

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LOWER DARWEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Darwen

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119120

Headteacher: Mrs S Morton

Reporting inspector: Paul Dennison  
17736  
Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 March 2003

Inspection number: 247967

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Milking Lane  
Lower Darwen  
Darwen  
Lancashire

Postcode: BB3 0RB

Telephone number: 01254 55639

Fax number: 01254 668065

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Cox

Date of previous inspection: 10 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17736	P Dennison	Registered inspector	The Foundation Stage English as an additional language Art and design Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19669	F Kennedy	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32224	D Earnshaw	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Design and technology	
4113	L Hampson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology History Music	
21893	V Brittain	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Science Geography Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?



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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in Lower Darwen, Blackburn. There is no nursery class, although most pupils have experienced some pre-school education in playgroups or nurseries. The number on roll is rising and the school building has been extended with additional classrooms. The school has a resource centre for pupils with hearing impairment. Currently there are 239 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is above the national average. Eighteen pupils have statements of special educational need. These are associated with hearing impairment, physical disability or Downs Syndrome. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority groups. Five of the hearing impaired pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. There is a wide range of ability on entry although overall attainment is in line with that expected for the age group.

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

This is a very good school. Pupils achieve well and by the time they leave school, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is good. The headteacher, governors and staff work well together to improve the school and maintain the high standards. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She is well supported by senior staff and the school is managed very well. The teaching is good overall and much is very good. This helps pupils to make good progress. Very effective support ensures that all pupils are able to take a full part in all aspects of school life. The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

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

- The headteacher and senior managers provide excellent leadership and manage the school very well. They are very well supported by governors and staff who work hard to maintain and improve the good standards of attainment.
- Pupils achieve well and, by Year 6, standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are good.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and much is very good.
- A very good range of activities is provided to meet pupils' interests and abilities; this includes a very wide range of activities outside lessons.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
- Pupils are very well behaved; they have very positive attitudes, work hard and are keen to learn.
- Pupils with special educational needs are provided with very good support and make good progress.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively and play a very important role in ensuring that all pupils have full access to the curriculum.
- The school has developed a very effective partnership with parents and the local community.

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

- The provision for information and communication technology and its use to support learning across the curriculum.

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

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

As a result of the excellent leadership provided by the headteacher and senior staff, improvement since the last inspection in 1997 has been very good. The school has taken positive and effective steps to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. Effective systems have been established to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, and the quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Assessment procedures have been improved and are used effectively to track pupils' progress and support curriculum planning. Parents are now kept well informed about pupils' learning, the curriculum and the school's work. Financial planning is very good and the budget is carefully monitored. The governing body is now well informed about the work of the



school. Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science have risen at a higher rate than the national trend. Provision for information and communication technology has been improved, however, it is not yet being used sufficiently to assist pupils' learning across the curriculum.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	C	A	A	well above average    A above average        B average                 C below average         D well below average    E
Mathematics	E	C	A	A	
Science	C	C	A*	A*	

Pupils' performance in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2002 was well above the national average in English and mathematics. The results in science were very high (in the top 5 percent of schools nationally). The test results between 1998 and 2002 have improved at a rate above the national trend.

Pupils achieve well. On the evidence of the inspection, their attainment is above the national expectations in English and mathematics and well above expectations in science.

Pupils' performance in the Year 2 National Curriculum assessments in 2002 was below the national average in writing and mathematics and well below the national average in reading. Compared with similar schools, attainment was below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards have improved and standards in all three subjects are now in line with the national expectation.

There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school although, overall, attainment is in line with that expected for the age group. Children in the reception classes achieve well. The great majority of children attain the early learning goals set for children of this age group and many move on to the National Curriculum programmes of study.

Attainment in design and technology is good. Attainment in all other National Curriculum subjects is in line with the national expectation by Year 2 and Year 6.

Pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and very good progress towards the specific learning objectives as identified in their individual education plans. Progress in language development and the acquisition of literacy skills is particularly good.

The school agrees realistic but challenging targets for each year's tests at Year 6. The targets for English and mathematics were surpassed in 2002. Inspection evidence indicates that targets set for 2002 are likely to be met.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They work hard, concentrate well and show good levels of interest.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond in a positive manner.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils co-operate well with each other and their teachers. Pupils are provided with opportunities to exercise responsibility, and they respond well.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and much of it is very good. It effectively promotes the progress and attainment of all pupils. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In the reception classes, all staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play and first hand experiences. Children are provided with many interesting practical activities and they respond very positively, making good progress. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is good overall and much is very good.

Relationships are very positive. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour and show good levels of concentration. Teachers have high expectations and take great trouble to teach in ways that challenge and motivate pupils. Lessons usually proceed at a lively pace and pupils work hard, showing good levels of concentration and developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result, they make good progress. Classroom support staff are used very effectively to support pupils' learning and make a very positive contribution to the progress made. On the occasions when teaching is less than good, it is usually because the work provided is not well chosen for the age or ability of children, with overcomplicated instructions that children find difficult to follow.

Teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, and much is very good. Effective use is made of the frameworks provided by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Clear and detailed planning leads to tasks being very well matched to pupils' needs. The school ensures that the pupils with hearing impairment receive the support that they need to be included in all classroom and other activities.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provides a wide range of interesting and relevant learning opportunities to support pupils' academic and personal development. Activities are well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. The good use of visits and visitors and a very wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities enhance the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is very good. The class teachers and support staff ensure that pupils receive good support and have good access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for personal development. There are very clear expectations of behaviour. The positive values promoted in assemblies and lessons help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very good level of care for its pupils. Staff know their pupils well as individuals and work hard to ensure their welfare.
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The school has established a strong partnership with parents and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

Pupils' academic performance and personal development are monitored effectively. There are good systems in place to analyse the results of assessments, set clear targets for improvement and track pupils' progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior staff provide excellent leadership and have established a very positive climate for learning in the school. The school is managed very effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the headteacher very well. They are aware of the needs and priorities facing the school and contribute very effectively to its success. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are very effective systems in place to monitor the quality of planning and teaching. Assessment results are analysed to monitor standards of attainment and the progress of pupils. This evaluation is used to inform the planning of further improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Effective use is made of the school budget and additional grants for the benefit of pupils' learning. Financial planning is very good and resources are used well to support the school's educational priorities.

The school has ample, suitably qualified teaching and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and cater for the needs of all the pupils. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll, although some teaching areas are rather cramped. Resources are generally adequate, although there is a need to further improve resources for information and communication technology and science.

Collectively the headteacher, staff and governors contribute very effectively to the quality of education provided and to the standards achieved by the pupils. The school development plan has been produced in consultation with staff and governors. This is based on an analysis of the school's needs. It clearly identifies the school's priorities and is reviewed regularly to evaluate progress. The school makes good use of the principles of best value to make effective use of the financial resources available. These are used effectively to support the priorities identified in the plan.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress.</li> <li>• The behaviour in school is good.</li> <li>• Children get the right amount of homework.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The staff are approachable.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become</li> </ul>	<p>A small number of parents would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wider range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

mature. • The school works closely with parents.	
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Through the questionnaire and in discussions with inspectors, parents expressed much satisfaction with the school's provision. The inspection team agree with their positive comments. A few parents have reservations about the provision of extra-curricular activities but evidence from the inspection indicates that there is a very good range of activities at lunch times and after school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school although, overall, attainment is in line with that expected for the age group. Children in the reception classes achieve well. This is due to the suitable curriculum and the very good teaching. Children with special educational needs are supported very well and have full access to the curriculum. They make good progress. The great majority of children attain the early learning goals set for pupils of this age group in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development and physical development, and many move on to the National Curriculum programmes of study during their time in the reception classes.
2. Pupils' performance in the 2002 national assessments in Year 2 was below the national average in mathematics and writing and well below average in reading. Teacher assessments indicate that attainment in science was well below average. Compared with similar schools, attainment was below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing. Standards of attainment were close to the national average of pupils attaining the expected level. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was lower than that achieved nationally. Test results in reading and writing have declined in recent years. The school believes that this is a reflection of declining standards on entry to the school and also that results are affected by the number of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom are at an early stage of language acquisition. However, there have been clear and effective measures taken to reverse this decline. These have included the tracking of pupils' progress and the identification of those who need additional support; initiatives such as 'reading partners' to provide extra help for pupils; clear planning which ensures that higher attaining pupils are provided with appropriately challenging activities; and 'booster' groups to improve attainment.
3. As a result, current standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are higher than those suggested by the results of the national tests for 2002, and are now in line with those expected for the age group. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils achieve soundly in Years 1 and 2 and that the needs of the higher attaining pupils are being met. Standards in science have also improved and are now in line with those expected for the age group. The current Year 2 pupils are achieving well. Almost all are working at expected levels, with more pupils achieving higher levels than last year.
4. Pupils' achievement in the 2002 Year 6 national tests was well above the national average in English and mathematics and very high when compared with the national average in science. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment was well above average in English and mathematics, and very high in science. The Year 6 pupils in 2002 were a particularly strong cohort and the progress they made from the results achieved in their Year 2 tests was well above the national average. The school results improved between 1998 and 2002 at a rate that was faster than the national trend. The evidence from the inspection indicates that attainment in the current Year 6 class is slightly lower than last year. However, attainment in English and mathematics is above the national average and science is well above average. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls in

mathematics and science, although girls achieve better than boys in English. The school is aware of this and is taking positive steps to improve the achievement of boys.

