

INSPECTION REPORT

LONGSHAW INFANT SCHOOL

Blackburn

LEA area: Blackburn

Unique reference number: 119125

Headteacher: Mrs Dorothy Orgill

Reporting inspector: Mr Rob Crompton
7230

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th April 2002

Inspection number: 244728

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Crosby Road Blackburn Lancashire
Postcode:	BB2 3NF
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Florence Oldfied
Date of previous inspection:	16 th March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7230	Rob Crompton	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? <i>The school's results and achievements</i> How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9053	Viv Philips	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</i> How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21171	Sally Handford	Team inspector	Art and design Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30266	Hilma Rask	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage English Religious education English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
29378	Ken Watson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in a suburb of Blackburn. It is similar in size to other primary schools, with 208 boys and girls aged from four to seven. Pupils mainly live locally. Families move in and out of the area fairly frequently; during last year, about ten per cent of pupils joined or left the school other than at the usual times. Attainment on entry to the school is well below that of typical four year olds. Many children have poor language skills, are socially immature for their age and have a limited knowledge of the world beyond home. A quarter of all pupils have special educational needs, most of whom have learning or behavioural difficulties, and four pupils have statements of special educational need; both figures are above the national average. Most pupils have cultural roots in the British Isles. Fourteen pupils come from Asian backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The area has high levels of unemployment and almost half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school is part of the Blackburn with Darwen Educational Action Zone (EAZ) and receives additional funding and support.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, which values all pupils and successfully encourages them to try hard and make good progress. Pupils respond well to the warm and caring atmosphere; they have positive attitudes and behave well. Teaching is consistently good and, although the standards achieved by seven year olds in English and mathematics are slightly below the national average, test results are much better than those achieved by similar schools. The headteacher provides strong leadership and the school is well managed. There is a shared commitment to improve. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching enables pupils to progress well through the school
- The school is fully committed to ensuring all pupils do as well as they can
- A strong focus on pupils' personal development boosts their confidence to learn
- Pupils' progress is carefully assessed so that new work is at the right level
- The broad curriculum extends pupils' experiences and sustains their interest and enthusiasm
- Very effective provision for pupils with special educational needs means that they make good progress
- Close links with the local nursery and junior schools help children as they start and leave the school
- The school is well led and has a shared commitment to improving standards
- Additional funds are used to good effect

What could be improved

- Opportunities for promoting pupils' speaking skills
- The role of subject co-ordinators

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the previous inspection in March 1998 has been good. The issues identified then have been addressed successfully and other improvements have been achieved. The quality of teaching has risen and standards have improved in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and art. Higher attaining pupils have better opportunities to reach their potential.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The school's results and pupils' achievements

As they enter the reception classes, many children are immature for their age. They make good progress but, as they start Year 1, many have yet to develop the social, language and mathematical skills expected. Most meet the goals for creative and physical development but their knowledge of the world outside home and school is limited.

Learning accelerates during Years 1 and 2 and, as the above table shows, results in 2001 were much better than those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing matched that in similar schools and was much greater in reading and science, and very high in mathematics. Over the last five years, results in reading, writing and mathematics have improved more quickly than in other schools nationally. The level of work seen during the inspection broadly reflects recent national test results.

Attainment in all other subjects matches the levels expected, with pupils achieving good standards in art. Pupils make good progress in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. They listen well in class but speaking skills are weaker. Levels of numeracy are close to those expected by the age of seven. Pupils have a satisfactory grasp of number but some pupils find it difficult to remember things they have learned in other areas of mathematics.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets. There is no significant variation in the standards achieved by boys and girls, or those achieved by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

The school sets ambitious targets, reflecting its commitment to helping all pupils to achieve their potential, despite the rather low base from which many of them start. The vast majority respond well to the challenges set and make good and sometimes very good progress through the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils like school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in lessons but is not as good outside.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. Relationships between adults and children are good, but there are gaps in children's social experiences and understanding of other people's feelings and viewpoints.
Attendance	Satisfactory, but a few pupils are frequently absent, which severely affects their progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Across the school, teachers are very good at motivating pupils to try hard. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to believe in themselves by setting them challenging but achievable tasks. Praise is used liberally and boosts pupils' self-esteem. Teachers are highly skilled in managing behaviour and those pupils who have difficulty in settling down are supported well, often by one of the highly effective nursery nurses.

Teachers strive to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have every opportunity to learn and succeed. They maintain detailed records, which helps them to set work at different levels. Classes often have the support of their teacher, a classroom assistant and a volunteer parent so they can work in small groups. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and, because teachers concentrate on specific skills and use resources effectively, pupils make good progress. This is particularly evident in English and mathematics, which are consistently well taught, enabling pupils to make good headway in building up their skills in literacy and numeracy.

Pupils develop good learning habits as they move through the school; they listen attentively and put a lot of effort into their work. Teachers work hard to teach them the special vocabulary they need in subjects such as science and music. However, pupils often have difficulty in explaining things and expressing their ideas because they lack experience in speaking in class and discussing their work with other children and adults.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: pupils benefit from a stimulating range of practical activities in lessons and from educational visits and visitors to the school, and the good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: pupils are very well supported in lessons and in withdrawal groups.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and do just as well as other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall: pupils are often encouraged to make a personal response during assemblies and in lessons such as art and music. The school develops pupils' moral awareness very well, frequently rewarding their efforts and acts of kindness. It successfully broadens pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. As many pupils are socially immature, there is room for more opportunities that encourage independence and self-discipline.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Well-organised routines ensure that very good attention is paid to the well-being of pupils. Behaviour management is consistently very good. Very effective assessment procedures enable the school to track pupils' academic progress and personal development carefully.

Parents think very well of the school and are made very welcome. Home-school links are good and parents receive helpful information about how children are getting on. Simple, clear guides are provided about how parents can help in different ways in school and at home but formal reports by teachers and governors could be more user-friendly.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher, well supported by the deputy, provides strong leadership. The co-ordinators of some subjects lack the time to monitor teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors carry out their duties to ensure the smooth running of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and results are compared with those of other schools.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Governors have clear priorities for spending and use their human, financial and learning resources well.

The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management has led to improvements in the quality of teaching. Governors apply the principles of best value in order to make optimum use of available funding, but the school development plan lacks the degree of clarity needed to inform their evaluation of value for money. Staffing levels are good and allow pupils to be taught in small classes, often supported by learning assistants. Accommodation is good but there is limited outdoor space for reception children. The playground is rather bleak; it lacks seating and areas for quiet play. Resources are plentiful and used well to support pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of teaching and the progress children make • Pupils' behaviour and their responsible attitudes • The school management and the positive partnership with parents • The information provided about children's progress • Children enjoy coming to school and work hard 	<p>Parents raised no major concerns. Only a very small number mentioned the range of activities outside lessons.</p>

The inspectors support parents' positive views. The arrangements for parents to talk to teachers about their children's progress are good. Although the annual written reports describe what children have done, they do not always say how well they are getting on in relation to what is expected at each age. Contrary to the views of some parents, the school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children entering the reception classes start from a very low base, especially in social and communication skills. They make good progress and, by the time they reach the end of reception, standards are higher but still below those usually found in the early literacy skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. As they start Year 1, many pupils' social skills are underdeveloped and they have limited knowledge and understanding of the world outside home and school. In the areas of creative and physical development most children are likely to reach the early learning goals normally expected by the end of reception.
2. Building on the substantial progress made during the Foundation Stage¹, learning accelerates during Years 1 and 2 and, although national test results in reading and writing have been below the national average for the past three years, pupils have done very well in comparison with those in similar schools. In 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing matched that in similar schools but was much greater in reading and science, and very high in mathematics. These results demonstrate the school's success in enabling higher attaining pupils to reach their potential. Over the last five years, results in reading, writing and mathematics have improved more quickly than in other schools nationally.
3. The level of work seen during the inspection broadly reflects recent national test results. Standards are close to those expected in English and mathematics, although still below average, particularly in speaking. Although fewer pupils than last year are achieving the higher levels, most have made good progress through the school. Work in science closely matches the standards expected, with pupils' understanding of life processes and living things having improved on previous years.
4. Attainment in all other subjects matches the levels expected, with pupils achieving good standards in art. Standards in ICT have greatly improved since the time of the last inspection; pupils have good computer skills and a secure grasp of each strand of the subject.
5. Pupils make good progress in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. They listen well in class, but many lack the skills necessary to explain what they know, express ideas or discuss things with other children and adults. They have a reasonable understanding of numbers but are less secure in other aspects of numeracy, such as measuring in metres and centimetres, and weighing in kilograms.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress throughout the school, primarily because effective ongoing assessment of individual needs enables teachers to plan appropriate strategies for behaviour and learning in the classroom. This is backed up by the very good support given by classroom assistants and the individual attention of teachers in the relatively small classes. This gives pupils confidence, and helps them all to feel that their efforts are valued.
7. There is no significant variation in the standards achieved by boys and girls, or those achieved by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The majority of pupils who speak English as an additional language are fluent English speakers and make the same good progress as their peers.

