deputy headteacher share managerial roles effectively and recent improvements to the senior management team mean the whole management system is on a sure footing. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors fulfil their responsibilities and hold the school to account well. They have a very good awareness of how well the school is doing and what action they need to take to make further improvements. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | This is good. Senior staff and governors are using information about pupils' work and standards in school to evaluate its overall effectiveness. They consult with relevant agencies and compare the effectiveness of services and resources satisfactorily. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school makes good use of available funds to support levels of staffing, and provision for pupils with special educational needs, as well as resources for subjects such as ICT. |

Staffing levels are good and class teachers receive effective support from well-deployed teaching assistants. Levels of secretarial support are good and administrative procedures run smoothly. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory with a number of good features such as the nursery building and two separate assembly halls, but some classrooms are cramped. Levels of learning resources are satisfactory overall and good in ICT. Library resources require some improvement.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and make good progress • Behaviour is good and pupils are encouraged to become mature and responsible • Teaching is good • The leadership and management of the school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing how well their children are doing • The consistency with which homework is set • The range of activities outside lessons |

| | |
|----------|--|
| are good | |
|----------|--|

There was a very good rate of return on the questionnaires sent to parents, and responses showed a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school. Inspectors support the positive views of parents and consider that homework should be more consistently set and there is a very good range of activities outside lessons. Information in pupils' reports is good and the school has agreed to review the timings of parents' meetings.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment is well below average overall and very low in communication, language and literacy. The children make satisfactory progress in the nursery and reception classes but by the time they start in Year 1, standards are still well below average. In infant classes, pupils continue to make gains in their learning but a significant minority do not achieve the nationally expected level for seven year olds in national tests and in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Satisfactory progress has been made since the time of the last inspection to improve attainment in writing, mathematics and science in infant classes. This is because the quality of teaching has improved, pupils with special educational needs are taught well, and provision has been developed, for instance in the teaching of investigational skills in science. However, it has been too short a time since the last inspection for improvements to have their full impact on standards. In junior classes, pupils' achievement is good and this is the result of good and very good teaching, especially in Years 4, 5 and 6, as well as good teaching of pupils with special educational needs. In the current Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected levels in writing, mathematics and science is similar to that found in most schools. This is evident in a scrutiny of their work and unvalidated results of the national tests they have recently taken. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and reflects the work that the school has done to address key weaknesses. However, standards of speaking are not high enough, and higher attaining pupils should be achieving better standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
2. In the Foundation Stage, progress should be better and not enough children achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. In the important areas of personal, social and emotional development, of communication, language and literacy, and of mathematics, attainment is well below expectations. For instance, children's speaking skills are low and consequently they are not confident in the early stages of reading and writing. This finding represents a decline in the children's progress since the time of the last inspection, and is the result of a number of factors. There have been changes to staffing in all three classes and difficulty in recruiting a co-ordinator for the age range. In addition, the school has rightly focused attention on the serious weaknesses found at the last inspection, rather than on this area, which was judged a strength.
3. The impact of very low skills of speaking is felt throughout the infant years. There is an above average number of pupils with special needs in communication and literacy and their low attainment has a significant effect on the school's overall standards at the end of Year 2. Nevertheless they make good progress towards targets that are set for them. This is due to good teaching combined with appropriate levels of support. Support staff are well deployed and are instrumental in structuring work that is accessible to all pupils. Activities are effectively planned to meet the needs of individuals, many of whom are supported within the learning support classroom. This strategy is instrumental in giving pupils the confidence to work alongside their peers in the classroom. In addition to those on the register of pupils with special educational needs, pupils of average attainment have limited skills of speaking and this adversely affects their ability to explain methods and to interpret word problems in mathematics and outcomes in scientific investigations. Good structures are in place, including the

National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and nationally recommended guidelines in science, which support teachers in raising standards. There is clear evidence of improvement in the current Years 1 and 2. However, a greater focus on developing speaking skills and on challenging higher attainers to do better is required for standards to really lift.

4. Progress in Year 3 is variable. In one of the two classes, it is satisfactory and this is evident from a scrutiny of pupils' work over the last year. However, staffing changes in the other class have meant continuity of learning has been adversely affected, particularly in the current term, when it proved difficult to find temporary staff. Just prior to the inspection, this difficult situation had been resolved satisfactorily. Progress accelerates in Years 4, 5 and 6 and this is the result of consistently good and often very good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and the small number with English as an additional language continue to make good gains in their learning. There are improved standards of literacy, numeracy and science since the time of the last inspection. Nevertheless, low standards of speech are delaying further progress in all three areas, standards are below average and there are too few pupils attaining higher levels in tests at the end of Year 6. The school is on track to improve targets of 72 per cent of pupils to achieve the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics for the current Year 6. The proportion of pupils achieving expected levels in science is similar to that found in most schools.
5. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection when the subject was a key issue for action. Good provision, both in terms of learning resources and technical support, has been the focus of the school's attention, and standards are now similar to those found in most schools at the end of Year 2 and below those at the end of Year 6. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Older pupils have some gaps in their learning from previous years, and this is why they achieve below average standards by the end of Year 6.
6. Across other subjects, standards have improved in geography and are now average. Attainment in physical education is above expected levels by the end of Year 6 and this is the result of good teaching and a good range of activities outside lessons. Standards of swimming have also improved. Standards have been maintained in art and design, design and technology, history and music and are average by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils have good attitudes towards school and parents report that their children enjoy their work. This is a strength of the school and the result of very good provision for the pupils' personal development and procedures to promote good behaviour. Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Most pupils arrive at school on time, happy, smiling and prepared to get on with their work. Pupils are very willing to be involved in activities and clubs; for instance, a very high number of pupils of all ages are learning to play musical instruments.
8. Pupils respond well to good teaching and many teachers are very skilled at managing pupils' behaviour. Attitudes of children in the nursery vary between groups. One group contains a number of children with under-developed social skills, who can squabble when unsupervised. The other group is happier and more interested and can manage themselves well.

9. Younger pupils often try hard to please their teachers. They require a lot of adult attention and are very keen to discuss their work. There were occasions when reception children were asked to listen to the teacher for too long and this resulted in their losing interest and eventually becoming bored and disruptive. By the time pupils reach Year 2 most are making good intellectual effort and can collaborate well. There are occasions, however, when pupils do not learn well because they are not listening to the teacher. Many pupils continue to try hard even when they find the work difficult. Older pupils have very mature attitudes. In a design and technology lesson, pupils were able to work well independently. They were careful to be precise and able to collaborate well. Pupils had lots of enthusiasm and responded well to motivating teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language have good attitudes to learning. They are interested in new work and keen to contribute.
10. Pupils' behaviour is good. For example, the behaviour of pupils coming into assembly is exemplary. Younger pupils can be boisterous when on the playground but they generally play well together. Older pupils enjoy the cheerful, lively atmosphere of the junior playground. Boys and girls play a variety of games. For instance, boys happily turned skipping ropes and joined in skipping games. Both playgrounds lack quiet areas, however, where pupils can escape from the general hustle and bustle. Exclusions are rare but there has been one recent, fixed-term exclusion. Bullying is not viewed as a problem by either parents or school.
11. There are good relationships, especially between pupils and teachers. Teachers respect each pupil's contribution and this encourages pupils to be confident and to ask questions of their teachers, including requesting help and support when it is needed. In *Circle time*, when pupils discuss issues, they listen carefully to the opinions of others and empathise with their feelings. *Circle time* is also used by some teachers as an opportunity to discourage bullying and to encourage pupils to understand how their behaviour affects others. Pupils are also able to show their understanding of moral issues in assemblies. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated; pupils treat them in exactly the same way as they would treat their other friends, for example choosing them to help them in assembly. Personal development is good. For example pupils in a Year 2 geography lesson had the opportunity to research Commonwealth countries and worked well as a team when presenting their findings. Pupils are also encouraged to be responsible. For example, they tidy up quickly after lessons.
12. Attendance rates are satisfactory being very similar to the national average. Older pupils have good levels of attendance but some pupils in reception and Year 1 classes take too much time off school. Unauthorised absence is especially high in these classes.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The school has successfully improved the quality of teaching in most sections of the school since the time of the last inspection, and most teaching is good or better. Over nine out of ten lessons are satisfactory or better. The amount of teaching judged to be good or better has risen slightly since the last inspection to just under six out of every ten. Just under one in five lessons are very good or excellent. The school has successfully addressed the key issue at the last inspection by reducing the amount of unsatisfactory teaching and making improvements to teachers' subject knowledge, for instance in the teaching of investigational skills in science, and in their planning. Positive features include a strong work ethic, where no time is wasted and teachers

help pupils to improve by giving clear guidance. Across the school the quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent.

14. Teaching is good in science, geography and physical education throughout the school. It is good in art and design, and design and technology in the infant classes, and good in English, mathematics and music in the junior classes. Teaching is satisfactory in history throughout the school. It is satisfactory in English, mathematics and music in the infant classes; and in art and design, and design and technology in the junior classes. Pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are taught satisfactorily and there are lots of opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in other subjects. Across the school, however, there is insufficient focus on developing skills of speaking. In mathematics, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge in practical problem-solving situations and the quality of teaching in the mental/oral session is not of a consistently good quality in all classes. A scrutiny of work shows that not all pupils are being challenged consistently at the appropriate level. Overall, teachers' expectations of what higher attaining pupils can achieve in English, mathematics and science is not sufficiently high to help them achieve as well as they might.
15. The quality of teaching is, on balance, in the nursery and reception classes with the occasional lesson being taught very well. This represents a deterioration since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be excellent. Staffing changes in the nursery and both reception classes, after teachers moved to promoted posts elsewhere in the local education authority, have resulted in the quality of provision not being maintained. Some staff are inexperienced and the recently appointed co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage has had too little time to evaluate provision and effect changes. Relationships are good and the teachers have a sound understanding of the needs of young children. However, not all lessons clearly identify what the children should learn. In the nursery, for example, planning shows the activities to be offered. There are a number of different staff in each classroom during the week, and this makes it particularly important to be clear about what the activities should help children to learn. Attention should also be paid to stimulating creativity through providing a rich environment that focuses on the development of language and thinking skills. In one unsatisfactory lesson in a reception class, the pace of learning was too slow, mainly because the teacher spent too long talking to the whole class.
16. In infant classes, the teaching is satisfactory overall, taking into account the quality of pupils' work over the past year as well as lessons seen, a majority of which were good or better. Careful preparation provides a good range of resources to support pupils' learning and pupils are motivated well by praise and encouragement. The best teaching is based on high expectations of pupils and they respond enthusiastically. Lessons are well planned and organised but they do not always provide pupils with challenging tasks, especially for the higher attainers. An example of good teaching was in a Year 1 mathematics lesson when pupils were helped to concentrate on the task of counting by focusing on a frog that jumped along a number line and on a glove puppet called David. Questioning was used effectively to promote and assess understanding and the teacher gave immediate extension or reinforcement as the need arose. In a Year 2 design and technology lesson, a very good question and answer session was the basis of a very effective start to a lesson focusing on Joseph's coat of many colours. This very good rapport between teacher and pupils provided the perfect environment for a discussion about different cultures. In literacy and numeracy sessions, the teachers have established clear classroom routines and there is an industrious working atmosphere. In less effective lessons, the

management of pupils is not as strong as it could be, and planning is not precise enough.