5. These improvements in standards result from a higher proportion of teaching that is good or very good, and the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, which have provided a framework for planning and led to a clear focus in lessons. The school has developed clear strategies to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Improvements in the assessment of pupils' attainment and the tracking of their progress have also helped to raise standards. The school has effective systems in place to monitor progress and to set clear targets for improvement. Very good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. The school also identifies pupils with particular talents and provides them with appropriate challenges. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and attainment and pupils respond very positively. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and most achieve well.
6. Pupils across the school have good speaking and listening skills that are better than those usually found in pupils of their age. They listen carefully, follow instructions and ask and answer questions as part of class or group discussions. Pupils' skills in this crucial aspect of English have developed well because teachers encourage debate and discussion in many lessons across the curriculum, provide time for pupils to develop their ideas and show that they value everybody's contributions.
7. Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. They are encouraged to read for a wide variety of purposes, including information and pleasure. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils read simple texts with some accuracy and the more fluent readers enjoy reading short stories. They are becoming familiar with non-fiction text and of how to find information in reference books. By Year 6, pupils read well. They read challenging text with very good expression and accuracy, and understand the concepts of plot, settings and characterisation. They use independent research and library skills competently.
8. Pupils make good progress in the development of their writing skills. By Year 2, pupils can write clear instructions and compose interesting stories. Their writing shows an increasing fluency and control, with simple punctuation being used accurately and simple words spelt correctly. Handwriting skills develop well, with most pupils forming letters accurately and developing a good style using joined writing.
9. By Year 6, pupils' writing skills are above average. In Years 3 to 6 pupils develop progressively their ability to write for different purposes, using a range of styles. Consequently, by Year 6, they are able to write effectively for different purposes and in different forms, including play scripts, biographies, character studies, newspaper reports and persuasive writing as well as narrative and descriptive accounts. Many pupils are able to compose sustained, well organised pieces, which generally demonstrate accurate sentence construction, punctuation and grammar. Most pupils choose words carefully and spell words accurately. Handwriting is legible and well-formed, using a pleasing joined script. Pupils make effective use of their reading and writing skills to support learning in subjects such as history and geography. Standards of literacy are good.
10. In mathematics, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. By Year 2, pupils achieve overall standards that are in line with the national expectations. They have an appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Most have a good understanding of pattern in number and know the difference between odd and even. They develop skills of simple

data handling and can construct and interpret graphs. The higher attaining pupils have a clear understanding of the value of numbers and they carry out simple calculations accurately. Pupils have a secure grasp of addition and subtraction and are consolidating their skill in simple multiplication and division. They can work out simple problems mentally. Lower attaining pupils have a limited ability to recall number facts mentally but they use apparatus effectively to aid their calculations. The majority of pupils have a satisfactory understanding of shape, space and simple measures.

11. Pupils make very good progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, pupils achieve standards that are above the national average. They carry out mental calculations with a high degree of accuracy. They can explain their methods clearly and are developing a good range of strategies to help them solve mental problems. They have a secure understanding of fractions and quickly and accurately convert these into decimals and percentages. Mathematical vocabulary is well developed and pupils use it accurately when describing their method of calculation. Good attention is paid to developing skills in data handling and pupils use these well in science, for example when constructing graphs to display the results of investigations. Standards of numeracy are good.
12. Pupils make good progress in science. By the end of Year 2 they possess a good scientific vocabulary and knowledge. They observe changes, make sensible predictions and record their observations appropriately in notes and drawings. Pupils develop their scientific skills well because their knowledge and understanding are acquired through investigation. They are beginning to understand how a test can be structured to make it fair.
13. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed very good levels of knowledge and understanding across the full range of the subject. They can find answers to scientific questions by systematic investigation. They make informed predictions about what might happen and explain their findings in terms of what they originally thought. They are confident in planning and carrying out fair tests, knowing which variables to change and which to control.
14. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with national expectations for the age group by the ends of Year 2 and Year 6. By Year 2, most pupils know how to load programmes and are able to use a mouse and the keyboard effectively. They print out their work. Pupils use simple data handling packages to help organise data collected about their pets. By Year 6, pupils use word processing software to extend their learning in English when writing letters. All pupils are confident in saving and retrieving their work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a good understanding of control software. They are able to select input and output devices and link them using control modules. Pupils describe the uses of computers in modern life. They know how to access the Internet and can locate information using search engines. They also use electronic mailing systems.
15. There has been good improvement in design and technology since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be broadly in line with the standards expected nationally. Standards are now above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and progress is good throughout the school. This improvement reflects the development and implementation of a well-planned curriculum that provides pupils with good balance in their learning. Additionally, teaching is now good and ensures that pupils experience all aspects of the process of designing, making and evaluating what they have done.

16. Attainment in art and design, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education is broadly in line with expectations for the age group by Year 2 and Year 6.
17. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their individual education plans. Progress in lessons is good because of the high quality of support and the good match of work to pupils' needs and abilities. Additional support in withdrawal groups is very effective. Pupils with English as an additional language are also well supported and achieve well.
18. Realistic, but challenging, targets for the Year 6 tests have been agreed. The results in 2002 surpassed the target for English and mathematics. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the targets for 2003 are likely to be met.

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

19. This aspect of the school has shown good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school now demonstrate very good attitudes and this has a positive effect on their learning. Behaviour and relationships throughout the school are very good. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
20. The pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about all school activities. Almost all the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are of the opinion that their children like school. The pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their record of attendance, which is consistently good and above the national average for primary schools. Most absence is due to illness or holidays taken in term time. The rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with that found nationally. Punctuality throughout the school is good.
21. Behaviour in lessons is very good. An outstanding feature of the school is the way in which the pupils show caring and supportive attitudes towards those pupils who have special educational needs. This is apparent not only in lessons but also in the dining room and in the playground. The school's highly successful policy on educational inclusion was praised by parents and carers at the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors. Pupils are very good at recognising and valuing each other's strengths of character. For example, during a personal and social education lesson, the Year 6 pupils were pleased to praise one another for qualities such as being kind, helpful and friendly and having a good sense of humour.
22. The pupils' readiness to co-operate with one another in class is a very good feature in their learning. They share ideas, resources and table space willingly and are glad to accept help from their peers. For example, in a Year 5 design and technology lesson, when the pupils were working on their own individual designs, they discussed ideas sensibly and came up with some very imaginative ideas for making a toy with a moving part. Throughout the lesson, the pupils worked with confidence, enjoyment and sustained concentration to produce well drawn and properly labelled designs for their toys, taking account of important safety features to be considered when designing a toy for a young child.
23. During the inspection there were numerous occasions when the teaching engendered a spiritual response from the pupils. For example, in a reception class literacy lesson the children were learning to recognise letters of the alphabet by playing a 'hidden letter' game. On each occasion, a sense of excitement and wonder was created when the letter was finally drawn from its hiding place and the children couldn't wait to make the



sound that fitted the letter. In a Year 3 science lesson, during an experiment to show that light travels in a straight line, the pupils were enthralled and gasped in amazement when particles of chalk defined the cone of light emanating from the overhead projector. Their behaviour throughout the lesson was of a very high standard.

24. Behaviour in assembly is very good. The pupils file into the hall in silence, they listen attentively and they join in the singing with real enjoyment. During a whole-school assembly to celebrate the Jewish festival of Purim, the pupils were very interested in the Bible story of Esther, which was acted out by pupils from Year 6. At the end of the play they reflected quietly about how the things they say and do can 'make a difference' to other people.
25. The pupils move around the school in a very orderly manner, respecting the many lovely displays in classrooms and other areas of the building. Caring for school property is one of the 'Golden Rules' for good behaviour. The rules also require them to be friendly, polite and helpful. Their understanding of and respect for the rules is evident in the way they support one another in class, their friendliness in the playground and the way in which they help their teachers, for example by tidying away the resources at the end of the lesson. Pupils from Year 1 upwards represent their classes on the school council, which gives pupils, through their class representatives, the chance to contribute to school improvement. The council is currently considering the school's policy on bullying. The council has also organised the selling of fruit in school in order to raise funds for future projects.
26. Year 6 pupils contribute a great deal to the school community by helping around the school and by setting a good example to younger pupils in terms of their behaviour and their general appearance. The system for allocating monitorial duties to Year 6 pupils is very good. Pupils have to apply for their 'jobs' as they would in the world of work. Jobs include helping in the dining room, distributing and collecting in registers, ringing the school bell, operating the overhead projector and the CD player in assembly and staffing the school office at lunch time. Overall, opportunities for showing initiative and taking responsibility make a very positive contribution to the pupils' personal and social development.

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

27. The quality of teaching is good overall and effectively promotes the progress and attainment of all pupils. During the inspection, 80 per cent of the teaching observed was good or better, including 47 per cent that was very good or better. At times, it was excellent. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection, with much more teaching that is very good and none that is less than satisfactory.
28. There have been a number of changes of teaching staff since that inspection. The school has successfully addressed the points for improvement raised in the inspection report. Lesson planning has improved and now clearly identifies the aims and objectives of lessons. These are shared with pupils so they have a clear understanding of the purpose of lessons. The school makes effective use of national guidance to provide a framework for curriculum planning and this helps to ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and plan work that is challenging and helps to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers also make good use of assessment information when planning work. This has been helped by the improvements in the systems for assessing pupils' progress.