¹ The Foundation Stage is from the child's third birthday to the end of the reception year.

8. The school sets ambitious targets, reflecting its commitment to helping all pupils to achieve their potential, despite the rather low base from which many of them start. The vast majority respond well to the challenges set and make good and sometimes very good progress through the school. The school is on course to meet current targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The positive picture of pupils' attitudes and behaviour described in the last inspection report has been maintained well in the classroom and continues to support achievement. Pupils like school and their attitudes to work are good. This is because teachers do all they can to help pupils to grow in confidence and to enjoy success with their learning. Pupils are keen to please their teachers. They respond well to good teaching by having a go with work that they find hard at first, such as writing new words and adding up bigger numbers than they have done before. When pupils realise that they have the right answer, they are really pleased that teachers notice and praise them. As a result, they enjoy their lessons. When teaching is lively and activities hold their interest, pupils become involved happily with what they are doing, even if they find it quite difficult to work independently of the teacher for long.
10. Pupils behave well in lessons because teachers work very hard to help them develop good habits such as sitting still, listening and doing what is asked. Pupils respond well to regular reminders in lessons about what sort of behaviour helps them learn. As a result, most of them try to follow the basic rules in the classroom and do what is asked. One or two pupils in each class find it more difficult than other children do to concentrate and follow instructions. Teachers manage the classes so well that such problems have very little effect on anyone's chances of learning enough in a lesson.
11. Pupils respond well to the school's emphasis on consideration for others in class, but at playtime, when there is space to run around away from adults, their behaviour is not as good as in lessons. This is partly because adults rarely join in or show them how to play any traditional games. Many children are not used to playing outside with others in games of make-believe or with simple rules. They are not accustomed to using such rules to sort out any arguments by talking, rather than shouting at, or pushing each other. As a result, play is physical: children run around, chase each other, or sometimes skip or do cartwheels on the grass. They are less likely than is usual at their age to play with others. Many children just play side-by-side rather than together and some individuals have little contact with other children at break times. Adult supervision keeps bullying in check. Quite a lot of play fighting was seen. There are no exclusions.
12. Personal development and relationships are satisfactory. The school recognises that children are often immature for their age and have limited experiences outside home and school. As a result, staff work very hard to help children to settle in, feel secure and gain confidence when they start school. Pupils make great strides in their personal development, particularly early on, which help them to make the most of the opportunities they are given to learn basic skills in lessons. By the time pupils are ready to move on to local junior schools, the school's emphasis on consideration for others means that they are able to relate to people reasonably well and have a basic understanding of the effect their behaviour has on others. Their limited experience of negotiating and playing with each other constructively results in more fragile understanding of other children's feelings, rights and views than usual. It means that children find it even harder than others of this age group to listen to what their classmates say and to work in pairs or groups, without a lot of adult support. They are reluctant to show initiative and find it hard to take responsibility for their work and actions, although they enjoy being asked to do simple jobs to help teachers. They have good relationships with their teachers and with familiar adults working in school.

13. Attendance has improved considerably since the last inspection and is almost the same as the current national average. It is just satisfactory. Most pupils come to school every day and arrive on time, as expected. The school's level of unauthorised absence is higher than average because the same, individual pupils are often away without good reason. These few pupils fail to make enough progress, in spite of great efforts by the school to persuade their parents to ensure that they come in each day and arrive on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is the school's main strength and is the major factor in the good progress that pupils make from entering reception to the end of Year 2. All teachers manage behaviour well and plan lessons so that all pupils have a chance of success. Small steps in pupils' learning are celebrated, which builds pupils' self-esteem and encourages them to work hard. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. At that time, one in ten lessons were very good or excellent. One third of lessons observed during this inspection were in these categories.
15. The positive start that pupils make in the reception classes owes much to the good and sometimes outstanding teaching. Teachers establish very good relationships with the children and provide many practical activities to support their learning. Teachers are particularly successfully in helping pupils who are socially immature to settle down and adapt to the routines of school life. They skilfully handle those children with specific behavioural difficulties. Learning assistants support teachers very well, teaching small groups in and outside the classroom.
16. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is consistently effective. Many lessons observed were good and some very good. Again, the relationship between teachers and pupils is a key factor in pupils' learning. They want to earn the teachers' praise and are thrilled when their achievements are rewarded in class or more widely in assemblies. Teachers know pupils well; they record their progress carefully and use this information to set work that is matched to pupils' various levels of attainment. This is a feature of literacy and numeracy lessons, which are taught consistently well across the school. Questions are used effectively to find out what pupils know and to challenge them to build on it. Appropriate emphasis is placed on teaching the vocabulary associated with subjects, such as science, but sometimes pupils are hesitant and need a little more time to respond to questions rather than have teachers anticipate their response and complete the answer for them.
17. The attention paid to ensuring that pupils' work at the right level benefits all pupils, whatever their starting point. Pupils with special educational needs make progress because they are not put off by something too difficult, and the level of challenge in most work motivates higher attaining pupils. There are more boys than girls in some classes but both groups have equal chances to do well, neither dominating lessons. The school is fortunate to be able to draw on the mother tongue skills of a bilingual member of staff when necessary.
18. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, ICT, art, geography and physical education, which accounts for the good achievement in these subjects. In design and technology, history, music and religious education, the teaching is satisfactory. Most teachers lack specific expertise in music but cope reasonably well. In all subjects, where teaching is satisfactory rather than good or very good, less emphasis is placed on reviewing what pupils have learned during the lesson or on opportunities for pupils to express their ideas and work co-operatively. Occasionally, higher attaining pupils could be challenged further.

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

19. The school provides a good curriculum that fully meets statutory requirements and meets the needs of all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Extra-curricular activities, including lunchtime clubs and a programme of visits and visitors, enrich the curriculum.
20. There have been good improvements since the last inspection. The curriculum for children in reception is now good and matched to the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage. There have been significant improvements in the opportunities pupils have for developing their skills in ICT. There are good and comprehensive policies for most subjects, although some, as in the case of art, are currently being reviewed and brought up to date. Schemes of work for almost all subjects identify what is to be taught in each year group. These provide good guidance to teachers and ensure that pupils build on their knowledge and skills in a systematic and progressive way. Opportunities for pupils to write or record their learning are much improved in English and mathematics, although this is still an area for development in subjects such as history and geography, particularly in Year 1.
21. The school has effectively introduced the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Help for pupils with special educational needs supports the development of their literacy skills and work is adapted and well matched to meet the needs of those pupils of higher ability. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop reading and writing skills across different areas of the curriculum, such as history, geography and science, but there is not enough emphasis on spoken language skills through drama, role-play and small and large group discussions. The strategy for numeracy is firmly in place across the school and this is having positive impact on the raising of standards in mathematics. There is room for improvement in the way these skills are developed informally, particularly in the daily use of such things as weighing and measuring. Some good opportunities are exploited in other subjects, such as the use of co-ordinates in geography or symmetrical patterns in art.
22. Pupils' personal, social and health education is well provided for through the formal curriculum, and the more informal opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings in special whole-class sessions and during assemblies.
23. All pupils have equal opportunities. The school has succeeded in maintaining small classes so that opportunities for pupils to learn well are maximised. Classroom assistants provide good support. Their use is managed well and contributes very well to all pupils' progress. In addition, there is a programme of intervention support to help pupils who are not achieving as well as they might. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. With the help of the local nursery, pupils who need support are identified at an early stage. Where necessary, individual education plans are drawn up giving clear, achievable targets that are regularly reviewed. Extra support is very well targeted to those who need it most, usually within the classroom. Detailed records are maintained and procedures correctly followed, so that when the support of outside agencies is needed it is well focused on the particular needs of those pupils.
24. The school is very committed to providing a programme of visits and visitors so that children can extend and enrich their experiences of the world around them. This very good provision contributes successfully to pupils' learning and understanding of the different subjects. For example, during book week, different visitors, such as the local community police, are invited into school to read to the pupils; during 'Pets Week', a talk was given to the children in the reception classes by a representative of the RSPCA. Visits to Blackpool and Townley Hall, Burnley, enable pupils to experience at first hand

what they have learnt about in geography and history. Pupils enjoy the opportunities provided by the good programme of lunchtime clubs and attend enthusiastically. The clubs enable them to develop their interests in, for example, music, design and technology, art, and football.