17. In junior classes, teaching is good. The best lessons are well planned and cater for the needs of all pupils. They have clear purpose, include challenging activities, and proceed at a good pace. In an excellent Year 5 athletics lesson, pupils were fully involved in decision-making and taking responsibility for their own learning. This was linked to the teacher's secure subject knowledge and effective interventions so that pupils knew what they had to do to improve. Similarly, in a Year 6 geography lesson on rivers, the teacher used an effective range of teaching strategies and had high expectations of what the pupils could achieve and how they should behave. In this lesson, discussion and questions were used to challenge pupils' thinking, to inspire ideas and to see alternative possibilities. All pupils responded very positively, enthusiastically raising their hands. This was effective in developing ideas and technical vocabulary, such as *meander* and *fertile*. Whole-class teaching was effective and pupils also had the opportunity to work independently or collaboratively, which they did well. This resulted in pupils settling quickly to the task, working at a good pace and producing written accounts of good quality. In a very good Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils entered the classroom before the teacher and their behaviour was impeccable. The teacher's very good management of pupils encouraged all to work hard, with positive results at the end of the lesson. Occasionally teachers' explanations in lessons are confusing and the lesson loses impetus because pupils' concentration is lost. This is particularly important in lessons where pupils need time to digest information and to give a personal response.
18. Good management of pupils is a feature of the school. It is very good in some infant classes and the majority of junior classes. Often it is so effective because it is unobtrusive. The best lessons get off to a brisk start and sustain interest throughout because of the varied activities. Questioning is skilful and used well to move the lesson on, often by discussing their misconceptions. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. However, the emphasis on developing pupils' skills of speaking is not as consistent as it should be, to ensure that pupils' answers become ever more articulate and they use technical terms better. This was evident in a Year 5 science lesson, when pupils were not required to use the best words, both technically and descriptively, to describe sounds that they were hearing. Throughout the school, the experienced teaching assistants work as valued members of the teaching team and are well deployed by teachers to help pupils with different learning needs achieve well. Teachers' methods of assessment are well implemented, and marking of pupils' work is a strength of the teaching. However, the use made of the results to record the progress of individual pupils in English, mathematics and science, and set targets for learning is less well developed. This has a limiting effect on the way in which pupils talk about their own learning and understand what they need to do to improve.
19. Some parents expressed concerns about the quantity of homework. Inspectors found homework to be complementary to work carried out in class but not always having sufficient impact on pupils' learning. The content of the work is appropriate but there is some inconsistency in the amount set by different teachers in the same year group, especially in junior classes. Home journals in the infants are of a good quality and meticulously kept up to date.
20. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well in accordance with their grouped education plans. The pupils are included in discussions, for example, those at the beginning and end of literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers and teaching

assistants take time to allow pupils who have difficulties in expressing themselves to make significant contributions to whole-class sessions. Teachers take an active role in checking the progress of pupils and setting targets for them. Tasks are frequently adapted to suit pupils' individual needs. However, some planning does not always sufficiently outline the work of individuals or groups who have special educational needs, or the type of resources they will be using. This is particularly evident in physical education lessons, where a variety of resources could be made available to ensure that pupils achieve success. Teachers prepare work that enables pupils to succeed most of the time and the relationship between adults and pupils is mutually respectful. This allows pupils to attempt new work without being afraid to make mistakes. Teaching assistants teach small groups of pupils experiencing difficulties, especially those associated with reading. Pupils enjoy their time in these groups where basic skills are taught very well. The specialised teaching that pupils with statements of special need receive in the learning support classroom is very good. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and teachers ensure that pupils are confident to work on their own as well as working collaboratively. The groupings for teaching literacy and the numeracy skills are advantageous and, together with good planning, enable pupils to take an active part in the lesson. They learn well and make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors, as it is for all pupils. The strengths of teaching for these pupils are: teachers' good knowledge of English and the stages of pupils' language development; good management of pupils' activities; and the good teamwork of teachers and support staff so as to promote all pupils' learning.

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

21. The quality of the curriculum in the infant and junior classes has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The school is now achieving its aim of providing 'a comprehensive and well-structured curriculum'. Teachers follow the latest national and local education authority programmes of study. This is also an improvement since the last inspection when there were no planned work programmes for five subjects. The school also ensures that the right amounts of time are now given to each subject, a further improvement. Teachers make satisfactory use of the new national methods of teaching both English and mathematics. These methods are gradually raising standards of literacy and numeracy. Although the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, there are shortcomings.
22. The school gives all pupils a satisfactory range of interesting and enjoyable learning activities both in and out of school. These meet all the latest requirements of the law. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the school did not teach some aspects of ICT and did not therefore meet its legal obligations.
23. In the Foundation Stage, the range and quality of learning opportunities provided are satisfactory overall and there is a range of interesting and appropriate activities. It broadly covers the six areas of learning in both nursery and reception classes, but is not clearly linked to the early learning goals for this age group. Rather, the reception classes plan in subjects linked to the National Curriculum, and the nursery plans according to the activity areas within the nursery, such as sand and water. As a result, there is little clear continuity at present. The new co-ordinator and senior staff recognise this and have prioritised in the current school development plan the development of an effective Foundation Stage curriculum.

24. In infant and junior classes, good quality planning ensures breadth in learning and a firm connection with pupils' interests and experiences. However, although the school has a clear plan to improve pupils' spoken language, in practice teachers do not usually make enough of opportunities to develop pupils' speech in lessons. Pupils receive satisfactory health and sex education, and gain awareness appropriate to their ages of the dangers of drugs through their science lessons. During the junior years, all pupils have the opportunity for weekly swimming lessons at a local pool.
25. Arrangements to make sure all pupils have full learning opportunities are satisfactory. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language. Pupils are fully involved in a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and the full range of extra-curricular activities. In most cases, withdrawn groups of pupils with special educational needs follow the same programme of work as the rest of their class, enabling them to keep abreast of what is being taught. Curriculum planning takes into account the needs of individual pupils but this is not always sufficiently focused and does not always identify what particular pupils will be doing.
26. Teachers link subjects effectively so that they make more sense to pupils. For example, history work on the Ancient Greeks in Year 5 includes reading, imaginative writing, art, geography and religious education. As a result, pupils improve their creativity, use of imagination, organisation and expression in writing as well as their understanding of the past. Pupils often use drawing and illustration well to record new learning, particularly in science, design and technology and geography. They also apply and develop number and measuring skills effectively in these subjects and music. However, below average speaking and reading skills delay the development of most pupils' independence in researching and ordering new learning.
27. There are satisfactory arrangements to support pupils' personal education, to improve their social skills and their understanding of citizenship. A relevant topic focuses learning in each class on this area each half term. Conversations in class with teachers and daily assemblies therefore explore personal and social issues appropriate to pupils' ages. However, the quality and amount of such learning vary from class to class. This is because teachers do not always timetable this work. For example, five classes do not have *Circle time*. However, social maturity and understanding of citizenship are also 'caught rather than taught' through the closeness of the whole-school community and the good quality of the school environment. All Year 6 pupils continue to have the opportunity to go on an annual residential adventure holiday and this supports their personal development very well. Pupils are used to being together, working together, learning responsibly and supporting each other.
28. The school makes very good arrangements to enrich pupils' learning and to improve their progress through many extra activities. These include after-school groups for football, rugby, netball, athletics, swimming, rounders and cricket; computer and Internet clubs; clubs for art and drama; a choir for the juniors; concerts and drama productions each year for both infants and juniors; and individual and small group lessons on string, brass, keyboard instruments and guitar. Nearly all pupils take up some of these opportunities during their time at the school. Local excursions and investigations make important contributions to pupils' first-hand discoveries, which are available to both boys and girls, about the environment in geography, through fieldwork within and around Borwick Hall. This visit widens their experience of outdoor pursuits and geography. It also enhances their social education.

29. The school's good relationships with its partner institutions enhance pupils' education. Good links with the associated high school avoid a break in the education of the Year 6 pupils. Visits of both staff and pupils help to give pupils a confident start to the next stage of their education. The school also maintains close links with local schools and professionals to improve provision for pupils with special educational needs. A further education partnership enhances the school's provision for ICT. The school maintains effective informal links with the parent and toddler group which meets in the school each week. Teachers in the Foundation Stage also set up strong and effective links with local families through home visits before children join the nursery and the reception year.
30. The local community makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils benefit from visits from the local fire department, animal welfare organisations and a professional theatre group. A local business sponsors the school's football teams. Older members of the community come in to lessons and make significant contributions to pupils' learning, particularly in relation to recent and local history. Pupils continue to get strong support from the church and community to support their spiritual and moral education.
31. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. This judgement constitutes an improvement since the last inspection, when it was good overall but only satisfactory in relation to the pupils' cultural development. The minor issue, to improve provision for multicultural education, has been addressed satisfactorily.
32. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The Catholic ethos and the school's mission statement promote good spiritual development throughout the school. The philosophy of valuing all pupils and providing for their spiritual needs is evident in practice. The visits to church and to Fernyhalgh offer good opportunities for reflection, as do the collective worship times in individual classes. These are very child-centred and appropriate to the age of the child. The element of mystery in human experience is explored in learning such as when children in the nursery cracked open an egg and explored the changing substance as it was mixed with other ingredients in the making of chocolate muffins. In a Year 3 design and technology lesson pupils expressed amazement when lemonade bottles, card tubes and balloons were transferred into moving monsters by incorporating the concept of pneumatics. Individual pupils often display joy, patience, kindness and self-control towards each other and this is particularly noticeable when pupils with additional needs are included in all activities, including extra-curricular activities. Year 6 pupils in particular show spiritual maturity in the way they think about the concepts of acceptance and fairness, and demonstrate their sensitivity and wisdom in discussion.
33. Very good attention is paid to the pupils' moral development. The school's code of conduct is based on the Christian concept of everyone treating others as they would like to be treated, and each class has developed and displays its own set of class rules. The positive relationships between adults and pupils throughout the school set the tone. Many of the staff team provide very good role models by their dedication, hard work and respect for the individual. They help pupils relate well to each other and take account of others' feelings. Moral issues are included in the planning for religious education and personal, social and health education, and good attention is paid to them in assembly. The weekly Achievers' assembly is a good example of a joyous celebration of the values of individual talents, hard work and caring. On the rare occasion when the moral code is infringed, incidents are dealt with sensitively and firmly, and the pupils concerned are explicitly helped to gain a clearer understanding

of the difference between right and wrong. In infant classes the emphasis is on the awarding or removal of 'chances', which can be earned for hard work and helpful behaviour.

34. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. This is evident during lessons, lunch times, indoor play times and after-school clubs. There are good opportunities for paired work and group work, which support the development of good social skills. Although the scheme of work for personal, social and health education has not been fully developed, many areas are already being taught effectively. The elected school council ensures that pupils throughout the school are given a voice. They have successfully changed the school uniform and improved playground games. Pupils support charities such as CAFOD and communicate with overseas schools in Africa. Racist incidents are monitored and an incident of name-calling was dealt with in an effective and sensitive way during the week of the inspection.
35. Cultural development is good and permeates many aspects of school life. Displays reflect the value placed on cultural heritage in its widest sense. The school actively promotes an appreciation of a multicultural society without losing a sense of British culture. A display in the main hall celebrates the Queen's Golden Jubilee, and the Commonwealth Games have been chosen as an appropriate focus for this term. Music chosen for assembly and dance is drawn from a variety of cultures. Popular culture is also embraced. This delight in celebrating the best of all cultures is apparent through the school in the array of extra-curricular activities on offer. Enjoyment was evident when Years 5 and 6 pupils practised their acting and dancing from the play, *Blood Brothers*.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school continues to provide a caring family atmosphere with a strong Catholic ethos. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory as the school follows locally agreed procedures. The school is committed to keeping children safe and secure.
37. The school's very good arrangements for promoting good behaviour and discipline are based on mutual respect, high expectations and creating an environment where pupils are valued. The emphasis is on rewards and praise; there is a clear hierarchy of sanctions but these are rarely used. Classroom management is firm and fair. The school's Christian philosophy is prominent in the way that it manages behaviour and this results in pupils developing self-discipline and confidence as they mature.
38. Arrangements for monitoring attendance lack vigour and are unsatisfactory. The main responsibility for following up unauthorised absence and monitoring attendance lies with the class teachers who do not always have the time or experience necessary for this task. The lack of effective procedures to monitor attendance has resulted in a significant increase in unauthorised absences.
39. Assessment procedures have improved significantly since the last inspection, when they were part of various key issues for action. They are now good. Regular assessment tasks are now carried out in English, mathematics and science and subject leaders now have a much greater awareness of pupils' standards and progress. The school uses a range of tests to measure how much the pupils have learnt and what progress they have made. Much better use is made of this information, together with national comparisons, to effectively monitor pupils' academic progress.

40. The school carefully analyses the results of tests and if necessary alters how lessons are taught. For example, in science, some pupils knew a lot about electricity so they were grouped together and given lessons that taught them even more; some pupils found the subject of electricity very difficult so they had lessons to reinforce learning. The school identifies pupils who are making good progress and those who are not reaching their potential. Extra classes in literacy and numeracy have been offered to help pupils who are doing well to reach even higher levels and to ensure those who are struggling are well supported. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is informal; teachers know their pupils well and this is reflected in the detailed comments that are written on pupils' reports. Pupils' personal development is well supported.
41. The school has established a good philosophy of including all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, in what the school offers. Other pupils are often very supportive of those who experience learning difficulties. Support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs are very effective. Individual education plans are not in place as would normally be expected. However, the systems adopted by the school for target setting and subsequent checking of pupils' progress are an adequate replacement. Apart from pupils with physical and sensory disabilities, all other pupils work to a group education plan. An effective system for the early identification and assessment of pupils' needs is in place and is understood by all staff. Carefully structured testing gives a clear picture of the progress pupils make year by year. Test results are well recorded and move through the school with pupils. Targets set for individual pupils closely reflect the recommendations of statements, and regular monitoring ensures that these are both realistic and achievable. The school fully complies with legal requirements in respect of seven pupils with statements of special need. Arrangements to assess the achievements and progress of pupils for whom English is a second language have improved since the last inspection and are now good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents are pleased with the standard of education offered by the school. The rate of return for the inspectors' questionnaires was very high and indicated a very strong measure of support for the work of the school. Parents recognise that behaviour is good and that their children are helped to become mature and responsible. They feel that teaching is good and that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The inspection found that some teachers have high expectations but this is not consistent across all age groups. Parents consider that the school is well managed and has worked hard to improve. A minority of parents think that there are insufficient activities for children outside lessons. However, the inspection team identified a very good range of activities. Parents were concerned about the consistency and amount of homework set. Pupils are set one major piece of homework per week that is usually carefully linked to what children are studying in lessons. The amount of homework set for older pupils is not consistent compared with that set in many other schools and does not have as much impact on pupils' progress as might be.
43. Parents are very supportive of the school. There is an active Friends' Association, which organises fund-raising and social activities for parents and children. Also there are social events such as a trip to the Blackpool illuminations organised by independent groups of parents. Events, such as Christmas concerts, performances and sports days, are very well attended. Most parents try to support their children's education but some parents find this difficult because of their own educational

experiences. The school has recently appointed a co-ordinator to encourage an even better partnership with parents to develop links further. The school has held meetings for parents to inform them about statutory testing of pupils' academic progress, but is aware that there are limited opportunities for parents to come into school and learn alongside their children. However, parents can come into school one evening per week and use the school's computer suite.

44. Information for parents is good. Parents find the school very easy to approach, should they have problems or concerns. The school offers a genuine open-door policy. There are cheerful and interesting weekly newsletters, which give parents a good flavour of the work of the school. The school brochure now meets statutory requirements but the governors' annual report to parents still has important omissions, including information about the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs, arrangements for the admission of disabled pupils, and information about the school's response to inspection.
45. The school makes every effort to establish good links with parents of pupils who have special educational needs. They are consulted regularly and have access to all relevant information about their children. Attendance at the annual reviews of pupils with statements of special need is good. Most parents are happy with what the school is trying to achieve and they are regularly informed about their children's progress at all stages of the process.
46. Annual reports on pupils' progress, which formed a minor issue for improvement at the last inspection, have improved substantially, so that they are now good. There is a new format and written comments now clearly inform parents about what their children know, understand and can do, and the progress their children have made. Targets for improvement are usually very precise. Teachers' comments about children's personal development are often very incisive. Some parents are concerned about the information they get about their children's progress. There are parents' evenings in the autumn and summer terms and the school recognises that there may be too long a gap between these evenings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The leadership and management of the school overall are satisfactory with a number of good features. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection when serious weaknesses were found. The leadership by the headteacher and key senior staff is now satisfactory. The headteacher has given significant thought to his leadership skills and is now active in providing a key direction for the school. Finances have allowed the deputy headteacher to be released from full-time responsibility for class teaching, and this enables her to share many more of the managerial responsibilities of the school. New systems have been implemented to strengthen the senior management team with four key stage leaders and this, although recent, is a positive move.
48. The governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Significant changes have taken place since the time of the last inspection, with a new chair and several new governors appointed, and these have strengthened the existing team. The governors are committed to improving standards and provide good support for the management of the school, particularly in the role of 'critical friend'. Senior staff and governors now use information about how well pupils are doing to compare the school's performance with others. They have required the school to be accountable and through regular meetings, particularly of the curriculum

committee, have held the school to account both for standards and for securing improvements in line with the post-OfSTED action plan and school development plan. This has had a positive effect. The governors fulfil their statutory requirements well, and have improved the curriculum by ensuring ICT is taught throughout the school. One requirement not yet fulfilled, despite being noted at the last inspection, is the necessary information for parents in the governors' annual report to parents.

49. Important improvements have taken place in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. They are now good, although more remains to be done. The headteacher and deputy headteacher check the quality of teaching by observing lessons in all classes, and providing positive feedback, both orally and in writing, to teachers. This gives staff good indications of their strengths and how to improve further. It has helped to reduce the amount of unsatisfactory teaching, although further work is needed in some areas. Subject leaders are better involved in managing their subjects and carrying out their responsibilities. An example of success in this aspect is the level of improvement in the teaching of science, which was a key issue at the last inspection. The impact of the work of subject leaders has yet to be fully felt across all subjects, however. Suitable strategies are in place for appraisal and checking the performance of teachers, and their objectives for improvement link well with the foci for school improvement.
50. The school has rightly prioritised improvements in standards in its development plan. It has taken determined action to secure these improvements through good staff training and committing sufficient finances to initiatives such as resources and technical expertise for teaching ICT. These have been effective and secured good improvements overall. All staff share the school's commitment to succeed and improve.
51. An experienced and committed co-ordinator of special educational needs provides very good leadership. She is well supported by class teachers, support assistants and a governor who takes an active interest in school procedures. Records of pupils are well kept and documentation is extensive and informative. Good links are maintained with the nursery and reception classes and with receiving secondary schools. Good contact with a range of outside agencies has proved effective in terms of identification and monitoring of pupils' needs. The school has successfully introduced the revised Code of Practice, which is supported by an effective policy. Funding for special educational needs is appropriately deployed. The leadership and management of provision for pupils for whom English is a second language are satisfactory. The school uses the extra funding it receives for these pupils effectively, so as to improve their progress and access to learning mainly through providing extra individual support, but also through extra resources such as bilingual books.
52. Good numbers of staff are employed in the school, to provide for the pupils' needs. Significant staff changes have taken place in the last year, and staff are working well together to improve the opportunities for pupils to learn. Suitable systems are in place to introduce new staff and provide them with support and advice. Extra staffing helps to ensure that all pupils' needs are met. For example, a part-time teacher is employed to enhance and develop links with parents, while a technical assistant provides support for ICT, which has a very positive impact on learning. Staffing levels to support pupils with special educational needs are good. Support staff and other classroom assistants offer good quality provision to these pupils. The school values their contribution and relies on their expertise and ability to work closely with class teachers. They work efficiently as a team and are an asset to the school.

53. The finances of the school are managed effectively. Specific grants are used well to provide resources and support for pupils. The large carry forward (nine per cent of the total budget) from 2001 has been reduced to under four per cent in the current financial year through increased spending on staffing.
54. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Although there are a good number of rooms available in the school overall, for example, a separate hall and dining room, and a computer suite, some classrooms, such as for Years 3 and 4, are small and cramped for the numbers of pupils they accommodate. The learning support classroom is a good facility and takes groups and individuals receiving additional literacy and ICT support. Resources are satisfactory overall, an improvement since the last inspection. This is particularly noticeable in ICT where there has been a substantial increase in resources and this in turn has had a positive effect on pupils' learning. Storage of resources is not always well organised. Minor deficiencies still occur in some areas, for example, in the resources to teach pupils about famous artists. There are particular deficiencies in the library facilities, where some books are old and outdated.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. The school should

- (1) Improve teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage* (Paragraphs 2, 15, 23, 56 – 70)
- (2) Pursue the raising of standards in English, mathematics and science by
 - focusing on improving pupils' skills of speaking * (Paragraphs 3, 4, 14, 72 – 75, 95, 102, 107), and
 - improving the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils (Paragraphs 3, 4, 14, 90, 96, 106, 107, 109).