29. Teaching in reception classes is very good. It is often exciting and interesting, capturing children's imagination and making them very eager learners. Teamwork between teachers and support staff is especially effective and has a considerably beneficial effect on children's learning. All staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play and first hand experiences. This has a very positive effect on the good progress children make towards the early learning goals and provides a firm foundation for learning in Year 1. Praise and encouragement are very effective in promoting positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. All activities are planned carefully to enable children of all abilities to build on their previous knowledge and understanding. Staff use questions, comments and observations very well to extend learning and to assess children's progress in order to plan for future learning. The experiences provided are interesting, challenging and of a very high quality and are focused very closely on what children need to learn. Children are given very clear instructions about what it is they are expected to do. As a result they move quickly to tasks using the time well to reinforce or extend their learning. The staff have appropriately high expectations of the children, both in achievement and social skills, and the children are respected and valued.
30. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is good overall and much is very good. Good use is made of the resources available to provide interesting tasks that motivate pupils. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible about their work, and are given opportunities to work independently and in pairs or groups. Relationships are very positive and pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour and show good levels of concentration. Group work is organised skilfully to enable some groups to work independently thus enabling the teacher to give more intensive support to others.
31. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will work hard and achieve well and take great trouble to present learning in ways which challenge and motivate pupils, as when setting problems in mathematics, encouraging pupils to undertake scientific investigations or providing a wide range of experiences in English. At the beginning of each lesson they set clear objectives and identify what they will be looking for in written work. Lessons usually proceed at a lively pace and pupils work hard, developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result, they make good progress.
32. Teachers make effective use of questioning to develop and assess pupils' understanding and they give clear explanations. They build on pupils' earlier learning and use the opportunities of whole class sessions to review and assess pupils' understanding of previous work. Teachers make good use of review sessions to reinforce and evaluate learning. Many lessons end with a general discussion about what has been learned. Pupils' work is assessed and marked constructively on a day-to-day basis. Classroom support staff are used very effectively to support pupils' learning and make a very positive contribution to the progress made.
33. On the occasions where teaching is less than good, it is usually because activities are not well chosen for the age or ability of children, with overcomplicated instructions that pupils find difficult to follow. At times the teacher's introduction is too long and this results in insufficient time for pupils to complete the activity.
34. Teaching of English and mathematics is good overall and much is very good. Teachers generally have high expectations and provide work that is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities, and provide a very good level of challenge for all. Pupils respond well and make good progress. Teachers' questioning skills are good and there are many opportunities for pupils to explain the methods they use. Good use is made of the frameworks provided by the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. This high

quality teaching has a very positive impact on maintaining and raising the standards of attainment.

35. The quality of science teaching is very good. The teaching is lively and there is good pupil participation and motivation. There is a good balance between discussion, written and practical work, which ensures the pupils know what is expected of them and how they can improve. A strength of the teaching is the emphasis on encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to present findings clearly. The essential skills of scientific enquiry, for example the use of scientific measuring devices, are carefully taught and pupils are given sufficient opportunities to take measurements and collect data.
36. Teaching in information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection and is now good, although it should be reinforced with greater use of class-based computers during daily lessons. Teaching is better in Years 3 to 6, particularly in the older classes where the key feature is the effective use of interactive whiteboards and multi-media technology. Teachers demonstrate very good technical skills when using this equipment and its introduction has done much to enhance pupils' learning.
37. The teaching of geography, history and religious education is good. Activities provide challenge for all pupils and well-chosen resources enable them to be fully involved in their own learning. Much of the pupils' completed work shows that teachers in most classes encourage pupils to learn through enquiry based approaches and this ensures that they develop skills and understanding as well as factual knowledge.
38. The quality of teaching in physical education lessons is good. Teachers provide pupils with well-structured sequences within lessons, enabling them to move gradually from basics to more complex work. In the best lessons, teachers regularly provide new challenges and encourage pupils to achieve higher standards. Lessons are organised well and pupil management is good.
39. Teaching of art and design and design and technology is good. It is characterised by good organisation, well-prepared resources, secure management of pupils and a shared understanding of what it is the pupils will achieve by the end of the lesson. Work is both challenging and enjoyable, and pupils are encouraged to think about the quality of their work and how they can improve it. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and understanding and use appropriate terminology with confidence.
40. Teaching of music varies from satisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. The lack of any unsatisfactory teaching is an improvement since the last inspection. A very positive feature of the music provision is the inclusion of pupils with hearing impairment in mainstream lessons. They are well supported by class teachers and teaching assistants who use a variety of communication techniques to maximise their participation.
41. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and the planning of appropriate work by well-trained staff contributes positively to their learning. For those pupils with individual education plans, work is well matched to their targets. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all subjects and activities and there are high but realistic expectations of what these pupils can achieve. The impact of this very good teaching is evident in the interest that the pupils show in their work and in their behaviour, which is very good. Special needs teachers, teaching assistants and class teachers have excellent working relationships and they plan, teach and assess pupils' learning together.

42. Homework is used effectively to support learning. The amount of homework given to pupils is increased as they progress through the school. This takes a variety of forms including reading activities, mathematics and following up classwork to support learning across the curriculum.

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

43. At the time of the last inspection the school's curriculum and planning were satisfactory overall with some weaknesses. These have now been addressed. The school now provides a wide and varied curriculum. Since the last inspection the school has adopted nationally agreed guidelines for all National Curriculum subjects and these have been used to produce schemes of work. Medium and short term planning is detailed and is being used effectively to raise the quality of the teaching and learning. The curriculum is very well planned to meet the needs of all pupils and higher attaining pupils are provided with appropriately challenging work. The school has begun to identify gifted and talented pupils. There is a clear policy in place and their progress is monitored. The school is exploring means by which these pupils' needs can be met by giving them appropriate activities. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are very well cared for to ensure they have full access to the curriculum.
44. The quality and range of learning opportunities in the reception classes is good. Detailed planning ensures that the curriculum is securely based on the nationally recommended six areas of learning for children of this age. Special emphasis is rightly given to personal, social and emotional development, as well as to communication, language and literacy and to mathematical development. Appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are incorporated into lessons. Opportunities to promote skills in these areas are incorporated into all aspects of the curriculum. The children are encouraged to enjoy learning and to take part in a wide range of lively practical activities, which support their progress effectively in all areas.
45. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is wide and varied and there is a good range of learning opportunities. The school rightly gives priority to English and mathematics in order to raise standards further and to enable pupils to transfer their skills to other subjects. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully in place and are being used effectively to raise standards. The school is making good use of additional literacy strategies and initiatives for pupils who would benefit from extra support. Literacy skills are also being developed in other subjects. For example, in science, pupils of all ages write their own reports of investigations. Good use is made of role-play in subjects such as religious education and this is helping to develop pupils' speaking skills. There is good emphasis on the development of key vocabulary in all subjects. Mathematical skills of measuring and data handling are consolidated across the curriculum, particularly in science and in design and technology. However, information and communication technology is not being used sufficiently to assist learning across the curriculum and this is an area for development.
46. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Prompt and early identification of need ensures that individual education plans for pupils contain clear targets with practical strategies to achieve them. Teachers use those plans well to inform their own curriculum planning for individual pupils with special needs. Teaching assistants are deployed and used very effectively. They are involved in

planning, know the needs of the pupils very well and are able to give positive support in lessons, so making a very good contribution to pupils' learning. All pupils with special educational needs play a full part in the life of the school. Hearing impaired pupils from the school's special educational resource facility (SERF) are included successfully in many lessons in mainstream classes, while provision is also made for movement the other way. For example, some mainstream pupils with language difficulties go to the SERF base for some of their literacy lessons. The emphasis at all times is on the particular needs of the individual child and on providing every pupil with the same opportunities for learning. The school's clearly stated policy of inclusion is very evident in practice.

47. There is good provision for personal, social and health education. It is taught in discrete lessons as well as through other subjects such as science and religious education. Pupils have opportunities to explore their own feelings as well as relationships with others. An after-school club has been particularly successful in boosting the self-esteem of some older pupils, teaching them how to work together and share friendship. There are opportunities in class to discuss moral issues; in Year 6 pupils have been discussing the morality of war. Pupils are taught from an early age about healthy eating and care of the body, including drug awareness. Older pupils receive sex education in line with the school's policy. Assemblies make a good contribution to the sustaining of good behaviour and to personal development. The school's positive and inclusive atmosphere reflects the good provision in this area.
48. A very good range of activities is provided outside lessons to enhance the curriculum. At present, these include sports, music, art, science, gardening, German, modelling and reading. All are very well supported by pupils. They are open to all pupils, regardless of gender or ability. Peripatetic teachers work in school to give tuition for a variety of instruments. Enrichment is provided by numerous additional activities such as the recent *Travelling Science Show*, school concerts and the use made of *World Book Day* to promote the enjoyment of reading also enrich the curriculum.
49. The local and wider community makes a very good contribution to the pupils' learning and to their personal development. There are regular visits from members of the local community, such as the police, road safety officers, fire fighters and members of religious groups. Pupils take part in community activities such as the Darwen Civic Society Bulb Growing competition. Their personal and social development is enhanced by visits to homes for the elderly at harvest time and at Christmas. Good use is made of the area around the school for geography and local history and visits, including residential visits for Years 5 and 6, are made further afield.
50. Very good links are maintained with local schools. These are well used to enhance the curriculum. Effective links have been made with another primary school in the Blackburn authority to use their expertise to improve pupils' speaking and writing skills. Teachers from local high schools run clubs for football and German. The school is part of an Education Action Zone in which schools work together on various initiatives to raise standards. The importance of links with colleges is recognised and the school supports students on work experience, including those training to be teachers.

51. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and enhances the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities for pupils.
52. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are good. The school has a strong community spirit and a commitment to shared values throughout the school that leads to a healthy, welcoming and supportive atmosphere. Members of staff provide time for pupils to appreciate their environment and to reflect on their own experiences. Pupils respond well to such opportunities and show a high level of self-esteem that is well balanced by their empathy with, and respect, for others. There is a daily act of collective worship as part of a whole school assembly. Care is taken to create an appropriate atmosphere, often by playing carefully selected music, and a brief time is given for private reflection. The school prayer, which focuses on school values, is recited collectively. Singing is enthusiastic, tuneful and clearly enjoyed by pupils and staff. Pupils are encouraged to think seriously, and contribute ideas, about a variety of topics, such as memories and weddings. The headteacher led an act of worship based on the wedding at Cana and imaginatively used her own wedding dress and photograph album as visual stimuli to create a sense of wonder. On another occasion she skilfully created an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation before introducing a visiting author. In lessons pupils are given opportunities to discuss their feelings and contribute to discussions. For example, in a Year 4 religious education lesson, pupils engaged in a debate about the meaning of sacrifice, reflecting on the sacrifices made by Jesus and Nelson Mandela, and considered what they would be prepared to sacrifice. The school has planned to introduce further opportunities for spiritual development.
53. The school's provision for moral development is very good. This is guided by a clear policy that encourages a coherent approach to good practice throughout the school. The school provides an open and safe environment in which pupils can express their views and practise moral decision making. For example, in an assembly they were asked to think about situations when they could have made a difference. Teachers and support staff adopt a consistent attitude to discipline that is marked by the effective use of praise and encouragement. Pupils understand the code of conduct that guides their behaviour, and respond accordingly. Through their relationships with pupils and colleagues, members of staff provide pupils with very good role models of integrity, fairness and respect. Parents indicate that pupils feel that incidents at school are dealt with fairly and justly. Pupils are taught to distinguish right from wrong and to explain the impact of negative and positive actions in terms of the consequences for themselves and others. They are aware of the rights of others and take responsibility for their actions. Moral issues are considered in a range of contexts, for example literacy and religious education lessons and in meetings of the school council, where playground behaviour has been discussed. Consequently, pupils are able to discuss issues in a mature and sensible manner, showing their own personal commitment to the school's positive moral code.
54. Opportunities to extend social development are very good and pupils show high quality interpersonal skills. They work well co-operatively with one another and resolve minor conflicts amicably. They are appreciative of each other's efforts and successes. The school teaches the principles of citizenship very well, through the curriculum and a range of opportunities, as well as the policy and practice of inclusion, which raises pupils' awareness of the needs of deaf people. The further development of pupils' social skills has been one of the school's priorities this year and has resulted in the formation of a very active and effective school council. The pupils themselves take responsibility for meetings, from chairing the meeting to taking the minutes. Staff are responsive to the council's suggestions and, already, the pupils have been instrumental

in bringing about some improvements to the school's provision, for example the opportunity to purchase fruit at mid-morning break. Being members of the school council gives pupils a real understanding of decision making and the part that pupils can play in the life of the school. Older pupils take on whole school responsibilities, such as house captains or lunchtime monitors, and are required to apply formally for these positions at the beginning of the year. A 'buddy' system also operates, whereby older pupils support younger ones across a range of activities. Pupils extend their social skills in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, some of which are especially helpful in that respect. Examples include the residential visit for older pupils, the lunchtime gardening club, where pupils work co-operatively to enhance the school environment, and the after school Pyramid Club which is designed to increase social skills and self-esteem.

55. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are given good opportunities to learn about their own culture through visits to museums and other places of local interest. Visitors to the school, such as authors, also contribute to pupils' awareness of their culture. Pupils are introduced to other faiths and cultures in lessons such as religious education and geography, and displays in the hall highlight celebrations and festivals from around the world. A lively German lunchtime club introduces pupils to the excitement of learning another language. However, greater prominence should be given to the multi-cultural dimension. The school has already recognised this need and included it in the school development plan. Multi-cultural links are being formed with other schools and the range of literature and other visual material related to different cultures is being increased.

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

56. The level of care provided by the school for its pupils is very good and shows good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and work hard to ensure that these are met. Very good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. This aspect of the school was highly praised by parents and carers at the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors.
57. Child protection procedures are very good. The school's policy is documented clearly and reviewed regularly to make sure procedures comply with guidelines provided by the local education authority. All teaching and non-teaching staff have received relevant training by representatives from the educational welfare service. The designated teacher for child protection and the headteacher have benefited from more specific training, appropriate to their responsibilities not only to the pupils but also to ensuring that all the staff are supported sensitively in this area of their work and kept up to date with any changes in statutory requirements.
58. Procedures for the assessment of the pupils' attainment and progress are very good. Careful records of each pupil's attainment are kept from entry to the school and are passed on from year to year. The system identifies strengths and areas for development, on a regular basis, and helps teachers to plan for the next stage of the pupils' learning. Information gathered from the various formal and optional tests is used to target pupils for additional learning support and booster classes where necessary. Procedures are particularly well developed for English and mathematics, where teachers throughout the school set clear individual targets for improvement for each pupil. Teachers have developed easily manageable systems for assessing progress in the remaining subjects on the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and, where necessary, they are provided with individual

education plans. The progress of all pupils is reviewed regularly against the targets they have been set.

59. There are very good assessment and tracking procedures in place for pupils in the special education resource facility. They have clearly focused individual education plans and there is effective liaison with outside agencies. The school has developed a very effective system that involves the active and thorough inclusion of these pupils in mainstream classes and activities. The number of teaching assistants has been increased substantially over the last few years to provide a most effective structure of support for pupils with special needs.
60. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are very good. There is a co-ordinated approach to implementing the personal, social and health education programme of study. 'Circle time', which takes place in every class, forms an important part of the programme of study and provides valuable opportunities for the pupils to think and talk about their feelings on a given topic. It is also used effectively to promote the pupils' self esteem by encouraging them to speak openly and honestly in praise of one another's qualities of character. Carefully planned assemblies and lessons in English, religious education, geography and science make a very positive contribution to the pupils' personal, social and emotional development. For example, in a Reception and Year 1 geography lesson, the pupils were learning about road safety, with help from the school crossing patrol officer. They were taken to a road bordering the school, where they practised crossing the road, with their teacher, while the crossing patrol officer held up the traffic. The experience was very enjoyable for the pupils and their behaviour throughout the lesson was excellent. The teaching developed the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the dangers of traffic and of how to keep safe when crossing a busy road.
61. The pupils are given many opportunities, appropriate for their age, to take responsibility inside school and to reach out to the wider community through fund raising for a wide range of charities. Pupils in Year 6 are given special responsibility for various duties or 'jobs' that help to develop their confidence and self esteem and which assist the smooth running of school routines.
62. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The school has a very positive approach to behaviour management and hard work, good behaviour, courtesy and friendly, caring attitudes are rewarded fairly and consistently by the teaching and non-teaching staff. Rewards include certificates, Headteacher's Award stickers, 'well done' necklaces, 'best class' awards and letters to parents celebrating individuals' successes. An appropriate system of sanctions is in place for dealing with misconduct and parents are informed at an early stage if their child's behaviour is giving cause for concern. The pupils themselves negotiate their class rules and these are displayed prominently in classrooms. The more general 'Golden Rules' require the pupils to be friendly, polite, helpful, caring and hard working. Pupils have a good understanding of the rules and their attitudes and behaviour, in lessons and around the school, are very good.
63. The school benefits from the Education Action Zone initiative and from the Blackburn Child Care Trust, which together fund a family support worker, who supports individual pupils and families experiencing difficulties. The school nurse gives very good support to the school in matters concerning the pupils' health and general welfare. Arrangements for dealing with and recording accidents are very good. There is now a qualified first aider in school throughout the week and the governors make regular risk assessments of the school building and grounds.



64. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school works hard, in close co-operation with the educational welfare service, to encourage regular attendance and to inform parents about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

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

65. The school has worked extremely hard, since the last inspection, to strengthen the home-school partnership and to improve the quality of the information provided for parents and carers. As a result, the school has established a very good partnership with parents and keeps them very well informed in relation to their children's attainment and progress, the curriculum, school events and school policies and procedures.
66. Parents and carers have very positive views about the school. At the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors they expressed their appreciation for the attitudes and values that the school promotes and for the school's highly successful policy on educational inclusion. Analysis of the parents' and carers' replies to the pre-inspection questionnaires revealed that they consider the school to be well led and managed and they would feel comfortable approaching the school with problems or questions concerning their children. They are of the opinion that teaching is good and they feel their children like school and are making good progress. The vast majority consider the school is helping its pupils to become mature and responsible. They are of the view that pupils are expected to work hard and achieve of their best and that behaviour in the school is good. The great majority are of the opinion that the school works closely with parents and gives pupils the right amount of homework. Inspection findings support all these positive views.
67. A small minority of parents and carers feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classrooms. Inspection findings are that extra-curricular provision is very good. Lunchtime and after-school clubs include art, dance, German, French, science, skipping, gardening and ICT. There is also a range of sports activities. In addition the school makes effective use of a wide range of visits, including residential visits to provide additional experiences for pupils.
68. The quality of the information provided for parents and carers is very good. Through the prospectus, the governing body's annual report, the home-school agreement and fortnightly newsletters the parents are kept well informed about the aims of the school, the work and responsibilities of the governors, important events and school policies and procedures. Parents have suitable opportunities to discuss their children's progress formally with class teachers at the parents' evenings, which are held twice a year. Pupils' annual written reports provide parents with detailed and helpful information about their children's attainment, progress and personal development. Reports now report separately on all subjects of the National Curriculum. They can be discussed with class teachers at the open evening in the summer term. A very good feature of the reports is that there is space for parents to comment on their children's progress and to offer suggestions about how the school might help them to improve further. In addition to the annual report, a shorter interim report is sent to parents in the spring term. This can be discussed with class teachers at the February parents' evening.

69. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are now closely involved in setting and reviewing their children's targets. They meet regularly with the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the class teacher, and are given a copy of their child's individual education plan. This helps them to support their children's learning in school and at home.
70. Since the last inspection, the school has greatly improved the amount and quality of the information provided for parents and carers about the curriculum. An annual curriculum leaflet outlines the topics to be covered during the year. In addition, curriculum newsletters, each term, inform parents about the programmes of study for literacy, numeracy and science. This information enables parents and carers to support their children's studies by, for example, retrieving information from the Internet, borrowing books from the library or visiting places of interest linked to topic work. The school arranges numerous 'Parents as Educators' courses and curriculum information evenings, which help to strengthen the home-school partnership and to encourage and equip parents to participate more fully in their children's education. The school keeps parents well informed in relation to its policy on homework, which is now implemented consistently. At the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors the parents and carers praised the school for the way in which homework is presented.
71. Parents' and carers' views are canvassed regularly, through questionnaires. This gives the school a good insight into what pleases parents most and what they would like to see improved. The school values the parents' views and ideas and the contribution they have made to school improvement.
72. The Parent Teacher Association continues to work hard to raise valuable additional funds for the school, through sponsored events, the annual Christmas Fair and other activities. Items purchased by the association, since the last inspection, include fleece jackets for sports teams representing the school and a stage for the school hall.