25. There are useful links with the local fire service, community police, and British Legion group who add an extra dimension to pupils' learning. The local vicar occasionally contributes to assemblies; however, links with other local religious leaders and places of worship have yet to be developed. There are good contacts with local training institutions.
26. The school liaises very well with partner schools. To ensure that there is smooth progression within the curriculum, there are good joint planning arrangements. Teachers from the nearby nursery have met with the school to discuss approaches to the revised curriculum for the Foundation Stage and subject co-ordinators regularly meet to plan with their junior school colleagues. There are very good arrangements to ease pupils' transfer to the junior school whose teachers spend time in the infants to get to know the children; Year 3 pupils give a talk to the Year 2 pupils and a 'fashion show' to display the uniforms; both schools share in performances and assemblies. Nursery children are introduced to the infants through sharing the facilities of the school toy library, and reception children share in the nursery play equipment in the summer term, and spend an enjoyable 'Fun Day' held jointly in both schools.
27. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall, with some very good elements, notably in moral development. This is because the school provides a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour, which is clearly communicated to children and parents and consistently promoted by all staff. These values are constantly reinforced by using rewards such as stickers, certificates and special mentions in assembly. The good relationships between staff and pupils enable staff to model such principles as fairness, integrity and respect for others. Pupils respond to this well in lessons but some find it more difficult to do so out of the immediate influence of adults.
28. The school has developed a good climate for spiritual development. In religious education lessons, assemblies and in time given for reflection in class, pupils are encouraged to explore values and beliefs, which impact on people's lives. In music and in art, they are encouraged to appreciate the particular qualities that make something special, whether it is the work of a great artist like Van Gogh or that of a member of the class. Staff are skilled at giving pupils a sense of wonder and highlighting what is special about each and every one of them. This respect for others influences cultural development also, and helps prepare pupils for life in a culturally diverse society. Pupils learn about other cultures in subjects like geography and history, they celebrate major festivals of different religions, and special activities such as African drumming and dancing widen their experience. Around the school, posters, pictures and artefacts from Britain and around the world stimulate ideas. For example, close observation of African masks and musical instruments led to some very high quality artwork in one Year 2 class.
29. Social development is promoted well through the opportunities given for teamwork in activities like games and school productions. Pupils undertake simple responsibilities around the school such as carrying registers, preparing the lunch trolley or watering plants. Each class considers what rules they need to help everyone to be a member of the school community, and these rules are brought to assemblies for further discussion. However, many pupils lack the linguistic skills to articulate their feelings clearly or resolve conflicts in the playground, where the support of an adult is not so readily available. The school does not put quite enough emphasis on developing pupils' social skills by further encouraging them to independently share views and opinions, so that

they are better equipped to understand their responsibilities to each other away from the controlled environment of the classroom.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school takes very great care to ensure that all pupils settle in well, build strong relationships with staff and feel safe and secure so that they can make the most of their one chance to succeed in a particular year of education. Teachers know the children in their classes very well and are quick to give praise or encouragement at just the right moment to acknowledge real effort and build confidence. They set very clear boundaries in lessons, using simple rules consistently, so that pupils know what they are doing wrong, such as calling out, and can then try to do the right thing. Teachers notice and reward changes for the better. As a result, provision for monitoring and promoting good behaviour in lessons is very good and contributes very well to the progress pupils make. The school works very hard to teach children to show consideration for others in the classroom and to avoid copying any bullying or anti-social behaviour that they may see outside school. It monitors incidents with great care and works very hard with individual children to help them to learn to behave well and stay away from trouble, with strong support from teaching and non-teaching staff.
31. Attendance is monitored well. Teachers and administrative staff check reasons for absence and lateness with care. Where necessary, the school works constructively with the education welfare service to reduce unnecessary absence and support children who miss a lot of school. In one or two cases, the level of absence is so high that, in spite of the school's best efforts to offer help and guidance, it is impossible to plug all the gaps in pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
32. The school is very successful in monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development by getting to know children and their needs very well. Teachers know what kinds of rewards and sanctions work for different children and use them to great effect. Good teamwork ensures that adults working in class help all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to feel confident enough to have a go with their work. The school takes its responsibilities for pupils' welfare, health and safety very seriously and has very good, clear arrangements to deal with any issues of child protection or children's well-being. Strengths in pastoral care have been maintained well since the last inspection.
33. Assessment is a strength of the school. Very well organised procedures enable teachers to track pupils' individual progress. The results of informal classroom tests and standardised assessments are used to plan what to teach next. Very frequently, they are used to decide groupings within the classroom so that pupils can work with those at a similar level of attainment. Teachers keep a file of work for each pupil, collecting examples of writing, number work, art and work in other subjects to form a record of achievement. Pupils take pride in these records. They provide good information for parents, particularly when notes are added that identify the levels that pupils are achieving.
34. Careful assessment also benefits pupils with special educational needs. All procedures are correctly followed and enable the support given both in school and by outside agencies to be well targeted to meet these pupils' needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. The school's strong relationship with parents, identified in the last inspection report, has been developed well. The school has built good links with parents, particularly by making good use of extra resources, that allows it to fund training programmes to help parents to support their children to better effect. Parents think very well of the school and believe that it is doing a very good job for their children. One or two parents who have particular difficulty in ensuring that their children attend regularly still appreciate all that the school does for them. The school makes great efforts to work with parents, but not all parents are able to respond positively to these, mainly because of home circumstances. Parents do what they can to support their children's work at home; their involvement with the school's life and work makes a reasonable contribution to children's learning
36. The school gives parents a great deal of useful information about how their children are getting on in informal day-to-day conversation and at meetings to discuss progress. This helps to make up for the fact that written reports often describe what has been taught, rather than how well each child is getting on. Written reports do not say how well a pupil is doing in terms of what is expected of someone of that age or ability. When staff write about what a child knows, understands or can do, the key points are not always easy for parents to grasp.
37. The school produces many simple, clear guides about how parents can help in different ways in school and at home. As a result, more parents have come forward to take advantage of experiences offered in programmes such as *Parents as educators*, *Family literacy* and *ICT pacesetters*. They appreciate the school's efforts to provide the listening libraries, toy library and work packs that they can use for their children's benefit. The school sends home letters when appropriate, but recognises that parents respond better to the personal touch in a quiet word at the beginning or end of the day, or a telephone call. As a result, the school does not give priority to the governors' annual report or other formal documents for parents. It has been slow to explore the possibilities of different styles of written information for families, made possible with modern software packages. This is in spite of its lively booklets illustrated with children's drawings that are used well to encourage parents to help with reading, practical work and other aspects of school life. Overall, the quality of information given to parents is good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The success of the school in raising pupils' self-esteem and helping them succeed against the odds owes much to the headteacher's determination. She is firmly committed to ensuring that all children have the best possible chances and staff share this ambition. Under her leadership, teachers with key responsibilities – the deputy headteacher, the co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage and the special educational needs co-ordinator – do everything possible to raise pupils' attainment. The main subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT are well managed. The co-ordinators of other subjects are keen to support colleagues but opportunities to do so directly are limited because they have too little time allocated to this role. As a result, teachers do not benefit as much as they might from their colleagues' expertise and support.
39. The co-ordinator for special needs provides very good leadership. She is allowed the equivalent of one half day each week away from her class teacher duties, and this valuable time is used to support teachers and to carry out regular reviews. Particular care is taken to identify any special educational needs that pupils might have as they start school and helpful information is passed on to junior schools. The programme of

training for support assistants has been very successful in ensuring high quality learning opportunities for all pupils. In her own class, the special educational needs co-ordinator provides a good role model, particularly in the skilled and patient way that she helps pupils with behavioural difficulties.