In addition, governors and staff should consider for inclusion in the action plan

- improving the monitoring of unauthorised absences by pupils (Paragraphs 12, 38)
- providing all the necessary information for parents in their annual report (Paragraphs 44, 48)
- improving the contribution that homework makes to pupils' progress (Paragraphs 19, 91), and
- adding to library provision * (Paragraphs 54, 82)

* Features in the current school development plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 80 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 28 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 1 | 12 | 34 | 29 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 1 | 15 | 43 | 36 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

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

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) | 32 | 379 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0 | 130 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 7 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 1 | 118 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 14 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 22 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| |
|---|
| % |
|---|

Unauthorised absence

| |
|---|
| % |
|---|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.4 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.7 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2001 | 33 | 27 | 60 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 18 | 15 | 22 |
| | Girls | 20 | 17 | 17 |
| | Total | 38 | 32 | 39 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 63 (60) | 53 (57) | 65 (64) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 17 | 19 | 17 |
| | Girls | 18 | 14 | 16 |
| | Total | 35 | 33 | 33 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 58 (60) | 55 (62) | 55 (60) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

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

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2001 | 20 | 38 | 58 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 11 | 10 | 18 |
| | Girls | 23 | 18 | 32 |
| | Total | 34 | 28 | 50 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 59 (76) | 48 (73) | 86 (80) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|-------------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 10 | 14 | 17 |
| | Girls | 23 | 24 | 33 |
| | Total | 33 | 38 | 50 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 57 (71) | 66 (78) | 86 (78) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 1 |
| Black – other | 4 |
| Indian | 4 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 308 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 2 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

| | |
|------------------------------------------|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 17 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 21.6 |
| Average class size | 27 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 16 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 363 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 63 |
| Total number of education support staff | 3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 95 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 21 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|
| Financial year | 2001 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 831 530 |
| Total expenditure | 831 395 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1906 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 75 209 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 79 697 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 7 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 7 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 1 |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 1 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 282 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 224 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 56 | 38 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 50 | 44 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 50 | 45 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 32 | 43 | 13 | 6 | 3 |
| The teaching is good. | 55 | 38 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 36 | 39 | 21 | 3 | 1 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 62 | 30 | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 59 | 35 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 39 | 47 | 10 | 2 | 1 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 53 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 50 | 46 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 37 | 33 | 16 | 4 | 8 |

Other issues raised by parents

Parents find homework is inconsistent between classes and consider there is too long a gap between the first parents' consultation evening in October and the next in July.

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

56. Children enter school in the year in which they become four and attend nursery part time for one year, after which they move into one of the two reception classes. The nursery is housed in a large purpose-built building on the school site and the reception classes are in the main school building. Recently the school has focused rightly on improving whole-school aspects which were weaknesses in the last inspection. This has limited the focus devoted to the Foundation Stage, which was judged to be a strength of the school then. However, since that time, the Foundation Stage teaching staff has changed completely, with teachers leaving to promoted posts in other parts of the local education authority and some new members of staff being inexperienced. There have been difficulties in appointing a co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage. The new post holder has been in school for only a few months, which is too little time to evaluate provision fully and make significant changes.
57. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment is well below average overall and very low in communication, language and literacy. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage in all six areas of learning but by the time they begin the National Curriculum in Year 1 attainment remains well below average. Progress should be better.
58. In the Foundation Stage, the range and quality of learning opportunities provided are satisfactory overall. The curriculum provides a range of interesting and appropriate activities. It broadly covers the six areas of learning in both nursery and reception classes, but is not clearly linked to the early learning goals for this age group. Rather, the reception classes plan in subjects linked to the National Curriculum, and the nursery plans according to the activity areas within the nursery, such as sand and water. There is little clear continuity at present. The new co-ordinator and senior staff recognise and have prioritised the need to develop a Foundation Stage curriculum. Procedures to assess the children's progress are satisfactory and give a clear picture of the achievements of each child. Staff use the information effectively to group children in the reception classes for more formal activities in literacy and numeracy and to provide activities which help children of differing attainments to make appropriate progress.
59. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, this is not good enough to raise standards to where they should be. Work is planned on a half-termly basis and these plans are translated into short-term planning which identifies activities each week. However, not all classes clearly identify what the children should learn. In the nursery, for example, planning shows the activities to be offered. There are a number of different staff in each classroom during the week, and this makes it particularly important to be clear about what the activities should help children to learn. Relationships are good throughout the Foundation Stage, and children feel secure and comfortable. This helps to create a good environment for learning. In the reception classes, the environment is inviting with lots of colourful displays, which help to enhance and extend children's learning. In the nursery this is not so well developed, and some chances are missed to help children to think and ask questions. For example, in mathematics, numbers to five are on display, but no other aspect of mathematics is represented nor higher numbers, say to 10 or 20.

60. Teaching methods are generally appropriate to the children's stage of learning. However, teaching often lacks sufficient pace to enable children to learn at a good rate. Children spend too long on the carpet, particularly in literacy and numeracy in the reception class, resulting in boredom, rather than being directed to stimulating activities and then being gathered together for further instruction. Teachers' expectations of the pace at which children should work and the challenges they could meet are not always high enough. This limits the children's achievements. Support staff are enthusiastic and often encourage children to speak and give their views. However, this is not standard throughout the Foundation Stage. Planning does not always make it clear what children should learn and this affects how well support staff focus on important elements. Many opportunities are missed to encourage children to share their views and to develop vocabulary, through the range of subjects and activities available.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. Standards in personal and social skills are well below average by the end of the reception year. Children make satisfactory progress overall. Relationships are good and children generally show respect and courtesy to adults. Children are learning to co-operate in large and small groups, and beginning to take turns. However, a significant group of children find this very difficult and they become angry if they cannot get what they want straight away. This improves as the children become older. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Children are not always motivated to learn and some find concentration difficult.
62. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All staff provide good role models of courtesy and respect for children to follow. Where teaching lacks enthusiasm and the pace is too slow, children lose interest quickly. Some children have too few skills to work independently. Staff, particularly support staff in the nursery, are interested in the children and care for them well and this helps children to gain confidence.

Communication, language and literacy

63. Standards in communication, language and literacy are well below average by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Children make satisfactory progress, but there are aspects of provision and teaching which limit children's progress. Many children come into school with poorly developed speaking skills and limited vocabulary. Too little emphasis is placed on the need to develop children's speaking and listening skills. Planning does not show how vocabulary can be enhanced in different sessions through the introduction of technical vocabulary associated with particular activities. There are many staff working in all three classes but they are not made sufficiently aware of how they could improve children's skills effectively. There is limited access to books in the nursery and few children choose to read independently during sessions. Although a focus on a particular author or aspect of reading such as poetry has merit, these young children sometimes have a choice of less than ten books on the book shelf, mainly linked to a theme, in this case poetry. Frequently there are no books for a child who enjoys topics such as dinosaurs, cooking, fairy stories or trains. In this case some children might begin to believe that there is little to interest them about reading. Reception classes have good examples of writing on display, and areas for writing are available in both nursery and reception classes, encouraging children to make marks and begin to understand that writing carries meaning. For instance, the reception children write postcards as part of their theme on *Holidays*. However, few children are beginning to write independently.

Mathematical development

64. Standards in mathematics are well below average overall. Children make satisfactory progress, and count to ten but many cannot recognise the numerals. Opportunities to count are included in role-play activities, such as the 'Flower Sho'p in the nursery, but there is little adult support in this activity to ensure that children are extending both speech and understanding. Chances to count in everyday activities are few, although there are good opportunities for children to join in counting songs and rhymes, such as *Five little speckled frogs*, often with good props which help them to see how many frogs are left. Chances are missed to include mathematical vocabulary in practical activities. For example, in the pegboard activity in the nursery, children worked without any interaction with adults, so little was done to extend learning. Number displays are particularly helpful in one reception class where a 'washing line' display shows numbers to 25, so children can look at the next number to the ones they know and reflect on what they have learned. In the reception classes, lessons follow the National Numeracy Strategy and this gives a good framework for learning.
65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Where lessons are lively, children are enthusiastic and this leads to them being motivated and interested in learning. For example, in one class, children enthusiastically counted to ten and back down to zero, following the teacher's lead. However, the pace of lessons can be pedantic, and then children lose interest quickly. Children often need adult support to concentrate and finish activities successfully. They find working independently difficult, and when given a task which requires working co-operatively they can become boisterous. Staff deployment in the nursery sometimes limits the chances that staff have to offer help and support to children who find difficulty choosing their own activities. Nursery staff sometimes work at opposite ends of the very large room, sometimes with a small group of children for a specific activity. This is often effective in encouraging these children to learn, but staff do not always keep track of what other children are doing and do not take opportunities to offer support and encouragement. This limits the opportunities for some children to learn effectively on occasion.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. Children make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards are well below average by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and a suitable range of activities is planned which enables children to make satisfactory gains in their learning. Children learn to use simple tools effectively. In the nursery, children spread glue for collage pictures, and use paintbrushes carefully to make both large and small paintings. Older children in the reception classes paint sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh, showing good control of their brushes. They begin to use simple programs on the computer, particularly matching and painting activities, helping them to learn good mouse control. Children explore how things work, with wet and dry sand and water activities. They learn about the past and present and how things grow, enthusiastically pointing out to visitors in nursery the potatoes growing in large tubs. Older children in the reception classes look at the four seasons, and well thought out displays help children to reflect on what they learn. Role-play areas in both nursery and reception classes are well organised and help children to develop their understanding of the world around them. Children enjoy using construction toys and in the nursery this is supported well by extra staff who specifically work on developing language through this play. However, this is not always a sufficiently focused aspect in other sessions in both nursery and reception classes. Limited language skills sometimes limit the progress children make, as the children do not ask questions and participate in extended conversations.

Physical development

67. Standards in physical development are below average overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning, but most will not reach the early learning goals at the end of the reception class year. There are regular opportunities in both nursery and reception classes to use the large outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage. This gives chances to use wheeled toys, explore small equipment and learn to play co-operatively. Children also use the hall for dance and movement. Regular opportunities are provided for children to paint and draw, giving chances to improve co-ordination and fine skills in manipulating tools. Children enjoy using malleable materials. For example, in nursery children make pizza and cook it. Skills in using tools for cutting and shaping are limited but developing.