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

73. The school is very well managed. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, promoting and sustaining a clear sense of direction for the work of the school. Since her appointment as headteacher, the school has improved considerably. The senior managers set very good examples in the work they undertake and, consequently, there is an enthusiastic and committed staff team, including those in non-teaching positions. The very positive and supportive atmosphere and the sense of commitment displayed by all who work in the school reflect the quality of this leadership. Governors, teachers and support staff work well together to support the headteacher in promoting the school's aims. There has been a high level of attention to improving the school. This has been promoted through the establishment of an effective system of self-review that has produced very clear targets for improvement. The quality of teaching and learning has been monitored and evaluated and the systems of curriculum planning have been successfully developed.
74. At the time of the previous inspection, the leadership and management of the then headteacher were serious weaknesses. The present headteacher has developed a very effective working relationship with the governors, won the confidence of parents and established a very clear programme of school improvement. The headteacher and her very effective deputy headteacher have worked hard to ensure that the school has taken positive and effective steps to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. A strong and effective leadership team has been established and the school has a good development plan in place. Effective systems have been

established to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, and the quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher has worked hard to develop useful assessment procedures. These have been improved considerably since the previous inspection and are used successfully to track pupils' progress and support curriculum planning. Parents are kept well informed about pupils' learning, the curriculum and the school's work. Financial planning is very good and the budget is carefully monitored. The governing body is now well informed about the work of the school.

75. The governing body plays a very effective and supportive role. The governors are aware of their responsibilities and ensure that statutory requirements are met. The governors are regular visitors to the school and they are kept well informed about the issues. This enables them to make a very positive contribution to supporting the work of the school. They are actively involved in decisions about finance and the curriculum. Individual governors have links with curriculum areas and special educational needs.
76. The school development plan has been produced in consultation with staff and governors. This is based on an analysis of the school's needs. It clearly identifies the school's priorities and is a useful and effective management tool. It is linked to the school budget and is reviewed regularly to evaluate progress. It is supplemented with clear and effective action plans for each area of development.
77. The leadership of the school helps to ensure that all pupils benefit from what the school offers. The school brochure states "We are proud to be an inclusive school," and the policy and practice evident during the inspection confirm that to be undoubtedly true.
78. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides strong, purposeful leadership. The expertise, advice and support offered to colleagues are of high quality. The co-ordinator has written a detailed and comprehensive development plan and has led the introduction of a number of successful initiatives which have been instrumental in further improving the learning opportunities and experiences of special needs pupils. Examples include improved assessment and tracking procedures, more focused individual education plans, effective liaison with outside agencies and, by no means least, the development of a more inclusive approach that allows the active and thorough inclusion of pupils from the school's special education resource facility. The number of classroom assistants has been increased substantially over the last few years to provide a most effective structure of support for pupils with special needs. The co-ordinator leads training sessions for assistants to provide them with the knowledge and skills they need for effective support. She maintains close liaison with the governor responsible for special needs. The co-ordinator is allocated a good proportion of non-contact time for the management of special educational needs and makes very productive use of the time allowed. Administration procedures in relation to maintaining accurate records for pupils are very good.
79. The school has effective strategies in place to promote skills of literacy and numeracy. The literacy and numeracy strategies are very well managed and have been implemented effectively. All staff have curriculum responsibilities. In consultation with staff and governors, curriculum co-ordinators have produced whole school policies that support teachers in their planning. There are very good systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. All co-ordinators provide effective leadership within their area of responsibility. They are involved in the monitoring of standards and have clear action plans linked to the school development plan. They play a significant role in the school's strategy of self-review.

80. Long term strategic financial planning is very good. Governors are fully involved in establishing spending priorities that are clearly detailed in the school development plan. The large budget surplus for 2000/2001 was earmarked for spending on refurbishment of classrooms and building maintenance. The budget has also been used effectively to provide additional classroom support staff. Governors consider a range of options before making decisions about spending. They carefully evaluate the effectiveness of their decisions and consider a number of alternatives and quotations in order to ensure good value for money. Prices are compared, services are only purchased if they provide value for money, parents and pupils are consulted appropriately, and the school believes that monitoring and comparing its performance against local and national outcomes is essential.
81. The day-to-day administration and management of finance are very good. The school secretary and clerical assistant ably support the headteacher. Their office provides a welcoming and friendly introduction to the school for parents and visitors, typifying the very good relationships that exist in the school. The collection of money and ordering and checking of school equipment are efficient and ensure minimum disruption to teaching and learning. The school ensures that it makes effective use of specific grants such as those to support pupils with special educational needs.
82. The school has ample, suitably qualified teaching and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and to cater for the needs of all the pupils. Highly effective teamwork between senior managers, teachers and support staff is one of the school's major strengths. The school places strong emphasis on staff development. Teachers, teaching assistants and governors are given opportunities to attend relevant in-service training and the school has been awarded 'Investors in People' status. Performance management procedures are firmly established and there are good arrangements for supporting the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff who are new to the school. The caretaker, cleaners, school meals and supervisory staff help to provide a clean, safe and healthy environment for pupils and make a valuable contribution to their well-being.
83. The school has a satisfactory range of resources to support learning in most areas of the curriculum. The accommodation has been extended and improved since the previous inspection. It is adequate for the number of pupils on roll although some teaching spaces are rather cramped. The computer suite does not have sufficient space or computers to enable a whole class to use computers at the same time. Standards of cleaning and caretaking are good, and the quality of the internal environment is enhanced by colourful displays of the pupils' work, which are of a good standard. They are used effectively to celebrate the pupils' achievements, support their learning and promote enquiry.
84. The school has a clear set of aims. These are reflected in all aspects of the school's work. There are high expectations of the pupils in terms of their personal and academic development. The school is forward moving and has a positive and supportive atmosphere, putting the needs of the pupils as a high priority. There is a clear sense of shared values and a unity of purpose. Consequently, the school is well placed to make further progress.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

85. In order to improve further the quality of education and the standards of attainment, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

(1) Further improve the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and its use to support learning across the curriculum by:

- Re-organising the computer suite in order to accommodate a full class
- Developing the range of software and other resources
- Ensuring that opportunities for the use of ICT across the curriculum are identified in teachers' planning.

(Paragraphs 36, 45, 83, 135, 138, 145, 157, 161, 169, 176)

## RESOURCED PROVISION FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

86. The special educational resource facility (SERF) continues to be a strength of the school and to make a significant contribution to the provision both for pupils with hearing impairments and mainstream pupils with special educational needs.
87. Pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and very good progress towards the specific learning objectives as identified in their individual education plans (IEPs). Progress in language development and the acquisition of literacy skills is particularly good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and apply themselves to discussions or tasks with energy and enjoyment, being able to work well independently or co-operatively. They have high levels of self-esteem and display confidence in communicating with others. Relationships are very good, both among pupils and with adults.
88. The quality of teaching is very good overall, and at times is excellent. The SERF classrooms provide stimulating, colourful and interesting environments for pupils, with a very positive atmosphere of high expectation in terms of effort, achievement and presentation. Staff challenge pupils to do well and pupils respond enthusiastically. Clear and detailed planning leads to tasks being very well matched to IEP targets. A brisk, but not rushed, pace is maintained and pupils' interest levels remain high. Questioning is open, challenging and well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Teaching is often very imaginative in order to make learning interesting and meaningful. For example, in a literacy lesson, the teacher cleverly combined the stories of 'The Iron Man' and 'Stanley Bagshaw and the Fourteen Foot Wheel', to link a known text with a book written by an author who had visited school the previous day. Pupils explored what the two stories have in common and how they could be linked, before composing a class story using ideas and themes from both books. Excellent use was made of visual material including artefacts (eg a bicycle wheel).
89. The teaching is enhanced by the very good support provided by teaching assistants, who form a very effective partnership with teaching staff. Support staff know the pupils and their needs well and make a significant contribution to pupils' educational, personal and social development. They display a high level of commitment and expertise.
90. The curriculum provision is very good. Pupils have full access to the national curriculum and their IEPs are implemented very well. Progress is monitored and assessed systematically and thoroughly. Pupils are included very successfully in the life and work of mainstream classes. The school's philosophy of inclusion permeates throughout. For example, hearing impaired pupils are on the registers of mainstream classes, go there for registration and sit with their class in assembly. They also take part in many mainstream lessons, either with or without support depending upon their individual needs. Similarly, mainstream pupils with special needs sometimes attend lessons in the SERF class. For example, a pupil with language difficulties might take part in a literacy lesson. It is a truly two-way process.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	28	21	12	0	0	0
Percentage	2	45	34	19	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	239
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	54

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

Authorised absence

%
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Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.2
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
	2002	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	13	15
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	26	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (77)	85 (80)	91 (80)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	15	13
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	27	30	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (77)	91 (83)	85 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	14	14	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	12	14	14
	Total	25	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (85)	100 (64)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	14
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	24	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (76)	86 (70)	100 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	194	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

### ***Financial information***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.48
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.2
Average class size	23.9

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	319.75

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	-
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	-
Total number of education support staff	-
Total aggregate hours worked per week	-

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	649,049
Total expenditure	665,428
Expenditure per pupil	2,819
Balance brought forward from previous year	70,602
Balance carried forward to next year	54,323

Number of pupils per FTE adult	-
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **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	3.8
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 41.8%

Number of questionnaires sent out	239
Number of questionnaires returned	100

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	34	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	29	5	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	41	3	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	46	1	2	0
The teaching is good.	74	25	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	45	10	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	24	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	18	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	37	10	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	29	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	33	10	2	8