40. The governing body has seen some recent changes. It has yet to firmly establish its role in shaping the direction of the school but governors are increasingly playing the part of critical friends. With the help of the headteacher and the highly efficient finance officer, governors carry out their statutory duties well, ensuring that funds are allocated appropriately and that additional grants are well spent. The format of the school development plan does not help governors to evaluate the effectiveness of its budgetary decisions. Although priorities are identified, the intended outcomes for pupils are not clearly spelt out, which means governors have little to go on when deciding whether their financial decisions have been wisely made. Although subject co-ordinators have a say in establishing priorities and suggesting ways forward, some have limited influence on whole-school planning because they lack a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects.
41. Comprehensive assessment procedures, together with the detailed analysis of results by the assessment co-ordinator and headteacher, provide the governors with a good overview of the school's performance. The progress and attainment of each year group are carefully tracked to establish targets and modify them as pupils move through the school.
42. The school uses its financial resources well to support its long-term goals. Senior staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's financial situation as pupil numbers fall and funding declines with them. The governors have made a positive decision to sustain current staffing levels for as long as possible in order to avoid combining two year groups in the same class. The school's administrative officer works closely with the governors on managing and monitoring the school's finances. She provides regular budget updates and assists the governors in applying the principles of best value well.
43. Staffing levels are good. Teachers are well qualified and most have considerable experience in primary education. Learning support assistants are experienced and are increasingly acquiring appropriate qualifications. Induction procedures for new teachers operate well. Performance management has been appropriately introduced into the school. Teachers are positive about its effect on their professional development and believe the process is benefiting pupils.
44. The school's accommodation is good. Most classrooms are spacious and extra rooms are available for teaching small groups, for ICT, and for the preparation and storage of resources. The premises are well cleaned and maintained, and standards of display are high. This means that the children enjoy a bright and stimulating environment, which is conducive to good learning and where their work is seen to be valued. Resources for all subjects are good, enabling teachers to cover all areas of the curriculum well. Shortages of resources for ICT at the time of the last inspection have now been put right but outdoor equipment for children in the reception class is limited. Play areas are rather bleak and lack quiet areas and seating where pupils can play away from the hurly-burly of the playground. The school has drawn up plans to improve the outdoor facilities but they have not been implemented due to lack of funds. As a result, opportunities to enhance pupils' social development have been frustrated.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. In order to improve standards further, the school should:

(1) Extend pupils' spoken language skills and confidence in expressing ideas, knowledge and understanding (paragraphs 61, 81 and 98), by:

- creating further opportunities for drama, role-play and large and small group discussions in all subjects;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in introductory and summary sessions, so that they can express their ideas and learn to evaluate their work and that of others;
- providing pupils with opportunities to work together in groups to explore answers and solve problems;
- extending the range of experiences pupils have outside lessons so that they can use these to help them to talk about their ideas, feelings and views of the world around them.

(2) Provide further opportunities for co-ordinators to manage their subjects (paragraphs 37, 47, 89, 94, 98, 117, 122 and 126), by:

- enabling them to monitor teaching and support colleagues in the classroom;
- enabling them to monitor learning by scrutinising work across the school;
- helping them to refine whole-school planning so that developments can be judged by the impact on pupils' learning and achievements;
- where possible, releasing them from teaching in order to carry out their responsibilities.

In addition to the points above, the school should consider the following minor weaknesses:

- Play areas* are rather bleak and lack lively, colourful markings to support games, and quiet areas and seating where pupils can play away from the hurly-burly of the playground. Pupils have few chances to play with the typical range of soft balls, skittles, skipping ropes, stilts and hoops used regularly in similar schools. (paragraphs 10 and 43).
- The outdoor learning area for children in the reception classes* needs to be developed to make it more attractive, stimulating and secure. (paragraphs 44 and 47).
- Annual reports to parents are not as user-friendly as other information that the school provides. (paragraph 43,47 and 57)
- A few pupils are consistently absent without good reason* and this severely hinders their progress. (paragraph 12)

* These issues are identified in the school's development planning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
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	3	12	17	12	1	0	0
Percentage	7	27	38	27	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		208
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		96

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR - 2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		55
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		4

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	50	40	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	42	45	48
	Girls	32	35	37
	Total	74	80	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (82)	89 (85)	94 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	46	47	46
	Girls	35	36	32
	Total	81	83	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (83)	92 (90)	87 (83)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	7
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	130
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age in January 2002.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	10.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	255

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	494417
Total expenditure	516870
Expenditure per pupil	2104
Balance brought forward from previous year	60562
Balance carried forward to next year	38109

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	208
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	35	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	35	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	45	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	37	2	0	0
The teaching is good.	72	26	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	41	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	26	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	31	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	48	6	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	33	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	31	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	34	11	6	11

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

46. Children enter the school during the year in which they will be five and careful procedures for admissions enable children to gradually build up to full-time attendance. The school has an intake of 71 children in the reception classes. Assessments made in the first seven weeks shows attainment on entry to be low, particularly in the key areas of communication, language and literacy, social and personal development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The majority of children who enter the reception classes have had the benefit of nursery school experience, but almost 15 per cent of children have had no previous nursery experience; a number of children have attended specialist speech and language groups.
47. The overall quality of teaching is good, with some excellent lessons observed in one class, where the teacher created an atmosphere where children were entranced by her imaginative delivery and storytelling. Teachers' planning takes good account of the early learning goals identified for children in the Foundation Stage, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make the same good progress towards these goals or beyond.
48. The three teachers and two nursery nurses work effectively as a team, and make good use of the available shared area outside the classrooms for sand and water activities and creative tasks. Appropriate use is also made of a small, enclosed area, which has a special safety surface, for outdoor activities using small equipment and large wheeled toys. A larger outdoor play area leading directly from the classrooms is less well used and equipped, although the school has plans to further develop the outdoor environment to make this area more attractive and stimulating.
49. Relationships between staff and children are very good and there is constant use of praise and encouragement. Partnership with parents is a strong feature, with additional funding enabling partnership initiatives, such as the family literacy programme, listening library and toy library. Several parents support children's activities in the classrooms on a regular basis, which is much valued by the school. In addition, homework books and suggested home activities are provided. The school has good links with the nearby nursery school.
50. Improvements have been made on the good quality of provision identified in the last report. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the needs of young children and has introduced detailed assessment systems to monitor children's progress. However, insufficient time is made available for her to monitor teaching and learning across the three classes.

Personal, social and emotional development

51. Teaching in this area is consistently good, as teachers introduce children to the school rules, and encourage them to take on responsibility for their own actions. A significant number of children enter the reception with immature social skills. Although many children play together co-operatively, a number of children still play alone or alongside others, rather than planning more complex play together. Although a number of children

are likely to achieve the expected early learning goals, the majority will still be working towards these by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teachers explain the difference between right and wrong, and most children learn to share equipment sensibly, to take turns in groups and to behave well in large group activities. Children are encouraged to help with clearing up after activities, and they do this with enthusiasm. Self-help is well promoted; for example, teachers expect children to manage their own fasteners when changing for physical activities, although this may take some time. Children who lack confidence are sensitively supported by staff, and this helps them to take part in activities alongside their peers. For example, one child delighted in holding the toy kangaroo, which had been the central character in a storytelling session, and this helped to sustain his interest during the following large-group discussion. Children with behaviour and emotional difficulties are well nurtured by staff. Special awards for effort and personal achievements support children's all-round development well, and staff promote independence through well-planned activities and turn-taking games.

Communication, language and literacy

52. Children make good progress in this area of their learning, as they have well planned opportunities to learn the early skills of reading and writing. Despite the good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching in this area, many children will still be working towards the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Some children do not yet express their ideas in fully extended sentences with confidence, and are still developing the vocabulary to express their understanding of new experiences. This was clearly evident when the children saw two baby lambs and talked with their teachers about this. Many children found difficulty in describing the lambs in detail. The children learn letter sounds and shapes with confidence, through regular and motivating activities. They enjoy games, such as lotto, which help them to distinguish between different letter sounds, and the higher attaining children make use of this new knowledge confidently when they attempt independent writing on their own. A number of children can write their full names unaided, whilst others are still learning to do this accurately.
53. Towards the end of the Foundation Stage, teachers provide structured class sessions which prepare children for work in Year 1. The children enjoy exploring stories in large text versions, such as *The Clever Duck*, and learn about book making through the many opportunities which they have to make large class books. For example, children made a collection of different books about bears, and this was celebrated by a large display in the classroom and corridor. Some outstanding story telling sessions were observed, where children became captivated by the stories they heard, through the teacher's dramatic use of small toys. Teachers encourage children to build up their knowledge of familiar words, as well as making use of individual sounds to understand unfamiliar words. Children enjoy handling books, and many make up their own stories together as they turn the pages of a selected book. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to try out writing through guided support, where they learn to hold pencils with the correct grip and to form individual letters with accuracy. In writing areas, children write for different purposes, such as writing birthday cards and shopping lists. In all three classes, appropriate opportunities for role-play are provided through, for example, a pet shop, vet surgery or farm play area linked to the theme of animals. At times, there is insufficient adult intervention and interaction in these areas to foster and extend children's spoken language.