Creative development

68. Standards in creative development are below average overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A broad range of opportunities is provided for children to experience creative activities in both nursery and reception classes. The children make observational drawings of daffodils in nursery and experiment with water colours. Their drawings are generally lacking in detail and show they have not mastered drawing from observation well. Children are confident in making choices of materials for collages from a good range provided. They know a range of suitable nursery songs and rhymes, but they lack enthusiasm and enjoyment when singing.
69. The management of the Foundation Stage is in a state of change. Some changes have been made and others are planned. However, although planned, no scheme of work has been produced which ensures that both reception and nursery classes work together as a unit. There is no clear system for evaluating the quality of the curriculum and although some classroom observations have been carried out, the quality of teaching is not yet high enough to ensure that standards rise overall. The very large nursery is not always utilised effectively and there is a sense that some children do not receive sufficient adult support simply because groups and individuals are too far away for staff to be able to observe informally what is going on in other areas. Planning does not clearly show who will be responsible for what, other than the focused activity of each member of staff. This means there is no clear view of who should intervene and support children at different activities.
70. The school recognises the need to support and further develop children's language skills and has allocated funding for this purpose. Specific grants are used effectively to bring in additional support staff. In the nursery, for instance, staff in the afternoon specifically support language development, which works well.

ENGLISH

71. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection and are not high enough.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are lower than those in most primary schools. However, junior pupils make a very good improvement on their low standards at the end of Year 2. This is because of the good teaching in junior classes, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Girls are achieving higher standards than boys, following a national pattern. The school is on track to achieve its target for 72

per cent of pupils in the current Year 6 to achieve the level expected of pupils in English.

- By the end of Year 2, standards are well below those found in most primary schools. However, these pupils make steady progress from their poor language standards when they first come to school. The school's above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in language has a significant impact on standards at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils' work in lessons and in their books and files shows improving standards of literacy throughout the school. Writing standards have risen significantly, for example, and this is the result of the school's determination to improve on weaknesses in writing found at the last inspection.
- However, standards of speech remain low, and are delaying progress in both reading and writing. This is because the school does not make the most of opportunities to improve pupils' speech, or to develop their ability to learn through speaking.

Speaking and listening

72. The quality of pupils' listening in nearly all lessons is good. This is because teachers listen very carefully to pupils and expect high levels of concentration. As a result, pupils of all ages listen attentively to teachers reading, explaining, describing and questioning, and to each other's answers and comments. For example, the high quality of listening in a Year 5 literacy lesson enabled all pupils to explore and create lively 'rap' poems and to learn from each other's work. By the end of Year 2, nearly all pupils speak accurately to say what they notice, feel and remember. However, the skills of the majority of pupils in speaking expressively in sentences and asking questions are lower than expected for their ages.
73. By the end of Year 6, pupils speak in clear and occasionally complex sentences. They also follow detailed instructions and explanations. Pupils of all abilities begin to explore new learning effectively in group discussions. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils explained clearly to a visitor what archaeological finds could reveal about life in the past.
74. However, standards of speech remain lower than in most primary schools. For example, because they are short of words, pupils often have difficulty in explaining their methods in mathematics and science. This is because teachers do not include enough opportunities in lessons to improve speech or for pupils to learn through using it. For example, at the beginning of literacy lessons, teachers do not usually give enough time for pupils to practise reading aloud with or after them, to recite or to talk in pairs and share ideas. Similarly pupils do not get enough opportunity in physical education lessons to comment about their own and others' performances. The amount of listening expected in most lessons far exceeds the amount of speech.
75. Weekly class singing sessions help to improve pupils' listening skills and the accuracy of their speech. School productions and class presentations to the whole school in assemblies also improve speaking skills. As a result, pupils gain confidence in the junior classes, and their use and knowledge of words grow as they get older. However, these are not as wide as they should be by the time they reach the end of Year 6.

Reading

76. Pupils make steady progress throughout the school. One of the strengths of teaching in the infant classes is that teachers encourage pupils to enjoy stories and thus to develop an appetite for reading. As a result, nearly all pupils read simple texts by themselves by the end of Year 2. They also read their own writing and begin to check and correct it.
77. Another good feature of work on reading in the infants is the way teachers ensure that pupils use reading books that match their achievement. However, there are wide variations in home support for reading development. A significant number of pupils do not read regularly at home to adults. As one pupil in the infants put it: "I don't like reading at home because it's not quiet." The school has begun to address the need to strengthen parental support by appointing a home liaison teacher. Teachers also arrange effective extra help in reading, particularly through the co-ordinator for special educational needs, for pupils in both infant and junior classes who are struggling or falling behind.
78. However, a quarter of Year 2 pupils do not reach the standard expected for their ages and only a small number achieve the standard above. Most pupils' learning of the sounds, shapes and patterns of letters is satisfactory. However, lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are slow to master these basics, and rely too much on guessing to work out meaning as they read.
79. Enthusiasm for personal reading fades for many junior pupils, and they do not read much outside lessons or silent reading sessions at school. Pupils in the upper junior classes at times speak of reading more as a chore rather than a pleasure: "I read at the weekends when I'm bored" and "I read when we sit round the television." As a result, average and lower attaining pupils in junior classes have limited ranges and understanding of words. This is partly because junior pupils have had less experience of learning through the National Literacy Strategy, as the school started using it a year later than other schools. Most pupils do not easily appreciate suggested as well as stated meanings in text. Similarly, they meet difficulties in understanding word problems in mathematics. This problem is greater for pupils with special educational needs in language.
80. However, teachers do a good job in helping pupils understand new words and ideas in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and geography, to help them overcome such barriers to learning. Below average reading standards slow down pupils' acquisition of keyboard skills and therefore their progress in ICT.
81. Good teaching in literacy lessons also improves pupils' close reading skills. With their teachers' skilful guidance, pupils discover the riches to be found through painstaking attention to good writers' use of language. For example, through enthusiastic teaching which explored the choice of words and style, Year 6 pupils really enjoyed Ted Hughes' poem, *The Fly*, which they had at first found difficult and uninteresting. However, such effective learning in class cannot make up for the weaknesses resulting from many pupils' limited private reading.
82. Library skills are average. Although the library is small, and short of up-to-date books, it is well organised and accessible. By the end of Year 2, nearly all pupils know how to find information using contents and index pages and simple dictionaries. The majority of junior pupils also know how to find books using both number and colour systems. There is insufficient use of the library to develop research skills and teachers partly make up for these shortcomings by arranging displays of information books in their classrooms to back up learning about new topics.

Writing

83. Standards of presentation and handwriting are as expected for pupils' ages. By the end of Year 2, nearly all pupils write fluently using readable printed letters. This is because of consistent approaches, and good standards of marking. Pupils record their experiences, retell stories and write simple lists and letters. Although they write in sentences many are unsure about how and when to use capital letters and full stops.
84. Junior pupils write in a satisfactory range of forms. They write clearly to record new learning in science, geography and history. The school is also good at encouraging pupils to write about their own experiences. As a result, their work gains a personal voice. Junior pupils' editing and re-writing improve their accuracy and expression.
85. A further strength in pupils' learning is the development of their skills in using different styles and different types of sentences to match their writing to its purposes. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote realistic postcards as if they were evacuees. Pupils' skills in organising and structuring stories and discussions are satisfactory. This is because teachers use the text and sentence work in the literacy strategy effectively. They also follow recent national guidance on teaching writing and provide a weekly lesson to give pupils time to write at length.
86. A major weakness is that teachers do not commonly link speaking activities in lessons closely enough to pupils' reading and writing work. As a result writing in the junior classes is often short of punctuation and expressive phrasing, because pupils do not speak or read aloud enough. The school is addressing the problem by encouraging teachers to make full use of talk as a preparation for writing. The current school development plan gives more emphasis to speaking. Because of limited private reading, pupils often use below average numbers of words in their writing. As a result, their skills in describing and conveying feeling are below those expected for their ages.
87. Spelling standards are also below average for similar reasons, although there are regular opportunities to learn and test spelling throughout the school. As pupils do not use formal English enough, because of limited opportunities for speaking and reading aloud, they continue to spell words as they sound, long after the infant stages of writing. For example, an above average Year 6 pupil wrote *variety*, *countries*, *experiance* and *onece*.

Teaching and learning

88. Taken overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with good teaching in the junior and satisfactory teaching in the infant classes. Grouping pupils by their attainment is helping to focus the learning effectively for pupils. The school teaches writing well, a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, there are shortcomings in provision for both speech and reading development. During the inspection, the quality of lessons ranged from very good to satisfactory. The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, an improvement since the last inspection when one English lesson in ten was unsatisfactory.
89. The satisfactory quality of learning in the infant classes is often enhanced by good teamwork and teachers' effective use of support staff. This ensures that pupils for whom English is a second language, and those with special educational needs, do

not lose out. This ensures that pupils for whom English is a second language, and those with special educational needs, are given appropriate opportunities to learn. Teachers in both the infant and junior classes give effective help to individuals and groups. This is mainly because they plan support arrangements well and keep a close eye on progress during lessons.

90. Good relationships between pupils and teachers make a good atmosphere for work in nearly all lessons. This establishes good listening from the start, in which pupils readily learn from both the teacher and each other. In nearly all lessons teachers manage pupils' learning well. However, expectations both of concentration and the quality of written work are not always high enough in the infant classes. This is often because teachers do not give pupils enough reminders about the presentation of their work. Pupils do not therefore always form their letters and sentences clearly enough.
91. In the best lessons teachers engage pupils strongly in closely related speaking, reading and writing activities based on high quality text. For example, Year 6 pupils made very good progress in understanding modern nature poetry because the teacher kept them all very busy with challenging work in groups using all these activities. As a result of the effective help and support they get from teachers and classroom assistants, pupils with special educational needs make steady progress towards the language targets in their individual education plans. The marking of pupils' work especially in junior classes is good and there are examples of constructive comments that help the pupils to improve their written work. The setting of homework is not consistent across all classes and its contribution to pupils' progress, while satisfactory overall, could be better.
92. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, as at the time of the last inspection. Monitoring of teaching has resulted in improved learning and steadily rising standards in both the infant and junior classes, following a dip in the last two years in national test results in Year 2. The subject leader has identified priorities accurately, particularly weaknesses in speaking. However, there is not yet a whole-school drive to remedy them, so as to ensure that pupils are up to the language demands of secondary school work when they leave.

MATHEMATICS

93. The school has made sound improvement to its provision since the last inspection. As a result,
 - standards in the current Year 6, though below the national average, are an improvement on the 2001 test results, which were well below the national average, and
 - pupils' knowledge and understanding of numbers improve significantly as they move through the school. From a very low starting point in Year 1 they achieve well over time.
94. The majority of pupils in Year 6 are working at an appropriate level for their age but the percentage of pupils who exceed this level is smaller than the national average. This year the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level is likely to rise to the school's target of 72 per cent, compared to 54 per cent last year. This good improvement is the result of
 - better teaching, and
 - improved use of pupil assessment since the last inspection.