## **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**

91. Children start full-time in the reception class in the September prior to their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection there were 32 children on roll. The great majority of children are taught in the reception class but a small group of children are taught in the Year 1 class. However, the teachers work closely together and ensure that these children have access to the full provision available for reception children. The school does not have a nursery class, and children entering the reception classes have experienced a wide variety of pre-school education at local play-groups or nurseries. There is a very wide range of attainment on entry to the reception class but, overall, attainment is in line with that expected for the age group.
92. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. The curriculum is securely based in the six areas of learning appropriate for this age group. Particular emphasis is rightly given to personal and social development, as well as to communication, language and literacy and to mathematical development. Appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are incorporated into lessons. The children are encouraged to enjoy learning and to take part in a wide range of lively practical activities, which support their progress effectively in all areas. The Foundation Stage prepares children well for the next stage of education.
93. Children achieve well. This is due to the suitable curriculum and the very good teaching. Children with special educational needs are supported very well and have full access to the curriculum. They make good progress. The great majority of children attain the early learning goals set for pupils of this age group in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development and physical development, and many move on to the National Curriculum programmes of study.
94. The quality of teaching is very good. All staff work hard and the warm, welcoming, secure and challenging environment they create makes children's first experience of school interesting, happy and positive. Staff use praise and encouragement to manage children very well so that they develop positive attitudes to learning and feel increasingly secure and confident. The teachers' knowledge of the curriculum and of how young children learn is very good. The comprehensive planning, along with thorough assessment of children's progress, results in constantly changing learning and practical opportunities that involve children actively and promote their independence. Staff work closely together as a very competent and effective team. The classroom support assistants provide very good quality support to the teachers in the running of the classes. Careful assessment is made of the children soon after they start school. This is used to identify children who may need extra support and to set targets for their future attainment. The children's progress is tracked carefully and good records of progress are maintained. These are used very effectively to plan work, which is well matched to children's needs. Classrooms are well organised, so that children learn through direct first-hand experience in a wide range of interesting activities.
95. There are good systems in place when children start school. Staff visit parents and children at home and children spend four afternoons in school in the term before they start. Parents and school work closely together in the Foundation Stage. Parents have the opportunity to talk to staff regularly when they bring children to school or collect

them at the end of the day. This enables any concerns to be dealt with as they arise. It also reassures children and encourages them to be confident about coming into school.

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

96. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is very good and pupils are cared for very well and make good progress. The aims of the school are effectively implemented by the promotion of good, caring relationships, which encourage good responses and good behaviour and ensure children feel safe and secure. Opportunities to promote personal, social and emotional development are built carefully into all aspects of the curriculum, and staff set, and model, high standards of care and consideration. All staff are consistent in establishing the school's expectations in very positive ways so that the children are very clear about how to behave, and are enthusiastic to do well. Staff listen carefully and respect children's ideas. They provide positive and encouraging verbal feedback and nurture the children's sense of self worth by taking care to display their work attractively. The equipment and resources are easily accessible to children to enable them to become independent learners. The children respond very well and most are enthusiastic and keen to join in all activities.
97. Children interact well with each other, showing consideration and kindness. They are aware of the difference between right and wrong. Concentration is good; children are involved for quite long periods on particular tasks, they are well organised and gain independence in managing themselves. Good examples of this include the confident manner in which they operate the computer or the listening center, and the way in which they organise and sustain lengthy periods of role-play. Children settle well into the routines of school life because teachers make clear what is expected of them. In whole class sessions, they listen attentively and their acknowledgement of class routine is good. They put up their hands and are confident to ask questions. Self-confidence and independence grow as children are given responsibilities for a variety of tasks to which they respond positively. They are becoming independent in looking after themselves, for instance in dressing and undressing for physical education. At the end of activities, they help to tidy up and put things away. They are good at taking turns and in sharing equipment, for example when using the sand and water. They show pleasure in their own achievement and are appreciative of the work of others. They co-operate well with others in their work and play, for example when developing relatively complex scenarios in the home corner or when developing outdoor role-play as 'fire-fighters' or 'repairing the road'. They handle equipment and books carefully and with respect. They follow instructions well and are sensible when moving around the school, as was observed when they went to the hall for a physical education lesson.

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

98. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, with many examples of challenging opportunities presented to children. The curriculum appropriately emphasises the development of speaking and listening skills as well as promoting the development of reading and writing skills carefully over time. The well-planned, clearly focused activities include formal whole class and group teaching, and informal independent learning, for example through role-play. Use of good and varied language is promoted in all activities. Children talk and role-play well, and staff sensitively encourage the development and use of good vocabulary. Children are encouraged to speak to the group and they talk clearly and in extended sentences about their likes and dislikes. They listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. All staff use questions carefully to help children express and extend their ideas. A good example was the use of the story

board, when children used pictures to help them tell a story into a tape recorder. This activity was very successful because of skilled questioning by the classroom assistant.

99. Children develop a growing enjoyment of books and stories. Staff place a good emphasis on reading and they are positive and encouraging in stimulating children's interest and enjoyment. When listening to stories, children concentrate attentively. A very good example was the story of 'Titch'. The teacher made very effective use of a puppet character to hold children's attention and increase their interest. The basic skills of learning letters and their sounds are taught well, and appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy are effectively incorporated into the curriculum. Most children recognise some letters by shape and sound, and some high frequency words from simple texts. Children make use of their knowledge of letter sounds to read unfamiliar words. Higher attaining pupils can read simple texts with confidence and enthusiasm. Parents support children's learning by sharing books at home. They have also been involved in the development of 'story sacks,' which provide a range of additional material to support children's enjoyment of books and are also used very effectively to develop speaking and listening skills. A teaching assistant has developed this project very successfully.
100. Words and labels are clearly evident in the classroom and many children make attempts at using a few familiar words to accompany their pictures. They are developing pencil control and learning how to form letters. By the end of the reception year, higher attainers compose and write their own sentences. Most children can copy the teacher's writing. Learning to communicate through talking, reading and writing is a fun activity and this has a positive effect on children's achievements.

### **Mathematical development**

101. Teaching and learning is very good. There is a variety of interesting well-structured practical activities, which support learning well. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are incorporated in the curriculum. Staff provide good support for groups to talk through ideas, ask questions and so promote good understanding. They encourage children to use and develop appropriate mathematical language. Children make very good progress in practical and investigative skills. They have many opportunities to develop their numeracy skills using a variety of apparatus both in structured activities and in play situations. Through well-planned work they explore pattern, shape and measurement. A very good example was the use of the 'garden' created in the classroom. Children filled plant pots with soil, and counted and compared how many cups each pot held. They recorded these numbers on labels. Higher attaining children were able to add the totals from different pots. They are beginning to use correctly the language of quantity and measurement, such as bigger than, smaller than, more or less than, tallest and shortest. The children enjoy singing a variety of songs and jingles, which are number related and which consolidate their understanding of numbers and positional language. The 'elephant song' was used very effectively by the teacher to develop children's understanding of 'one more than' or 'one less than' a number. Children recognise numerals and match these accurately to the correct number of objects. Higher attaining children can count forwards and backwards and are able to place numbers in the correct order. By the end of the reception year they calculate simple addition and subtraction sums. Counting and ordering skills are encouraged through use of a wide variety of games and activities that challenge children to count, look for patterns and carry out simple calculations.

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



102. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Children achieve well and gain good experience of the world around them. Resources are thoughtfully prepared and organised so that children learn well. They are offered a wide variety of experiences indoors and out which provide them with opportunities to learn about their world. The natural curiosity of young children is enhanced as staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore made and natural materials. They respond enthusiastically and are very keen to extend their knowledge about everything they experience. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. Children talk about their family members who are older than them, and are encouraged to talk about past events. They recognise the difference between past and present. Stories are used to encourage pupils to develop concepts of time and place. They recall their experiences through a range of role-play situations. Floor play equipment such as roadways, railways, castles and farms are used to enable pupils to develop their language use and to make connections with their own surroundings. Children are able to use the skills of cutting, joining and building using a range of materials. Construction toys are used well to encourage children to design and make their own models and to discover how things work. Children use information and communication technology to support their learning and become confident in using the mouse to control computer programs. Carefully directed questions extend children's knowledge and help them make sense of the world around them. Staff encourage them to explore and investigate in practical situations, as when children explore the properties of wet and dry sand and experiment with water. Staff plan a range of interesting first-hand experiences including out-of-school visits to enhance the children's knowledge of the world around them. Children are encouraged to talk about events in their lives and the environment.

### **Physical development**

103. Teaching and learning are very good. Physical education lessons in the school hall are very well planned and organised. Staff establish clear rules in the use of space and apparatus and children respond well. Children listen carefully and respond positively to the clear guidance on how to improve their skills. Teachers manage children very well and give clear instructions so that all know what is expected. They use children as exemplars of good practice to encourage the others. The teacher made very good use of photographs taken in an earlier lesson to remind children of the activities and to encourage them to practise their skills of balancing and making shapes with their bodies. Children make very good use of a wide range of apparatus for climbing and balancing. Children with special needs are well supported and this enables them to take a full part in the activities and to develop personal skills of co-operation, taking turns and following instructions. In addition to lessons in the school hall, the class also has regular access to an outdoor area. This is used to provide opportunities for outdoor play, including the use of wheeled toys. Children are given a variety of tasks to develop their physical skills in the classroom. They show increasing expertise in using tools such as glue spreaders and scissors safely, to complete their tasks. They manipulate construction equipment with ease, and they manage small play equipment carefully. The majority of children are confident with computers, and use a mouse with increasing accuracy.

## **Creative development**

104. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers plan a range of activities to develop children's imagination. They encourage children to develop their own ideas as well as learning skills. The supportive relationships established between staff and children enhance the children's self esteem and promote confidence in their own ability to explore a range of media without fear of failure. Children use paint and create collage pictures using a very good variety of textures. They confidently create three-dimensional models using recyclable materials. As part of their current topic on gardens, children created some miniature gardens using a range of plants and other materials and these were used to develop their story telling skills as they added model dinosaurs and other small characters. Children make good progress with observational skills and their representations of what they see reflects their capacity to look accurately. Their work is celebrated in very good displays throughout the classroom. Children are involved and collaborate effectively in role-play that is actively supported and extended by staff involvement. Staff are particularly good at creating attractive role-play situations and helping children to extend their imaginative response. They foster trusting relationships so that children are unafraid to commit themselves and are enthusiastic to explore media and act out situations. Indoors they have a home corner and this is currently extended into a garden area to reflect the current topic. Outdoor play provides opportunities for dressing up and role playing the parts of emergency services and developing complex scenarios. The children enjoy singing and join in with nursery and number rhymes within a range of class activities. They use percussion instruments to create loud and quiet sounds and maintain a simple rhythm.