Mathematical development

54. The teaching of mathematical skills is consistently good and sometimes excellent. As a result, children, including those with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress towards the early learning goals. A small number of children achieve at a level above this, showing a good understanding of counting up to 20 and beyond, and of simple addition, and have a clear

understanding of double numbers. Many children will still be working towards the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, and have a limited mathematical vocabulary. Excellent teaching was observed in one lesson when children were brimming over with excitement as they tried to catch out their teacher, who pretended to miss out numbers in sequence as she counted. With imaginative flair, she then challenged the children to explore double numbers in a giant domino game. The room was set out with motivating and challenging mathematical games and tasks, and additional parent helpers were well briefed on what they needed to do to support mathematical games. Teachers take great care to help the children to form numerals correctly. Teachers' planning takes good account of the varied individual starting points and different learning needs. Provision for sand and water play and shape and size exploration is good, and the nursery nurses play an important role in promoting new mathematical language alongside practical tasks. This means that children have good opportunities to develop their early mathematical understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

55. The majority of children enter the school with a limited knowledge and understanding of the world beyond their daily lives. By the end of the Foundation Stage, although all pupils make good progress, many will still be working towards the expected early learning goals in this area. Staff work hard to build up new vocabulary alongside new experiences, but there is more scope to extend small group discussions. Children have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through first hand learning experiences. For example, the children were learning about animal babies and the farm, in preparation for a visit. They delighted in handling the very good range of toys, puppets and small farm animals provided, and were amazed when two baby lambs were brought in to see them and they were able to watch them being bottle fed.
56. Computer skills are well taught and the majority of children make good progress in developing their skill in using a mouse. Children enjoyed creating their own pictures to illustrate a story, and selecting items on screen to dress a teddy bear. In one class the children were very excited to see that the seeds they had planted were starting to grow, and in another class the children showed sustained concentration in organising sets of small farm animals into fields and in ordering pictures of events in the life of a farmer. Teachers introduce new vocabulary linked to topics well, and select their resources with care. However, there is sometimes insufficient interaction with the children in role-play areas to develop discussion linked to topics of interest.

Physical development

57. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of children are likely to reach the expected goals for physical development. Teaching in this area is good and the children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their physical development. They develop a sound awareness of space, leaning to move around without colliding with other children. They enjoy learning how to travel across the hall area using different parts of the body to push a beanbag forward, and they confidently follow the teacher on a 'follow my leader' trail, using small steps, big strides and then small running steps. Some children lack co-ordination, however, and find it a challenge to concentrate on throwing and catching activities with small equipment, or to follow instructions with accuracy.
58. Children find difficulty in handling scissors when they start school, but have good opportunities to develop cutting and pasting skills through activities, such as making collage scarecrows, and this helps to develop hand and eye co-ordination. Children have appropriate opportunities to use a selection of large wheeled toys and other equipment for throwing and catching when they use the small, enclosed courtyard area

in small groups with the nursery nurses. However, opportunities for outdoor play in the playground area leading directly from the classrooms are limited and there is scope to make this environment much more stimulating and inviting. Occasional use is made of the very well equipped nursery outdoor play area nearby. There is no covered outdoor learning area for use in poor weather, which restricts the overall provision.

Creative development

59. Children make good progress in their creative development and the majority are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching in this area is good and sometimes very good, although there is scope for staff to enhance imaginative play and encourage fuller dialogue between children. Painting, printing and modelling activities are well organised both in the classrooms and in the central resource area and there are plentiful resources. Children are encouraged to be active learners, selecting their own materials when making collage pictures of scarecrows, for example. In one class, the provision of an attractive listening and music making area encouraged a very timid child to experiment with blowing, tapping, shaking and banging a range of different instruments and his face showed his obvious delight in the sounds he produced. Children learn a wide range of songs and rhymes and enjoy singing these with their friends. In one lesson, the teacher's tuneful guitar playing and melodious voice encouraged children to sing in tune and with real expression. The good range of percussion instruments is well used to develop musical skills.

ENGLISH

60. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, as there has been a steady rise in standards over time. Teaching is now good and teachers focus well on new vocabulary in subjects such as mathematics and science. Overall standards of attainment in the national tests are slightly below the national average in reading and writing, and this was reflected by the evidence collected during lesson observations, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils. When compared with the performance of schools in similar settings, attainment is very good
61. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well throughout the school. The good start in developing early literacy skills, which children make in the reception classes, provides a solid foundation, and pupils continue to make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make the same good progress as their peers, as very good assessment procedures enable staff to plan appropriately for all learning needs, and classroom assistants provide good support during lessons. The early intervention programme, which targets Year 1 children who need a short period of additional support for literacy, leads to good learning.
62. Although pupils behave well and listen attentively during lessons, and teachers take care to extend vocabulary, pupils' overall spoken language skills are below expectations for seven year olds. Many pupils lack confidence in expressing their knowledge and understanding through extended sentences. There is scope to further extend pupils' spoken language skills and oral confidence, through creating more opportunities for role-play, drama and large and small discussion groups across all the areas of the curriculum.
63. Reading is well promoted within the school, and resources are good. Careful selection of additional reading books has engaged the attention of boys as well as girls, and this has contributed to rising standards. Individual reading books are well matched to ability levels; children are taught a range of effective strategies for reading, and they make good use of their knowledge of sounds when attempting unknown words. They are

encouraged to think about the overall context of their reading, to help their understanding. Pupils are enthusiastic readers and learn to distinguish between factual and fiction texts, and to use contents pages and a glossary.

64. The teaching of reading is good, and the home and school reading records are much valued. Efficient planning and organisation in lessons enable teachers to teach specific reading skills through the use of enlarged texts with the whole class, and through small group reading sessions. When talking about their own reading, the most able pupils were able to comment on the content of their books and discuss their preference for different types of books, such as stories about animals. In a very good lesson in a Year 1 class, the teacher encouraged close attention to rhyming words and gave very clear feedback to pupils. "Yes, the word *shark* would make sense here, but we need a rhyming word." This encouraged pupils to look for rhyming words in their own books.
65. The school library contains an appropriate selection of reading books. Children particularly enjoy the weekly lunchtime library club run by a volunteer parent, when they can change books and share a story with an interested adult. Fuller use of the library could be made in lessons, to develop knowledge about authors and further reference skills.
66. During the inspection, two pupils were very excited to hear that their poems had been selected for a national poetry publication. Pupils throughout the school have good opportunities to undertake a range of different types of writing, such as letters, stories, personal news and factual accounts of educational visits, at appropriate levels. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 2 wrote about the setting and the main characters in a story plan of the book *Cinderboy*, and, with the support of a teaching assistant, pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 each wrote a short sentence about their favourite part of the story.
67. Teaching is consistently good, and occasionally very good. Planning is detailed and teachers manage pupils' behaviour and learning activities well. However, few teachers share their learning objectives with the pupils at the start and end of literacy lessons and this is a lost opportunity to involve pupils in their own learning. Summary sessions at the end of lessons provide a useful sharing of work undertaken, although occasionally this is too short. In the best lessons, teachers model reading and writing with a lively manner, and use probing questions to check on understanding of new vocabulary and overall meaning. In a few lessons, the teachers do not provide sufficient time for the pupils to offer extended explanations or ideas. However, a lively assembly provided a good opportunity for one class of Year 2 pupils to address a large audience through drama.
68. Teachers make valuable connections between the processes of reading and writing when they work with the pupils in whole-class and group sessions. Literacy skills are practised and consolidated in other subjects. Pupils are taught to form their letters with care and have regular opportunities to develop their handwriting skills. Overall standards of presentation are satisfactory, with some well-presented written work, including word-processed writing, on display around the school and in pupils' books. A consistent approach to the teaching of spelling throughout the school, contributes to rising standards, as pupils are encouraged to use a 'look, cover, spell and check' approach and regularly learn to spell words with similar patterns both in school and for their homework.
69. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator works conscientiously to develop new initiatives within the teaching of English, and has built up a good range of resources for reading and writing.