However, more is required to be done to raise the attainment of the average and above average pupils.

95. Progress on the key issue, to raise standards of infant-aged pupils, has been satisfactory. Although standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 2 have remained low since the last inspection, achievement is satisfactory, given many of the pupils' low attainment on entry. There have been staffing changes, which have had a variable impact on progress, and although teaching has improved since the last inspection, there has not been sufficient time for teachers to fill all the gaps in infant pupils' knowledge. Many children enter the school with limited vocabulary, which puts them at a disadvantage when they try to interpret word problems in mathematics.
96. Whereas many pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are very well supported in lessons by the strong team of teaching assistants, a significant proportion of pupils should be doing better. Teachers' expectations of pupils tend to vary considerably throughout the school and the level of challenge and support is not consistent. Occasionally expectations are too high and pupils are not supported in clear steps to understanding. More often they are too low. Strategies are being introduced to compensate for this and to improve all teaching. These are having a good effect and aim to produce higher standards in the future. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily.
97. In infant classes, teaching focuses on strengthening pupils' understanding and application of skills in number work, as well as extending knowledge in data handling, shape and measure. A sizeable minority of pupils find it difficult to explain their strategies and this limits their progress in using and applying mathematics. The majority of pupils in Year 2 can sequence numbers, are beginning to multiply numbers by 2 and are showing good understanding of doubling and halving small numbers. They can read the time at each hour but are less secure when the time is set at half past the hour. They use their knowledge of addition when adding coins such as 50 pence, 20 pence and 10 pence. The grouping of pupils by ability enables the lowest attaining pupils to move on more quickly whilst providing targeted support where it is most urgently needed for others. The highest attaining pupils are matching the expectation for their age in all aspects of mathematics but they are few in number compared to similar schools. Many can add coins that total up to £5 but they are less secure when subtracting amounts. They can add three-digit numbers without using apparatus, double numbers such as 95 and can use the 2, 5 and 10 times tables competently when multiplying numbers. Their work in shape, data and measurement shows less evidence of extended work for their ability and often they complete similar work to the rest of the class. Lower attaining pupils work more routinely, and at a simpler level. Some pupils still have poor concepts of the addition of numbers to 20 at this stage and use their number squares for support. They can double and halve small, even numbers and show good understanding of money notation, but they find difficulty in recalling quickly what they have learned and many have poor levels of concentration. Progress is slower because teachers repeatedly have to go over earlier work before extending topics. Nevertheless, all pupils achieve satisfactorily from their low starting point.
98. In junior groups, many pupils begin Year 3 with an insecure background in numerical skills and this is clearly evident for pupils of average and lower attainment, who lack confidence when translating word problems to their equivalence in numbers. Even in the highest achieving Year 6 group, several pupils do not know multiplication tables well enough to do work on logical problem solving and percentages, and they are unsure about the steps to take when faced with a written problem. Teachers are

focusing on improving confidence along with teaching basic techniques. Most Year 6 pupils can carry out long multiplication, and can multiply, divide and round decimals to two places; they can convert from one unit of measurement to another using a conversion graph and can find the simplest form of fractions. Other aspects of mathematics are average. Good knowledge and precision in measuring of angles are shown.

99. The quality of teaching is good overall and this judgement reflects findings from a sample of pupils' work as well as lessons observed. Of 12 lessons seen three were very good, four were good and three were satisfactory. In the juniors, the high quality teaching in Years 5 and 6 has been maintained and teaching is now good in Year 4. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and, for the most part, behave extremely well in lessons. This goes hand in hand with the teachers' ability to engage pupils' interest, the use of a range of creative strategies, and skilful questioning that checks understanding, misconceptions and progress. The majority of pupils say they enjoy the subject. Pupils are less confident in oral reasoning than in written work when working on word problems, as is evident when pupils attempt to reason through their answers. On the whole, pupils achieve a greater degree of success when working on structured tasks. In the best lessons, teachers have very high expectations and set challenging tasks, which engage pupils' interest and motivate them to work hard, independently. Unsatisfactory elements of lessons relate to plans that do not make it clear what pupils should learn, expectations of pupils that are too high or too low, or insecure discipline that leads to a lack of pace. Occasionally, a lack of subject knowledge leads to weak or slow learning. Some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to investigate but do not allow them enough independence in deciding on their own methods or resources. Introductions to lessons are variable. In some lessons the mental starter lacks focus which leads to missed opportunities for some pupils and not all teachers include opportunities for all pupils to participate. A good pace is generally maintained throughout lessons, however, so that pupils waste no time and produce an appropriate amount of work.
100. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good because work is well matched to their needs. Learning support assistants work closely with class teachers in planning for the needs of individual pupils and groups. This enables these pupils, and others of lower attainment, to exceed the levels that might have been expected based on their prior attainment. The good provision for lower attaining pupils is accelerating their progress.
101. Teachers make satisfactory use of ICT, and there are some very valuable opportunities in Years 5 and 6 when groups of pupils use the small collection of laptops. Homework is satisfactorily used to deepen pupils' understanding but is inconsistently set in some age groups. The quality of the marking of pupils' work is generally inconsistent, The best marking caused pupils to think for themselves and to learn from their own mistakes when teachers explained misconceptions.
102. The curriculum has its roots in the National Numeracy Strategy but teachers are increasingly tailoring their own teaching strategies to groups of learners. Teachers seek to develop communication and literacy skills of pupils, through discussion sessions that give pupils the opportunity to improve their ability to listen to others and express themselves clearly. This is an important area to focus on if standards are to rise further. Writing and numeracy skills are developed when measuring and recording the results of experiments. Pupils' numerical skills are average, having improved through the focus on mental mathematics at the beginning of lessons. Pupils' computational skills are average. Little evidence of calculators was noted.

Mathematical skills are used well to complement work in other subjects, such as science and geography, where, for example, pupils become adept at plotting co-ordinates and taking temperature measurements. In physical education lessons pupils take their pulse and multiply this number to work out how effectively their heart is working. Measuring equipment is taken outside so that skills are acquired in a meaningful way.

103. The management of the subject is good. The school uses a good system of tests and tracking designed to identify what pupils need to do to improve even further. This checking of individual progress is applied by the subject leader who is a strong influence behind the strategies for improving the progress of individual pupils. Checking the quality of teaching by the headteacher has begun to improve the quality of teaching. He has observed lessons and given clear feedback. There are clear signs that the strategic use of the monitoring and assessment systems is beginning to work well. Planning is checked to ensure that skills and knowledge are taught progressively. Pupils' work is regularly assessed against the national scheme of work and progress is recorded on individual records, which are checked by the headteacher and subject leader. Good practice is developing in the gathering and evaluation of information from national and other tests.

SCIENCE

104. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection, when the subject was a key issue for action. As a result of good leadership and management by the subject leader and the concerted effort of staff to develop their expertise,
- investigational work is now much better,
 - pupils' recording of topic work has improved,
 - staff use assessments well to plan further work ,
 - ample time is devoted to teaching the subject, and
 - resources are now sufficient and of good quality.
105. Provision is now good and, consequently, standards by the end of Year 6 have risen in the past three years. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and the few learning English as an additional language, achieve well over time. The proportion of pupils in both 2001 and the current Year 6 achieving the nationally expected level is similar to the national average. However, the number of pupils doing better than this, even though it is rising each year, is below the national average and this is a point for improvement. Compared to similar schools, the school's performance is average.
106. Pupils in Year 2 attained standards in the 2001 teacher assessments that were in the lowest five per cent of all schools and similar schools. However, because of improved teaching this year, standards are rising and more pupils are on target to achieve the nationally expected level than in previous years. Overall, standards in Year 2 are well below those of schools nationally and more must be done to challenge the average and above average pupils to do better.
107. Pupils in infant classes cover all aspects of the work well and are given good opportunities to carry out simple investigations. Staff use simple recording sheets, which become progressively more sophisticated from age group to age group, to provide pupils with the chance to predict outcomes, write about what happens and reach conclusions. For instance, in an experiment to find out whether plants need water, all pupils in Year 1 wrote what happened and higher attainers drew conclusions appropriately. In recording their findings of an investigation into whether sounds are fainter as they become more distant, pupils used a computer program to create a

very clear graph of their results. Generally pupils have limited speaking skills and in lessons this is evident when they try to recall earlier work or describe what they see happening. They need much support in these aspects of their work. Teaching assistants help the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to talk about investigations. In Year 2, pupils investigate friction and ask important questions as to why it is that certain surfaces slow down moving toy cars. Pupils can label a simple electrical circuit and understand safety with electrical goods in the home. Noticeable features of the work are: good opportunities for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to write using their own words; standards of presentation which are never less than satisfactory but which vary according to the expectations of staff; examples of very good use of computers to create diagrams and graphs, though practice varies according to the expertise of teachers; and, not enough challenge for higher attaining pupils to think about the reasons for their findings.

108. A sample of the work in Year 3 indicates pupils are not achieving as well as they should be. There has been clear progress in one class and this is evident in improvements the pupils make in their written work and diagrams, and was seen in a lesson where they recorded how light affects plant growth. In the other class, changes of staffing mean there have been inconsistencies of approach and some work has been left unfinished. The rate of pupils' progress in Years 4, 5 and 6 accelerates and pupils' learning is good because teaching has many positive features. As a result, pupils develop a clear understanding of the investigative process, and they are expected to write their own accounts of experiments and to reflect on outcomes. For instance, pupils in Year 4 use forcemeters to investigate the power of their muscles; pupils in Year 5 work out the angles of light reflecting off mirrors; and those in Year 6 plot temperature change when solids melt and liquids freeze. By Year 6, pupils' work is well presented and this is the result of the high expectations of teachers and their rigorous marking of work. It was evident, however, in a Year 5 lesson on sound that pupils' speaking skills are still below average, their recall of scientific terms is patchy and the colloquial language they use does not lend itself well to giving explanations. The use of ICT also varies across classes. It is satisfactory overall but could make a better contribution to standards.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is evident from lessons seen and sampling of pupils' work over the year. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when it was judged unsatisfactory, despite good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Except in one of the Year 3 classes, teaching is of a much more consistent quality than previously. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and of eight lessons seen, there was a balance of good and satisfactory teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved significantly as a result of good training in how to teach investigational skills. Planning is now consistently good and the pace of learning is better. Pupils get through a good amount of work during the year. Their behaviour in class is rarely less than good, they concentrate and co-operate with one another well. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson, for example, when the pupils carried out a series of investigations on sound, moving in pairs from one activity to the next. In lessons, for instance in Years 1, 3 and 5, teaching assistants helped pupils with special educational needs to be fully involved. Teachers manage the pupils and organise lessons well. Marking is thorough and there are examples of constructive comments promoting further learning. Teachers develop the pupils' skills of writing and mathematics well through the subject. Points to improve are:
- the use of questioning to challenge the thinking of higher attaining pupils,

- expectations of how well pupils know and use scientific terms when they describe what they see and give explanations,
 - the use of ICT across classes, and
 - standards of presentation, which should match the best evident in some classes.
110. The subject leader has very effectively kept a check on the quality of teaching and standards, providing advice and training when appropriate. There are good procedures to check on pupils' progress and there are examples of information arising from assessments being used well to focus on where pupils' knowledge is weak. A particularly good example of this was in Year 5, where results of tests showed pupils' knowledge of electricity to be very variable. This led teachers to plan a short series of lessons for pupils grouped by their levels of understanding, and resulted in extending the knowledge of higher attainers and consolidating the necessary learning for average and below average pupils. Resources for learning are now well organised in year groups and accessible for staff to use. The school is well placed to continue this good overall rate of progress.