## **ENGLISH**

105. Standards at the end of Year 2 match the nationally expected level. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above the national average. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average throughout the school. Improvements have been brought about by:

- the introduction of effective strategies to raise attainment in reading and writing;
- additional learning opportunities for pupils identified as below average in attainment;
- appropriate levels of challenge for pupils, including the more able;
- the introduction of individual curriculum targets and effective assessment and tracking procedures;
- focused, relevant planning and teaching;
- the provision of additional classroom assistants to support pupils' learning;
- a higher profile given to reading and writing, and good opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.

106. Current standards in Year 2 are higher than those suggested by the results of the national tests for 2002. These indicate that standards were below the national average in writing and well below average in reading. Standards were well below average in reading and writing when compared with similar schools, with relatively few pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. Inspection evidence does not support that view, but indicates instead that pupils, who enter school with attainment levels close to the national average, achieve soundly in Years 1 and 2, and that the needs of the higher attaining pupils are being met. In the 2002 national tests in Year 6, the school's results indicate attainment that is well above average when compared with both national results and those achieved by similar schools. Results are also well above average in respect of pupils' progress from Years 3 to 6. Inspection evidence shows that, in Years 3 to 6, the achievement of pupils of all abilities is good. Girls achieve particularly well

and the school is taking positive steps to improve the achievement of boys. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. Although attainment is slightly lower than last year, it is still above average and pupils are on course to meet the targets agreed with the local education authority.

107. Standards of speaking and listening are good across the school. This is an improvement from the time of the last inspection, when standards were judged satisfactory throughout the school. Opportunities are provided for pupils to explain their ideas to each other and to their teachers. They recall their experiences, assemble their ideas and present them enthusiastically and confidently. Pupils offer explanations and answers with confidence and explain their own thoughts clearly. They are responsive listeners and engage well with each other and with adults. When asked to share their ideas in small groups they speak confidently and listen respectfully, expressing their opinions well and considering the views of others. Even young pupils are able to follow the conventions of discussion by waiting for others to finish before speaking themselves. For example, pupils in Year 2 conducted a sensible discussion about the use of speech bubbles when writing a story in the style of a cartoon. Older pupils use correct terminology when studying language and speak fluently and expressively, as in a Year 6 lesson when pupils studied the use of official language in formal letter writing and used phrases, such as 'in receipt of' and 'in light of this,' with accuracy and understanding. Speaking and listening skills are developed well in all aspects of school life, both within other areas of the curriculum and in opportunities outside normal school hours. Examples include a Year 5 history lesson, when pupils engaged in a mature discussion about Drake's voyage around the world, using terms such as 'circumnavigate', and a lunchtime club based upon a Lord of the Rings board game. In this activity, older pupils discussed aspects of the story and battle strategies showing a detailed knowledge of the text.
108. The school successfully encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to reading. It has introduced a number of effective strategies which have been instrumental in raising attainment in reading in Years 3 to 6. At the time of the last inspection, standards in reading were average throughout the school. Now, however, while standards are still average in Years 1 and 2, by the time pupils reach Year 6 attainment in reading is good. Reading has been, and continues to be, an area of focus for the school and the literacy co-ordinator has rightly targeted the improvement of reading in her plans. The library has been re-furnished and re-stocked, and is now an attractive and well-used central resource. There is also a library of high quality story sacks, which teachers use to support their lessons and which are used in the lunchtime reading club. In the club, older pupils read with younger children and they often share a story sack together. Each classroom contains a good range of books in class libraries and boxes on pupils' tables. The Better Reading Partnership has improved the reading ability of targeted pupils and the school now has three members of staff fully trained in this work. The school has worked hard at securing support from parents to hear their children read and has provided training to help them in this process. Pupils take books home on a regular basis and a home/school reading record is provided for parents to make their comments. The school is involved in a Reading Partners project with three other schools, supporting pupils with below average reading attainment. Pupils' records indicate that the scheme is having a significant impact upon attainment. Pupils of all ages and abilities are included in the school's determined drive to raise standards in reading. Strategies are in place accordingly, from the government funded Early Literacy Strategy to the booster support for more able readers in Year 6, to enable them to achieve the higher levels in the national tests. Strategies to improve boys' attainment in reading include the provision of a wider range of fiction and non-fiction material that

will be attractive to boys and, also, visits by male authors, such as Bob Wilson who visited the school during the inspection week.

109. Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. They are encouraged to read for a wide variety of purposes, including information and pleasure. Books are generally well matched to pupils' attainment and interest levels. Pupils are enthusiastic readers and speak with pleasure about their favourite books and authors. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils are reading fluently, confidently and with expression. Lower attaining readers are mostly accurate and, although not so fluent, are able to read with expression to convey meaning and understanding. They are becoming familiar with non-fiction text and how to find information in reference books. Throughout the school effective strategies are used to develop a secure understanding of phonics, word families and picture cues. These skills give pupils confidence to tackle unfamiliar words, and have a positive effect on the progress pupils make towards becoming confident and fluent readers. By Year 6, pupils are able to read challenging text and understand the concepts of plot, settings and characterisation. They show an understanding of different writers' styles and can predict what might happen next in a story. Pupils know how to scan texts to obtain information or skim in order to locate a point they wish to investigate. They use indexes to find and retrieve information and are able to use independent research and library skills competently.
110. Standards of writing are average in Year 2 and above average by the time pupils reach Year 6. This represents an improvement from the last inspection, when standards were average all through the school. As with reading, the school has identified writing as an area of focus and has been pro-active in devising imaginative strategies to improve standards, especially in Years 1 and 2, and to promote a sense of purpose and enjoyment in writing. Visiting authors play a significant role there, as does the positive, enthusiastic attitude of staff. During the visit of Bob Wilson, members of staff took notes as he spoke to pupils about the techniques of story writing and the headteacher referred to her own love of writing and how she hopes to have a story published. Pupils are, therefore, provided with very good role models for writing. Efforts have also been targeted at specific 'catch up' programmes, such as the Writing Partners project with other local schools, and at strengthening the teaching of writing in both key stages. Teachers have received support for writing and training to enthuse pupils, especially boys, to write. The headteacher has co-written a booster support programme for writing in Year 5 and the pupils' records indicate this is having a significant effect.
111. Pupils' progress is good in the development of writing skills. Pupils in Year 1 are able to write short sentences and use simple punctuation appropriately. By Year 2, pupils are provided with good opportunities for narrative and descriptive writing. They can write clear instructions, for example how to make a sandwich in design and technology. They compose interesting stories where the central character is an animal (e.g. 'The Cheeky Chimp'), using the strategies of planning, drafting and re-drafting. Their writing demonstrates an understanding of normal conventions, with appropriate use of simple connective words, and is generally punctuated correctly. Spellings are mostly correct or are a sensible suggestion based on what they know of the sounds associated with letters. Handwriting skills develop well, with most pupils forming letters accurately and developing a good style using joined writing. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop progressively their ability to write for different purposes, using a range of styles. Consequently, by Year 6, pupils write confidently in a wide variety of genres: story, biography, poetry, letters, reports, play scripts and newspaper articles. Examples include a mystery story containing a 'twist' in the plot, a detailed biography of the headteacher and a letter to a company using official language to complain about a faulty mobile phone. Higher attaining pupils use imaginative vocabulary and are able to

develop ideas in a mature fashion, demonstrating a good grasp of the techniques they have studied in their analyses of fiction and non-fiction texts. Pupils' writing is well planned and drafted. Handwriting is legible and well-formed, using a pleasing joined script. Writing is well presented, with pupils taking care and pride in their work. Word processing is used only to a limited extent and needs to be developed further. Different writing skills are applied in other subjects such as history (writing a diary) and design and technology (labelling a diagram, evaluating a model), but, as the school has recognised, there is scope for further development in this area. Teachers mark pupils' writing conscientiously, indicating errors and providing encouragement and instruction on how improvements may be made. Comments are diagnostic and related to pupils' individual targets for improvement. Work has begun on developing portfolios of pupils' work for moderation purposes, which will further improve the school's assessment and tracking procedures.

112. The main factors contributing to pupils' good or very good progress are the attitudes of pupils themselves and the quality of teaching. At the time of the last inspection the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. It is now good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the teaching of literacy skills. They plan lessons carefully, in line with the National Literacy Strategy, describing a clear structure for the development of the lesson and identifying assessment opportunities. Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils. In the most effective lessons, whole class sessions and discussion groups are very well managed. Very effective use is made of the interactive whiteboard as a teaching tool. Skilful, differentiated questioning enables pupils of all abilities to participate fully. The teachers have high expectations for pupils' effort, concentration and achievement. Lessons have a brisk pace to maintain pupils' interest and keep them fully involved. Teachers continually challenge pupils' thinking. Tasks are interesting, challenging and matched appropriately to pupils' levels of ability. In Year 6, account is explicitly taken of pupils' preferred learning styles. Individual learning targets are constantly reinforced and teaching is well focused. Where teaching is less effective, new learning is not reinforced sufficiently and there is inappropriate match between pupils' ability and the task set.
113. Pupils' positive attitudes and relationships contribute significantly to their good progress in English. They are well behaved, eager to learn and interested in their lessons. Concentration and application are good and pupils remain on task. They work well both individually and collaboratively. Pupils show confidence in presenting their work to the class and pleasure in watching and listening to each other's efforts. For example, some Year 6 pupils presented role-play situations with a high degree of skill and poise and these were much enjoyed by the rest of the class. Strong, positive relationships among pupils, and between pupils and staff, enable this type of activity to take place successfully.
114. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress. Teachers and classroom assistants form effective partnerships and work hard together to ensure that these pupils are supported well. Assistants are involved in lesson planning so that they have a clear understanding of their tasks. The individual education plans, which are drawn up for all pupils on the register of special educational needs, are followed carefully. Assistants provide appropriate and effective support at all stages of lessons, in a discreet and unobtrusive manner. They work skilfully with individuals or groups of pupils. Hearing impaired pupils from the school's special education resource facility are included successfully in many literacy lessons in mainstream classes. The early, additional and further literacy support schemes are implemented effectively and are successful in enabling lower attaining pupils to improve

their literacy skills. Pupils with English as an additional language, most of whom have a hearing impairment, are able to use English well and confidently.