MATHEMATICS

70. There has been good improvement in mathematics since the time of the last inspection. Standards have risen year on year to a point where last year, in the national tests, pupils at the end of Year 2 attained standards above the national average, and well above when compared with similar schools. Although the school does not expect the present Year 2 to attain quite such high standards, particularly in the number reaching the higher level 3 in the tests, work seen during this inspection suggests that they will be only slightly below average. As many pupils enter the school with well below average number skills, this represents very good achievement. Good teaching helps all pupils, both boys and girls, and including those from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with special educational needs, to make good progress and achieve well.
71. The key to the school's success lies in the way that lessons are carefully planned, with tasks designed to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. This leads to pupils feeling confident and secure, which in turn means that they are well motivated to try hard and achieve their best. Very good use is made of the generous resources available to teachers, including the interactive whiteboards, linked to a computer, that have been installed in two rooms. There is a good range of computer software available, and this is regularly used in the classrooms to enhance learning. For instance, in one lesson a program on rounding numbers to the nearest 10 was effectively used by a group during the main part of the lesson. Support assistants play a full part in ensuring that all pupils learn well, and have a particularly important role in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are given extra support. Another factor is the relatively small class sizes that enable teachers to give lots of individual attention to all pupils, including those who are attaining the higher levels.
72. This well-targeted planning is the result of the careful and systematic assessment of what pupils know and can do. This is now a strong aspect of provision and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Teachers know pupils well and this enables them to ask questions and set tasks that encourage pupils to take the next step in learning. Relationships are very good, and pupils invariably behave very well during lessons. They listen carefully and try hard, and the good organisation means that lessons usually proceed at a good pace so that little time is wasted.
73. In Year 1, pupils learn to count sets of objects reliably and the more able solve simple problems using numbers up to 20. Most recognise numbers up to 20 but there are still a significant number who struggle to do so and some who are still not sure of numbers up to 10. Some find writing numbers difficult and often form them incorrectly or substitute one number shape for another. Most can identify what is more or less than a given number although many still need the aid of a number line to do this. Some of the higher attainers can identify what is ten more than a given number, and can make number sentences and record them confidently. Many pupils have below average speaking skills; this makes it difficult for them to explain their thinking and inhibits their learning. Teachers recognise this in their planning and, with the help of supporting adults, give many opportunities for pupils to increase their mathematical vocabulary.
74. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have made good progress from the levels they achieved in Year 1. Many are beginning to understand the place value of each digit in a number and use this knowledge to order numbers up to 100. Higher attaining pupils are good at using a hundred square to find 'short cuts' to solving addition and subtraction problems and know that the word for breaking up a number to make a sum easier is partition. Many know the number bonds to 20 and the more confident pupils can promptly recall these facts. In a lesson on rounding numbers, most were able to round up or down to the nearest 10 with confidence and some could round to the nearest 100 using numbers up to 1000.

75. The strength of most lessons lies in the way group work is tightly organised to give appropriate learning tasks for all abilities. However, there are times when the beginnings and ends of lessons are not as effective. This is sometimes because, in their natural anxiety to involve all the pupils in the initial oral work, teachers stop to explain a point that would be better left to later, and so the pace of the session slows. Although summary sessions are often used well to revise the content of the lesson and assess understanding, they rarely focus on what new learning has taken place or what needs to be done in future lessons. Another relative weakness is in shape, space and measures. All pupils are taught this aspect well, but because it is not reinforced often enough in some classes, pupils forget what they have learned and become confused. For instance, pupils in one class knew the names of common two- and three-dimensional shapes, but were unable to say what an angle was or recall what units they had used to measure length and weight. In the best lessons, this learning is constantly reinforced in oral work. For example, in one lesson when practising multiples of 5 and 10, pupils were challenged to calculate the perimeter of a square with sides of 5cm or a hexagon with sides of 10cm. Other subjects are used to develop numeracy and to extend mathematical experience, such as the use of co-ordinates in geography, but, because some pupils have poor recall, it is important that such strategies are used regularly.
76. Leadership in the subject is very good. The National Numeracy Strategy is now firmly embedded in all classes, and members of staff are confident in their teaching methods and knowledge of the programmes of study. The co-ordinator, who provides a good role model in her teaching, has played an important part in the improving standards over the last few years. Record keeping and assessment are good, and the systems for tracking progress, which are now well established, are having a positive effect on standards throughout the school.

SCIENCE

77. Standards are broadly in line with national averages. The results of teacher assessments in 2001 were lower than, but very close to, those in other schools. Pupils' knowledge of life processes and living things was the weakest element of the subject. However, when compared to the results of similar schools, pupils did well. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels matched the national picture and was well above that achieved by similar schools. It is unlikely that so many pupils will achieve the higher levels this year because there are fewer with the potential to do so. However, the school's hard work in helping all pupils to make good progress is bearing fruit. Although a substantial proportion has special educational needs, most pupils have sufficient grasp of early scientific ideas and the appropriate skills to reach the expected levels. Teachers do much to offset the fact that many pupils lack literacy skills, helping them to develop scientific vocabulary and to show their understanding by using pictures and diagrams.
78. The practical approach in most lessons works well. Pupils learn by seeing and doing. For example, during a very successful lesson in Year 1, pupils sorted materials with the teacher to see which would be suitable for making windows in a dolls' house. Many remembered the word transparent and all knew what it meant. Four groups, each supported by an adult, then worked on similar problems. Previously the teacher had shown pupils the effect of water on some materials. They had learned the term waterproof and now had to choose which would be suitable for 'teddy's umbrella'. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils helped the classroom assistant construct a wormery and were looking forward to seeing the effect of the worms' movement on the layers of soil, sand and grass. They worked extremely well when asked to find information about worms and other minibeasts from books and from CD-ROM sources. The strong focus on living things during the summer term is designed to ensure that the gaps in pupils' knowledge that were evident in last year's teacher assessments are covered.

79. Good teaching is evident from the lessons observed, from the contents of pupils' books and the work on display. All aspects of science are covered. In addition to finding out about materials and living things, pupils learn about sources of light and how the movement of the earth results in day and night. Early work on forces in Year 1, where pupils look at how toys are pushed or pulled, is developed in Year 2 when they experiment with paper to see how folding it can make it stronger. They draw accurate diagrams to illustrate electrical circuits and many have an idea of energy. This was illustrated in one pupil's book where he had explained – after seeing the effect of connecting light bulbs in series – that, "The lights went dimmer because the battery had to share energy". This shows how teachers manage to challenge the higher attaining pupils whilst supporting those pupils who often struggle to learn.
80. Pupils enjoy lessons, responding eagerly to the practical activities. Teachers encourage them to work in pairs and to co-operate in larger groups. Pupils' ability to work independently or with others varies considerably. For example, some pupils in a Year 2 lesson were quick to share ideas and get on with the task, while others took a long time to get started, snatched books and did not complete the drawing or labelling. Fortunately, because teachers manage behaviour well, they intervene where necessary and refocus pupils' attention so that their learning continues.
81. The quality of teaching and learning has been sustained since the last inspection. The co-ordinator supports colleagues and passes on ideas gained from meeting with teachers from neighbouring schools. However, opportunities for monitoring how the subject is being taught and for identifying strengths and weaknesses are limited because there is little time made available for these purposes.

ART AND DESIGN

82. The good and very good quality of artwork that can be seen in classrooms and in displays around the school contributes very well to the bright and lively environment. Pupils achieve standards in art better than those expected at the age of seven and some in Year 2 produce work that is outstanding. Standards in art are better than seen in the last inspection, and reflect the very good attention given to developing pupils' skills and creativity in the subject.
83. The curriculum provides for a half-termly focus on a particular aspect of art and design and for each aspect to be built on and developed through the year and from Year 1 to Year 2. Teachers are well supported by the scheme of work and have high expectations of what pupils can produce. Through careful teaching, pupils develop well their co-ordination and control of tools and equipment. By the time they are seven, they can select different grades of pencils to produce patterns and shading and merge colours using crayons and chalks. Pupils build up their knowledge of colour mixing to create tones of colour. They are encouraged to experiment independently to mix colours, so that the portraits they paint of each other show careful attention to skin, eye and hair colour. A range of good, interesting artefacts and resources are carefully selected by teachers to stimulate pupils to observe carefully. Pupils skilfully reproduce Mendhi² patterns, make drawings and paintings of their favourite toys, and paint and draw still-life arrangements of spring flowers. In an excellent lesson in Year 2, pupils showed outstanding skills in observing and sketching African artefacts. They had a good eye for detail and scale, and were exceptionally confident in drawing and reproducing the complicated detail.

² Mendhi is the traditional art of decorating the hands and feet with a paste made from finely ground leaves of the henna plant. Mendhi is associated with auspicious occasions or festivals in Indian, African and Arabic communities.