ART AND DESIGN

111. Only one lesson was observed in infant classes and two in the juniors. From this small sample, together with the work in pupils' sketchbooks and displayed around the school, standards are judged to be average and there are some standards higher than this in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress through open-ended tasks which they are able to fulfil to the best of their ability.
112. The best work is to be found in the infant classes where good teaching allows pupils to experience a variety of tools, techniques and media as part of their cross-curricular topics. By actively encouraging pupils to use all the tools at their disposal, teachers improve basic skills. Cutting and pasting techniques are used to create collages of a traffic survey completed in geography. The environment in Year 1 classes is colourful and vibrant and stimulates pupils to produce work of the same quality. Following a good demonstration by the teacher, pupils soon become proficient at rolling and manipulating clay. They can then model stained glass windows from designs that have been sketched, following a visit to a church. Some designs are particularly intricate. One pupil, who remembered that he had seen the figure of Jesus in the stained glass, included it in his model. Teachers encourage pupils to use the computer to design patterns for a portfolio of work. Knowledge and understanding are further enhanced by using an Internet website to find out about the work of Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils experiment with pattern and colour using the work of Klimt as an example, and their painted pictures of the story of *The Three Little Pigs* are used to develop their writing skills.
113. There is a lack of really inspiring work together with a richness of experience in junior classes. Overall, teaching is satisfactory but work in the style of other artists is not sufficiently developed. Lower junior pupils use what they have learnt about Aboriginal art to combine visual and tactile ideas about embarking on a journey. However, painting techniques are limited, as is the use of brushes for mixing colours. Work with clay produced a variety of coil pots in the upper juniors, the success of which was due to a good demonstration by the teacher. Many pupils working on Greek pot patterns can reproduce intricate designs and have a good eye for detail. They use their sketchbooks well to plan and experiment with drawings and designs. Drawings and paintings increasingly support pupils' work in literacy as they progress through the school.

114. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work, but the lack of a subject leader at the present time means that there is no checking of provision and not all pupils are being sufficiently challenged. Occasional good teaching ensures that pupils are taught specific skills, rather than assuming that they possess them naturally. Sometimes teachers talk for too long and pupils can sometimes wait for up to 30 minutes before they start working. There were similar findings at the last inspection. The present lack of a subject leader prevents the varying strands of art from being pulled together and leaves teachers to develop their own thoughts and ideas in isolation. There is a satisfactory level of resources apart from examples of the work of other artists, which could serve as a stimulus to pupils to raise standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and show satisfactory improvement since 2000, when the school was last inspected. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. There is appropriate evidence of creativity in the designing stage, which is clear in the high quality of design plans and results in good achievement in this aspect for pupils. Making skills are satisfactory. The evaluation of work is satisfactory overall and it is of a particularly high quality in Years 1 and 5.
116. In Year 1, standards of work are above average. Pupils explore slider and lever mechanisms in moving pictures. Useful experimentation with the technological aspect is expanded in earlier lessons when pupils experiment with joints, and the quality and finish of both the puppet theatres and the boat stories are very good, with attention paid to detail. When investigating fruit and vegetables, pupils use models, pictures and words to describe their designs. Evaluations show that pupils recognise the steps they have taken and have considered ways to improve. Year 2 pupils investigate vehicles and their labelled diagrams of cars are of a good quality. In their topic on Joseph's coat of many colours, pupils approached their tasks with careful precision, whether engaged on fabric designs, sewing or joining fabric in different ways. They undertake fewer topics than in Year 1 but their planning and making skills are above average. They approach tasks confidently and use their initiative.
117. In junior classes, pupils design and make simple products. The time allocated to evaluation is in general rather short and pupils are not always given appropriate ideas of changes that they might attempt. Making skills are good and pupils make products to a good standard. For example, Year 3 pupils explore sandwich snacks and photograph frames. The level of accuracy in the quality and finish is good and pupils have considered their function carefully. In exploring pneumatics, they apply knowledge acquired in science lessons when they make their moving monsters. Pupils in Year 5 explore the Christmas cake and research recipes using the Internet. Year 6 pupils collaborate extremely well when making their vehicles for their fairground topic but standards would be higher if pupils were given more time to develop their skills in the subject. Pupils enjoy the subject and respond positively to the challenge set by the teachers. They pay good attention to the quality and finish of products.
118. Teaching is satisfactory overall and it is good in infant classes. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teachers prepare pupils well for planning sessions by engaging pupils' interest and sparking off lots of ideas through an initial discussion and through an interesting array of audio-visual aids. Preparations for lessons are often very good. A successful lesson with Year 2 pupils explored how a seam is made and as the teacher was talking, pupils were excitedly finding seams in their clothes. In Year 3 the

teacher demonstrated the action of a balloon pump and engaged the pupils by asking them to predict the likely outcomes. This lesson was a very good example of the teacher using a range of strategies to facilitate learning. The link to other subjects is emphasised in the choice of topics. For example, in Joseph's coat of many colours there are strong links to art, mathematics and religious education. Some pupils have opportunities to use computers in the design process but this practice is not established through the school. The sound standards are a direct result of sound teaching in all aspects of the subject.

119. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has worked hard to develop a policy and a scheme of work that is rooted in the National Curriculum. This matches national guidelines and allows scope for individual creativity, retaining those elements that have proved to be successful in terms of skill development, standards and engaging pupils' interest. Natural links with other subjects could be further exploited. Pupils are making sound gains in knowledge and understanding of the designing and making processes. Achievement is being checked at the end of each unit of study but the information gained is not being used systematically to promote higher standards. Resources are vastly improved since the last inspection. There are now storage trolleys and portable trolleys equipped with suitable tools. In one Year 2 class, however, pupils were having to share pairs of scissors which limited learning, and there were insufficient pairs of left-handed scissors.

GEOGRAPHY

120. Standards in geography are average. Levels of attainment are in line with what would be expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when standards were judged too low. However, poor literacy skills of speaking are undoubtedly having a detrimental impact on the progress pupils are able to make.
121. Pupils receive a good start to their work through some inspirational teaching in infant classes. *Barnaby Bear* travels the world and pupils trace his journeys, and this encourages their familiarity with maps from the outset. It stimulates the pupils' enthusiasm to learn about the world in which they live and the different ways that people can travel. An interesting innovation, leading to good links with other subjects, is the use of the forthcoming Commonwealth Games to find out about some of the countries that make up the Commonwealth. Pupils in Year 1 learn to interpret simple maps of the school site and its immediate location. They are able to identify areas where it is not safe for them to play, explaining the reasons behind the initiatives put in place by the school and the local authority. A fence, yellow lines and a white line on the school playground, which pupils must not cross when cars are parked, are all identified features of safety. When using a simple map, a few pupils can explain the purpose of a key and can construct their own. Good teaching has targeted weaknesses of too little recorded work, and too little use of ICT found at the last inspection. Both aspects are now good. Detailed displays of a recently conducted traffic survey now adorn the walls of Year 1 classrooms, and word-processing skills enhance the presentation of written work. The work in pupils' books indicates that they have a good understanding of contrasting areas such as towns, countryside and seaside. They are able to sequence a journey from leaving home to arrival at their destination.
122. Juniors link a lot of their work with history, for example when studying the changes in the locality over the years. A detailed study of an area within the United Kingdom leads

to comparative studies of different parts in the world, such as India, Australia and Africa. This work occasionally produces some good quality, independent writing, through teachers making good use of relevant vocabulary and encouraging pupils to write in sentences. Words such as *condensation* and *precipitation* readily spring to mind when pupils are questioned about weather differences in other parts of the world.

123. An improvement on the previous inspection is that the work set in class is now more demanding, although at times good resources are not used to the best advantage and teachers talk for too long before pupils begin their own investigations. It is due to the more mature attitudes of older pupils that this does not pose problems for teachers. It undoubtedly does in younger classes where some pupils become noisy and restless. As pupils show concern for the environment, they develop good awareness of aspects such as litter and noise that spoil it. When considering how to improve the environment in a particular area of the school, teachers encourage the use of numeracy skills by introducing graphs and pie charts to record pupils' findings. These are frequently incorporated into displays within the classroom.
124. Teaching is good in both infant and junior classes and teachers now plan together consistently. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are developing satisfactorily. Teachers encourage pupils to do their own research as well as provide books and video recordings, which give pupils insight into the way that others live. The needs of all pupils are taken into account and marking is supportive and usually tells pupils how they might improve. This, together with the good use of classroom assistants, enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Higher attaining pupils are frequently well challenged. The commitment of teachers to encourage pupils to work collaboratively as well as independently helps to develop enjoyment in the subject and an ability to respond to challenge.

HISTORY

125. The school maintains the average standards noted at the last inspection. This is a good achievement, as pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world are less than in most schools at the end of their reception year. Teachers make satisfactory use of the latest national and local authority guidance. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make steady progress.
126. By the end of Year 2 pupils' knowledge and understanding of the past are as expected for their ages. They have a good understanding of chronology. This is because Year 2 teachers make very effective timelines which link pupils' lives and birthdays to the large scale of historical events from 1605-2002. Pupils also learn how we may find out about the past from eyewitnesses who wrote down or depicted what they saw. Pupils of all abilities discover how to find out about the more recent past by talking to older members of their families, and constructing family trees. They begin to make notes about what they discover, labelling pictures and writing simple sentences. For example, a Year 2 pupils studying Florence Nightingale noted: "She made the soldiers get better. She wrote lots of letters."
127. By the end of Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding of history, and their skills in finding out about the past, are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils compare different sources of evidence such as archaeology, pictures, films, living memory, books, artefacts and the Internet. They regard studying history as important because it helps them to understand change and to learn about famous people. Pupils of all

abilities recall key facts about Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilisations. They understand how and why Romans, Saxons and Vikings invaded and settled in England. Pupils also understand how life for children and families was different in Tudor and Victorian times.

128. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Very few lessons were seen during the inspection and the quality ranged from good to satisfactory. Learning is good when teachers have detailed knowledge of the topics, provide interesting resources, and give pupils plenty to do. For example, a Year 2 teacher linked work on the past effectively to the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. She interested pupils in her clear account of some significant events during the last 50 years, such as the change to decimal currency, the first *Live Aid* concert, and the death of Princess Diana. Pupils began to raise historical questions such as “How come you had half pence?” and “How many people died in the New York bombing?”
129. Teaching is also effective when pupils have varied opportunities to learn through investigating primary and secondary sources. For example, Year 5 pupils sought answers to the question: What made the Ancient Greeks such powerful fighters? The teacher provided them with challenging work in groups, finding out about the life of a Spartan child, studying pictures of Greek and Persian soldiers to discover their strengths and weaknesses, examining military objects such as a Greek sword, scabbard and helmet and discussing an account of the battle of Marathon with the teacher.
130. A weakness in the teaching is that the school does not make enough use of the local environment either for observational and discussion work in infant classes or for documentary research in the juniors. Weaknesses in reading and writing skills slow down junior pupils’ development as independent researchers. For example, Year 5 pupils studying Greek artefacts sidestepped the detailed information sheets that accompanied them. Teachers also have further to go in using opportunities to stimulate and develop pupils’ imaginative writing skills.
131. Teachers enliven pupils’ understanding of the past through well-planned use of artefacts. Visits to places such as the Turton Tower and the Ribbleson Hall site, and an interactive day at the Lancashire Museum, give pupils satisfactory opportunities to learn through observation and direct experiences.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

132. Standards are average by the end of Years 2. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average. However, all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Older pupils have some gaps in their learning from previous years, and this is why they achieve below average standards by the end of Year 6.
133. These findings represent a considerable improvement on the standards found at the last inspection, where standards, pupils’ progress, the curriculum and resources all had weaknesses. The school has worked hard to remedy the shortcomings and has succeeded overall. An appropriate curriculum is now in place and a suitable scheme of work has been implemented in all year groups. Teaching has improved as staff have received training and gained confidence. Resources have been significantly improved and the creation of a computer suite enables a class to be taught together efficiently. The resources are managed effectively by the technician who is both knowledgeable and supportive to teachers and pupils. This has a significant and positive effect on pupils’ progress.

134. Pupils in the infant classes make satisfactory progress in their learning, building on their early skills effectively. They work with the mouse on a range of painting programs, drawing themselves or their pets. They use the computer to make Easter cards. Pupils use a paint program to draw and then fill in their picture with chosen colours, using the various tools in the program. Pupils begin to use word processing, for tasks such as making lists and writing stories. They use programs to support learning in other subjects, such as geography, and to practise and improve their mathematics skills.
135. Pupils throughout the school, however, have few keyboard skills and this limits the amount of work they produce using word processing. Some pupils become frustrated with their lack of skills and the slow pace of their work.
136. Pupils in the junior classes make satisfactory progress overall. For the older pupils the gaps in their prior learning are yet to be filled and they remain below the expected levels overall by the end of Year 6. For example, older pupils have too little experience of skills of control and modelling, and limited experience in using email and the Internet. However, they are learning to make slide show presentations, to use graphs and spreadsheets and to import illustrations for their writing from an art package. Younger pupils in this age range, for example in Year 4, have a much broader experience. They are building on their previous knowledge with good examples of work using a control mechanism, in this case to give instructions to make the pupil's initials, and using graphs in both science and mathematics. This sort of progress indicates that these pupils will reach the expected levels by the time they leave the school.
137. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some good teaching was observed. Staff generally have reasonable levels of subject knowledge, which enable them to teach effectively. Some teachers still lack confidence. Although all lessons are satisfactory, some rely on teachers' good levels of general teaching expertise, backed up by the specialist knowledge of the technical support assistant for extra help and expertise. This is a good partnership, but there is some way to go before all teachers are fully confident. Teachers manage their classes well, particularly in the confines of the small suite. Interesting introductions and clear instructions enthuse pupils. Good relationships help pupils to respond positively to the teacher's comments and improve their work. Planning for higher attaining pupils is sometimes limited and these pupils lack challenging tasks.
138. Pupils really enjoy working in the computer suite. They are keen to learn and co-operate well with one another. Behaviour is good. Relationships are good and this means there is a positive working atmosphere with good levels of mutual respect.
139. Subject leadership is currently in a state of change. However, the school acknowledges the tremendous work done by the previous subject leader to bring the subject to its present acceptable level of resourcing and effectiveness, following concerns in the previous inspection. This means that a new system of team leadership and management can now be put in place to improve the subject further.

MUSIC

140. Standards have remained broadly similar since the last inspection and are average overall. Satisfactory improvements have been made to standards of singing, the leadership and management of the subject, and the range of individual instruments that are taught by staff and visiting specialists.

141. During the inspection, one lesson was observed in each of Years 2, 3, 5 and 6. These and other evidence, such as sound recordings and assemblies, indicate that standards are similar to those found in most schools at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Year 2 sing tunefully and can keep a simple beat. They tap rhythmic patterns and understand the time value of some of the notes used in traditional notation. Year 3 pupils develop an appreciation of the mood of different pieces of popular music. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 compose pieces of music following a theme and record them using tuned and untuned percussion instruments. From earlier lessons listening to *The Planets Suite* by Holst, the pupils in Year 5 showed sensitivity in composing music to accompany silent excerpts from the film, *Apollo 13*. Pupils in Year 6 perform a melody using three notes on tuned instruments, including keyboards, and compose their own pieces from the same range. They learn how to perform solo and in an ensemble.
142. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good in Years 5 and 6. The good teaching leads to good standards of performance, for instance in the school's choir as well as in lessons, and motivates the pupils to enjoy the subject and to learn an instrument. Teachers have good management skills and as a result, lessons have good pace and pupils work hard. In a Year 5 lesson on the theme of *Space*, the teacher made excellent use of video recordings to stimulate the pupils to compose appropriate film music. Shortcomings in teaching mainly relate to the limited knowledge and expertise of non-specialist teachers, who are at times unsure how to develop the pupils' skills of composition and have limited technical understanding. For instance in a Year 3 lesson on music and mood, there were missed opportunities to reflect on why different orchestral and 'pop' instruments were used to create different moods and to familiarise the pupils with technical terms such as *texture* and *dynamics*. The subject leader, appointed last September, is making a good contribution in this, advising and supplying published materials to support the nationally recommended guidelines for the subject that the school uses.
143. The subject leader has good expertise and management skills to develop the subject in school. He has already reviewed provision, checked resourcing and begun to observe lessons. As a result, the subject has been earmarked for development next term as part of the school development plan. Improvements to provision for learning an instrument since the last inspection are particularly appreciated by parents. A good number of pupils are now learning to play brass instruments, keyboards and the violin, and there are clubs teaching guitar and keyboards, as well as the school choir, which is becoming involved in performances outside school as well as inside. There are regular opportunities for pupils to perform in musical plays each year, such as *Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. Music is taking on a higher profile in school and this is benefiting the pupils' self-esteem and their personal and cultural development. The use of computers to support composition is planned.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

144. Attainment is average by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, and above that by the end of Year 6. This shows that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, and this is largely due to good and better teaching. Standards in swimming, which were a minor issue at the time of the last inspection, have improved and are now satisfactory. Overall, improvement in provision has been good since the last inspection.
145. From an early age pupils appreciate the necessity for warming up their bodies prior to exercise. Although only two infant lessons were seen, pupils were able to demonstrate that they have acquired games skills, which enable them to handle a large ball with competence, bouncing and catching it under control. When working with a partner they can accurately bounce a ball into a hoop as they throw to each other. In dance, most pupils can clap and stamp to a rhythm and they can all skip in time to music. Changes of direction cause problems for younger infants and many find it difficult to keep their upper body rigid and arms by their sides when they are learning Irish dancing. Some of them achieve the complicated footwork remarkably well. Teaching in this phase ensures that pupils are aware of the necessity for safe practice. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to listen and to follow instructions carefully. This is not always easy, as many young pupils are naturally boisterous and inattentive when a classroom environment does not restrict them. Teachers deal well with a few pupils who lack concentration. Good support of pupils with special educational needs ensures that they are fully involved in all activities.
146. Pupils have developed good hand and eye coordination by the time they reach the lower juniors. Using a racket and a ball, several are able to keep a rally going between themselves and a partner. They also begin to appreciate how they have to move their feet to position themselves to play a shot. By the time pupils have reached the upper juniors, their attitudes to the subject are very mature and they enjoy their lessons. At this stage, there is little difference in the performances of boys and girls and all possess good basic skills, which have been taught well. This was evident in an extra-curricular game of rounders when the throwing, catching, fielding and batting skills of a team of girls proved to be better than those of a team of boys, with the girls eventually winning the game. Good teaching has undoubtedly contributed to the maintenance of good standards since the last inspection. In athletics, most pupils understand that they have to strive for height as well as length when putting the shot. Throwing for accuracy is well developed as are running and jumping skills. Some excellent teaching develops pupils' ability to make informed judgements about their own efforts and those of others. This is an area where considerable improvement has been made since the last inspection. In the majority of lessons teachers' enthusiasm has a very positive impact on the interest and enjoyment of all pupils. Following improvement since the last inspection, standards in swimming are now sufficiently high, with survival forming a major part of the programme. Numeracy is used to good effect in physical education, as pupils take responsibility for their own learning, measuring, timing and calculating whether or not they have improved their performance.
147. Good curriculum leadership enables teachers to have a confident approach to teaching. Teaching is good overall but one lesson observed was unsatisfactory. Subject knowledge is generally secure, resulting in the establishment of very good opportunities for all pupils to participate, particularly those with special educational needs. Good support for these pupils enables them to benefit from work that is

appropriately challenging. Effective ongoing assessment clearly tells pupils how well they are doing while at the same time ensuring that they are operating safely. Teachers' planning is good but does not always identify how resources can be adapted to meet the needs of a variety of abilities. The one unsatisfactory lesson was due to lack of clear guidance on the tasks that pupils were expected to perform. Pupils' individual needs were not taken into consideration and they therefore failed to meet their learning objectives.

148. Schemes of work have been adapted to suit the needs of the school and guidelines for checking and reviewing pupils' performance are clear. The continued provision of a wide range of extra sporting activities supports the work that goes on during lessons, and consideration is being given to extending activities into the lower juniors. There is a wide variety of learning resources and although outdoor accommodation is limited, this does not detract from the many and varied opportunities available to pupils.