84. Three-dimensional work was not seen during the inspection but, from photographic evidence, pupils use plasticine and clay to model different shapes. There were examples of Year 1 work, in which pupils had used fabric dye to colour material, and had decorated their paper patterns with splodges of luminous colour. Year 1 pupils combined torn paper shapes to produce effective collage in which they carefully placed and joined colour and shape to form a pattern. There is evidence from the portfolios of work that pupils are taught well how to use paint programs to create computer-generated pictures and designs. Pupils are introduced to the work of well-known artists. In Year 2, they produce attractive paintings in which they use their imagination to interpret Van Gogh's painting of sunflowers. Drawings based on the work of the local Salford artist, Lowry, are of very high quality.
85. Although it was possible to see only two art lessons, the evidence from these observations and from the work seen shows that all pupils are enthusiastic and confident artists. The subject provides very good opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to achieve well and succeed. Pupils work well together and help each other and appreciate each other's efforts. The very good foundations they are provided with ensure that all pupils feel they are artists. A minor weakness in teaching is that pupils were not always encouraged to evaluate their own work or that of others so as to assess their own and others' accomplishments and to express their feelings about the work.
86. The co-ordinator has only recently taken on the role, but she has inherited a scheme of work which provides teachers with good guidance. She has not yet been given time to monitor the teaching and learning of the curriculum in order to assess where there may be areas for development. There is a good range of resources and attention is given to introducing pupils to the work of artists from different cultural backgrounds. A good portfolio of work illustrating pupils' progress is collected in their individual records of achievement. However, as pupils of this age often want to take their products home, the use of photographic records, of three-dimensional work in particular, would add to this record. A lunchtime art club runs from time to time and there are occasional special 'art days' when parents come in to work with pupils, for example, to make Christmas decorations. Currently there are no arrangements for a visiting artist or craftsperson to spend time in the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

87. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, when they were in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement because pupils have below average practical skills when they are admitted to the school. The school now has detailed plans in place that give good guidance on the work to be covered and the skills to be developed in each year group. Teaching remains satisfactory with some good features. Only two lessons were seen during this inspection, but further evidence was gained from teachers' planning, displays and photographs of previous work.
88. Pupils in Year 1 have been looking at the way levers and sliding mechanisms are used in 'pop up' books. In the lessons observed, the teachers had collected a range of artefacts with moving parts such as scissors, tin openers and clothes pegs, and higher attaining pupils talked about these using appropriate vocabulary, such as lever, cog and screw. The lower attaining pupils found this very difficult because of poor language skills, but skilful and patient teaching ensured that all pupils were able to contribute and improve their understanding. All pupils were fully involved and showed a sound level of skill in drawing and labelling the artefacts, or in using cutting techniques and split pins to create a lever mechanism. They handled the implements with care, showing a good awareness of the need for safety. Pupils in Year 2 show their developing skills when designing and making puppets using a variety of materials and joining techniques. They

are beginning to evaluate their designs and to make written comments on the parts they found easiest or most enjoyable. They are also trying to fit their designs for a purpose, such as for use in a story or play.

89. The subject makes a good contribution to personal development through the emphasis on collaboration and teamwork. Pupils of different backgrounds and levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved. Photographic evidence shows clearly the pleasure that pupils take in working together to produce a finished product of which they can be proud. The high quality discussion observed in one lesson indicates that in some classes design and technology makes a good contribution to language skills. Numeracy skills are soundly promoted through such activities as measuring, or weighing constituents in food technology.
90. Careful planning ensures coverage of all aspects of the subject, but teachers direct most activities and pupils do not have enough opportunities to show initiative and to develop their own ideas. Pupils are not encouraged often enough to discuss a design problem in pairs or small groups so that alternative solutions can be shared with the rest of the class. The co-ordinator is aware of this, and rightly feels that pupils now have sufficient grounding in the basic skills to be able to move forward in this way. Teachers plan carefully together in their year group teams, but the co-ordinator has not been given enough time to monitor teaching and learning in the subject across the school. In order for standards to rise, information gained in this way will be necessary.

GEOGRAPHY

91. Standards are broadly in line with those expected. They are similar to those seen in the last inspection. Pupils enter the school with limited understanding of the world around them but make good progress. Teachers are careful to base pupils' learning on their knowledge of their immediate surroundings and to sensitively extend their experiences through the provision of pictures and artefacts and visits to the local area and further afield.
92. Pupils in Year 1 learn to make maps by drawing a plan of the school and by drawing a map of the route they take to school. They discuss the landmarks they pass and begin to label some of the features on the walk. In a very good lesson, they were observed comparing their own street to the one that passes the school. They began to pick out some of the environmental differences: "My road's noisy. It's a cul de sac, but that way (pointing) is a building site with lorries going in and out." One child tried to explain that her road was quieter because it was no longer "stony". The teacher helped her to find the word 'smooth' and one pupil said, "It's tarmac ked". This is a common feature of teaching and learning. Many younger and less able pupils lack the vocabulary to describe what they observe, and teachers generally pay good attention to helping them to use the correct words. In order to extend their knowledge of the world, Year 1 pupils have just started to take 'Brenda Bear' on holiday with them so that the teachers can build up a collection of postcards from different parts of the world.
93. Only one lesson was seen in geography, but pupils progress well through Years 1 and 2, indicating good teaching. By the time they are seven, pupils have learnt more about their local area through extending their visits to the local Corporation Park and following the Millennium Trail. They explore the natural and man-made features, such as the sculptures on the trail. They record what they see and write simple accounts of their walk. Teachers provide good opportunities to explore and to solve problems when pupils create maps or place objects on a grid so that their partners can work out the co-ordinates. Pupils' knowledge of the local area is developed through comparing their environment with the fictional island of Struay. A teacher reported an interesting discussion of what they liked and disliked about the two areas: pupils disliked the litter in Blackburn and liked the sea in Struay, but were not sure if they would like to live there. A

discussion on the seaside in a history lesson, preparatory to discussing the differences between the seaside now and in the past, gave pupils a good opportunity to show what they knew about the coast and to share this with their classmates who had not been to the sea. The good use of photographs and illustrations helped pupils to develop their vocabulary for talking about natural and man-made features.

94. The subject is well managed. The curriculum is planned so that pupils build up their knowledge systematically, and there are links between subjects, so that, for example, transport is studied in history and in geography. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and helped to record what they have learnt. There are examples of ICT being used – for example, to create graphs or maps. Photographs are used effectively to record walks and visits. Assessment procedures are good. There is a good range of resources, and visits help to place pupils' learning within their direct experience.

HISTORY

95. Standards in history are broadly in line with those expected. Pupils make good progress. They build on from what they know about themselves and their families to gain a sense of the past. The scheme of work for Year 2 pupils includes topics that encourage pupils to talk to their grandparents in order to learn about the historical changes since they were young.
96. Pupils in Year 1 record the members of their families on a time line starting with the oldest member, and compose a family tree. They learn to place the events in their lives in time order. They begin to look at how different forms of transport have changed. They sequence air travel from balloon travel to Concorde. During a lesson in Year 1, they learned about the invention of the aeroplane. The teacher provided good photographic resources that showed the differences between old and modern planes, and the pupils enjoyed listening to the story of the Wright brothers. The lesson was satisfactory, but some learning opportunities were lost because the teacher did not fully explore what the children could learn from the illustrations, or introduce descriptive vocabulary. Despite good support for pupils of all abilities from teacher assistants and the teacher, the subsequent writing task produced unimaginative work.
97. By the time they are seven, pupils have an understanding of how domestic appliances have changed since the Victorian age. They wrote accounts of how the dolly tub, or kitchen range worked following their visit to Townley Hall. They discussed the events in the two World Wars prior to Remembrance Day, following the viewing of a video provided by the local British Legion, and wrote moving accounts of what they had learnt. In a good lesson linked with geography, the teacher prepared pupils for the topic of the seaside now and in the past, before a visit to Blackpool. Very careful consideration was given to ensuring that pupils, some of whom have never visited the seaside, were prepared for the topic. Photographs were used very well to stimulate discussion and many pupils showed a good understanding of the beach and the special features of Blackpool. Key vocabulary was introduced and pupils were encouraged to explain what they knew, for example, that the tide comes in and out and that you can find shells and crabs in rock-pools. In all classes, displays are used well to support the topics.

98. Management of the subject is effective. Assessment procedures are good and a new policy provides comprehensive guidance on how the subject should be taught. Although quality of teaching is good, there are some differences in teachers' expectations of pupils' written work, and insufficient opportunities for pupils to be able to record in different ways. Visits and visitors contribute well to pupils' understanding of the subject, but the use of ICT is not sufficiently developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

99. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection, when standards were too low. Attainment is now securely in line with expectations; most pupils have good computer skills and they are making good progress in all areas of the subject. They use computers in many lessons and much of their work in ICT is directly related to literacy, numeracy and other classroom topics. For example, Year 1 pupils used their skills in dragging and dropping items on the computer screen to sort words into the appropriate columns according to their vowels; *ee* or *ea*. Others used this technique to select 'healthy fruit' in science. Using a graphics program, pupils explore line and colour and share their ideas. Early work in Year 1, when pupils produce simple flower pictures using the *colour fill* and *spray* tools, is developed further in Year 2 when they begin to mix text and images.
100. Pupils produce pictograms in Year 1 as part of their introduction to databases and their understanding is increased in Year 2 when they collect information and display it in block graphs and pie charts. The oldest pupils are introduced to early ideas of programming when they enter a sequence of commands into a floor robot to make it move in different directions and to turn. Their good progress in this work was evident during a successful lesson in Year 2 when pupils, with some adult support, entered sequences of commands to send the robot on various journeys. Less confident pupils had good support from the teacher and classroom assistant as they used similar skills to program a teddy to move around an on-screen playground.
101. Good progress in ICT has been the result of staff training and additional resources. All staff, including some support assistants, are attending courses and are far more confident than at the time of the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory. The lessons observed, together with the good range of pupils' work in their portfolios and on display, indicates that teaching is now good. Teachers use the two or three computers in each classroom well to support many aspects of the curriculum and the two interactive whiteboards enable them to demonstrate to the whole class. For example, during a literacy lesson in Year 1, pupils' understanding of the structure of stories was enhanced as they guided the teacher in arranging the proper sequence of events in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Pupils also enjoy using the large screen themselves but they sometimes cannot reach the top because it is too high.
102. Pupils are learning how to search for information on CD-ROMs. For example, during a science lesson on small creatures in Year 2, they found detailed photographs and descriptions which supplemented the information they had gleaned from books. Following the recent connection to the Internet, this approach is soon to be extended to using the *National Grid for Learning*. Pupils explore real and imaginary situations as they play educational games but they have yet to use the computer to manipulate sounds, as the school does not have the appropriate software.
103. Work in ICT reflects the school's aim to broaden pupils' experience though a range of stimulating activities. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership in the subject. She has successfully supported staff in the use of the recently acquired resources and has introduced a manageable assessment and recording system.

MUSIC

104. Pupils enjoy music and sing well. Overall, standards are in line with expectations. Pupils have a reasonable sense of rhythm; they are learning the elements of music, such as pitch and timbre; they identify orchestral instruments and are beginning to see how music can be written down.
105. Many pupils start school with limited musical experience. Building on the nursery rhymes and number songs they learn in reception, they make good progress in singing. This was evident during assemblies when they sang in tune and with good expression. Many teachers play music at the beginning of the day and music is played in assemblies as pupils enter and leave. Teachers often ask pupils to comment on what they are listening to but many find it hard to express their views, as their speaking skills and knowledge of appropriate vocabulary are limited.
106. There is no music specialist in Years 1 and 2. Teachers in Year 1 take their own classes and Year 2 teachers combine to watch a weekly music programme on television and then do follow up work in the classroom. In addition, small groups of pupils are taught at weekly lunchtime sessions by a visiting specialist. These arrangements are satisfactory and mean pupils make steady progress. Teachers follow national guidelines but they lack in-class support. During the one lesson observed in Year 1, the teacher managed the class very well, enabling all pupils to play a percussion instrument to accompany a recorded rap poem. The imbalance between listening and discussing and practical work, however, meant that the lesson lacked pace and pupils occasionally lost interest. Year 2 pupils responded well to the televised lesson. As well as singing and clapping in rhythm, they were learning how sound can be recorded using symbols. It was not possible to observe the follow-up lessons.
107. There is a good range of non-pitched percussion instruments. Standard school instruments are supplemented by more unusual ones, including authentic African drums. These provide pupils with an insight into the musical traditions of other cultures. There are few melodic instruments, such as xylophones, glockenspiels and chime bars, and these do not feature as strongly as they should in lessons, limiting pupils' musical experiences.
108. Music in assemblies is used successfully to promote a personal response from pupils, contributing to their spiritual development. Pupils are often asked to interpret the mood generated by a piece of music. For example, the song, *What Have You Done Today to Make You Feel Proud?*, was used effectively. Accompanied by piano or guitar, pupils sing songs such as *When You're Happy*, with expression and obvious enjoyment.
109. The co-ordinator is also the special educational needs co-ordinator, a post which takes up much time, and there is insufficient time allocated for her to monitor the subject or to raise the profile of music across the school. As a result, opportunities for pupils' enthusiasm to be fully exploited are missed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are still in line with national expectations overall, although in some areas, notably games skills, some pupils are achieving above average standards. The curriculum has improved. It is now better organised with a whole-school plan that ensures sound progression in skills and knowledge in the different areas of gymnastics, games and dance.
111. The key elements in the mostly good teaching seen during this inspection were the very good relationships between pupils and staff, and the way teachers have established clear routines for class management so that pupils can practise their skills safely and

with enjoyment. Pupils respond well to the well-organised lessons and the high expectations for good behaviour by trying their best at all times and making sound and sometimes good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those with poor co-ordination, benefit greatly from the positive atmosphere and the good support given during lessons. These pupils often make better than average progress, and have the confidence to fully participate in all the activities planned for them even though they may find some very difficult. The systematic teaching of skills also enables talented pupils to flourish, and some show a high degree of quality and control in their movement and ball skills.

112. In the gymnastics lessons seen, Year 2 pupils showed good control and balance when putting together a sequence of movements on the large apparatus. They were able to run, jump and roll in a variety of ways using skills and techniques learned in previous lessons. For instance, in one lesson, every pupil could perform a forward roll with some confidence, and many could perform the more difficult backward roll as well. Most showed good poise and control when balancing on the apparatus, and were able to jump and land softly using a variety of body shapes. In a lunchtime football club, some of the girls and boys not only demonstrated above average skills when dribbling, passing and controlling a ball, but also an awareness of the need to find space in a small team games situation.
113. In less effective lessons there was sometimes a lack of emphasis on improving specific skills and techniques. The pupils invariably enjoyed the activities, but were not always made aware of how they might improve; for example, in a lesson on throwing and catching, they were not taught that the receiver should make a target for their partner to aim at when throwing a beanbag. They were shown that it is easier to throw accurately if the foot opposite to the throwing arm is put forward, but this was not explained or demonstrated clearly enough for the pupils to understand, and no mention was made at the end of the lesson of the need to practise this particular technique. Even in the better lessons, pupils were not always sure at the end of a lesson which particular skills they had acquired and which needed more practice.
114. The school makes good use of a spacious hall and the already adequate resources will soon be added to through the school's participation in the *Top Play* programme. The co-ordinator has produced a sound plan that can be followed by all classes, but she is not at present in a position to say with confidence what are the main strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. For example, there is some evidence that the teaching of dance is not as well developed as gymnastics and games, and there may be need for more training to give teachers the confidence to rely less on taped programmes. The subject is likely to move forward if the school can find ways of spreading best practice and enabling the co-ordinator to monitor standards of teaching and learning in each class.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

115. Standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of beliefs and values, religious traditions and shared human experiences. Children are encouraged to think about their own personal lives and actions in relation to the lives of other people. At the time of the last inspection, some teachers confused personal and social education with religious education, but this has now been rectified, with both areas having a distinct focus. Where appropriate, assemblies link with work undertaken in lessons.
116. Year 2 pupils explore the meaning of events in the childhood of Jesus as they find out about Christianity and explore the theme of power. They know that Jesus was a great

leader and that he had a special job to do in the world. Children talk about the story of Mary and Joseph's return home to Nazareth; one child suggested, "They must have felt happy to go back to their home", showing awareness of the feelings of others. The children suggested that God is all-powerful during a discussion with their teacher. Year 1 pupils find out about Islam and can explain the significance of the prayer mat, head coverings and the Koran to Moslems. They know that Mohammed was a special person within the Islamic tradition and they take care when drawing representations of a mosque, understanding that this is a place of worship for Moslems. When asked to consider a person who is special to him, one child said that God was special to him, "because he looks after everyone in the world". Another said that the classroom assistant is special, as she helped him with his work. All pupils show thoughtful responses as they choose to draw parents, grandparents, pets or other significant people in their own lives.

117. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers choose storybooks and resources with care to develop children's knowledge and understanding. An attractive display of artefacts linked to Islam provided a useful focus for discussion. This positive recognition encouraged Moslem pupils to share some of their own experience with their classmates, which was helpful for all children in their learning. Teachers take care to invite personal responses and to value all pupils' contributions, and appropriate use is made of storytelling and discussion during lessons, although occasionally the emphasis is on recording and writing rather than on developing an understanding of ideas and beliefs.
118. The co-ordinator is new to her role and has made a positive start. She has undertaken additional training and has established valuable links with local advisers and other schools but the lack of release time means that she is unable to monitor teaching and assessment across the school.