115. Developments in English are led and managed well. The raising of standards in reading and writing, especially in Years 1 and 2, has rightly been identified as one of the school's main priorities and strategies are being put in place accordingly. The school has been pro-active in introducing initiatives to promote pupils' literacy development. In addition to national initiatives such as additional literacy support, other examples include a reading club and links with a local Beacon school to form reading and writing partner partnerships. The disparity between girls' and boys' achievement is being addressed vigorously. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work on a regular basis and conducts lesson observations as part of the school's rolling programme of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator displays a high level of expertise and enthusiasm, and a clear vision for the further development of the subject.

## **MATHEMATICS**

116. At the end of Year 2, standards of attainment are very close to the national average and to those achieved by similar schools. By the end of Year 6, standards are above both the national average and similar schools. Pupils make good overall progress throughout the school and very good progress in Years 3 to 6. Standards have improved since the last inspection, significantly so by Year 6, whilst the Year 2 results follow the national improvement trend.
117. In the 2002 national tests for Year 2 pupils, standards of attainment were very close to the national average of pupils attaining the expected level. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was lower than that achieved nationally and slightly below that achieved by similar schools. These results were an increase on those achieved in the previous year. The performance of boys has fallen since the last inspection, whilst girls have improved significantly. The increase in girls' attainment has been the major influence upon the improvement since the last inspection.
118. Inspection evidence suggests that present standards are similar to those in the 2002 national tests. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a secure grasp of addition and subtraction and are consolidating their skill in simple multiplication and division. They are developing appropriate mental calculation skills and have a satisfactory recall of basic number facts. They can count on in fives from a range of starting points. Pupils can identify shapes such as triangles, squares, rectangles and pentagons and describe their basic properties. Pupils measure and draw lines accurately in centimetres. They can estimate using phrases such as 'longer than' or 'shorter than'. They use information from the 'In the Café' display to choose up to three items from the menu and then work out the cost in pence. They can translate arithmetic problems into good quality written English, thus helping to promote their literacy skills. Younger pupils successfully use computers to produce graphs of their favourite pets.
119. In the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2002, standards of attainment were well above both the national average and that achieved by similar schools. These results were much higher than the previous year. Progress from the Year 2 results was well above the national figure and that achieved by similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment was well above the national average and that achieved by similar schools. There were no differences between the performances of boys and girls. The school exceeded the challenging target agreed with the Local Education Authority in 2002.

120. Inspection evidence suggests that current standards of attainment in Year 6 are below those achieved in 2002 but still above what is expected nationally. There are no obvious differences between the attainment of boys and girls. The school is likely to meet the challenging target set for 2003.
121. By the end of Year 6, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the value of each digit in numbers up to a thousand and carry out mental calculations with a high degree of accuracy. They can explain their methods clearly and are developing a good range of strategies to help them solve mental problems. They show good understanding of the relationships between fractions, percentages and decimals and many of them show good mental dexterity in changing from one to another. They can recognise improper fractions and change them to their lowest form. They are very confident when working with negative numbers, though some lower ability pupils find this aspect of mathematics challenging.
122. Pupils in Year 4 are able to plot co-ordinates in the first quadrant and, by the age of eleven, they have moved onto all four quadrants. Older pupils are also able to reflect shapes in all four quadrants, demonstrating a good knowledge of symmetry. Younger pupils successfully measure the area and perimeter of simple shapes whilst the oldest pupils extend this to the calculation of area and perimeter of irregular shapes. Pupils investigate mathematical relationships at appropriate levels. For example, Year 4 looked at consecutive numbers whilst Year 6 considered prime numbers. Older pupils show a good understanding of angles within a triangle and a circle. They are able to calculate missing angles in both shapes. They can work out sophisticated problems involving this knowledge and explain reasons for their answers.
123. Teaching is good overall and this is an improvement since the last inspection. There has been a very good improvement in teaching in Years 1 and 2 whilst the good standards in Years 3 to 6 noted in the last inspection, have been maintained. Teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory, with the majority being good or better. There is no unsatisfactory teaching.
124. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy fully and the key elements are well embedded. Teachers plan lessons to a high standard using national guidance provided with the strategy. In the very best lessons, highly effective use is made of multi-media technology as a teaching aid. For example, in one Year 6 lesson the teacher used the equipment to help pupils understand the relationship between decimals and percentages and, in Year 5, pupils lesson explored number patterns found in 'magic squares. The use of this equipment does much to motivate pupils and keep them interested in mathematics. Other evidence indicates that teachers use a commercial software package to diagnose areas of weakness in learning and then target these areas with specific work on computers. It was not possible to observe this system in full operation during the inspection and thus it is not possible to fully assess its impact upon standards.
125. An excellent feature of the mathematical provision throughout the school is the inclusion of pupils from the hearing impaired unit in mainstream classes. Teachers work closely with classroom assistants to provide effective support for these pupils. Teachers and classroom assistants use a wide range of communication methods, including radio microphones and simple sign language, to help these children achieve standards of attainment in line with other pupils.

126. A notable feature for every child is the setting of individual learning targets, which are regularly reviewed. These are clearly displayed at the front of each child's exercise book. This feature plus some good marking help pupils to fully understand the steps they need to take to improve their learning. Teachers display good class management skills. The way they structure lessons, their effective use of questioning and their ability to match work to pupils' abilities ensures that all pupils make progress.
127. Where teaching is less effective, though still satisfactory, activities are not well chosen for the age or ability of children, with overcomplicated instructions that children find difficult to follow. In one otherwise good lesson, insufficient time was allocated to the main activity and this limited pupils' learning. In most lessons observed during the inspection the information and communication technology resources available for pupils were not used.
128. Pupils show obvious enjoyment for the mathematics provision and respond positively to the interesting activities provided for them. Hearing impaired pupils participate fully in the lessons with the support of classroom assistants and their peers. Behaviour is never less than satisfactory and is mostly good or better. Teachers encourage pupils to participate in discussions during oral and mental work and in the plenary sessions at the end of each lesson. Pupils explain their reasoning well and can express themselves clearly using correct mathematical vocabulary.
129. The mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has two leading mathematics teachers who provide good role models for teachers in this and other schools. The co-ordinator is based in the Foundation Stage and has limited opportunities to work directly with teachers in the other stages. However, there is good evidence to show that she has been very effective in introducing the National Numeracy Strategy and in leading developments that have led to an improvement of standards, including monitoring the standards of teaching throughout the school. She has identified that a priority for the school should be to address the underachievement of boys in Years 1 and 2.
130. Assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are both effectively managed by the deputy headteacher. Information and communication technology is still relatively undeveloped and the range of software to support mathematics is limited. Other resources are adequate for the demands of the Numeracy Strategy. Overall the subject is well managed by the co-ordinator.

## **SCIENCE**

131. Results of the 2002 national tests for pupils in Year 6 show that standards in the school were very high when compared nationally or with similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms that present Year 6 pupils are working well above the expected level. This shows a very good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls or between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. The achievement over time of Year 6 pupils is very good.
132. The 2002 teacher assessment of the attainment of Year 2 pupils show that standards were below national expectations when compared nationally and with similar schools. However, standards have improved and are now in line with those expected for the age group. The current Year 2 pupils are achieving well and almost all are working at expected levels, with more achieving higher levels than last year.



133. Most pupils in Year 2 are developing a secure fund of knowledge about the world around them and how it functions. They know the names of common materials and describe them by their properties, using correct scientific terminology such as 'flexible' and 'transparent'. They understand their uses; for example, why windows are made of glass and why some table legs are metal because of their strength and rigidity. They are beginning to understand why tests need to be fair, and can make predictions based on their own experiences. With support, they carried out tests to see if seeds would need water to germinate and then used their results to reach sensible conclusions. A group of higher attaining pupils used their own idea to see if seeds germinate best in soil. They were able to suggest that seeds did not germinate in the sand or in stones because water ran quickly through the pots and was not retained.
134. By Year 6, almost all pupils have a good understanding of the aspects of science they have covered. There are no specific areas that are stronger or weaker than others. Most are able to explain clearly what they understand, using correct scientific terminology. A lower attaining pupil could describe the process of dissolving, explaining that the particles of sugar become smaller until they could not be seen. Higher and average attaining pupils show a good understanding of forces and can explain the forces acting on a moving object. By measuring the mass of objects in and out of water, they can explain the power of the upthrust against gravity. Their skills of enquiry are strong. They are confident in planning and carrying out fair tests, knowing which variables to change and which to control. When investigating how the position of a light source affected the length of the shadow, pupils were effective in measuring the shadow, recording their results on a chart and then a line graph and using these to reach a conclusion. They remembered to repeat their tests to ensure that their results were reproducible.
135. The quality of teaching throughout the school is very good and this is a major factor in the high standards now being achieved. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when some teaching was poor. Teachers show secure subject knowledge and this allows them to teach confidently. Pupils are learning principally through investigation and teachers are developing pupils' science skills well as they move through the school. This is achieved by detailed planning, with clear objectives built on what the pupils already know and can do. Teachers evaluate learning from the previous lesson and use this to clarify understanding before moving pupils on. In a Year 2 class, the teacher realised that some pupils did not understand why there had to be two pots of seeds, one watered and one kept dry. She skilfully posed questions to help them clarify their ideas. In all lessons, pupils are constantly challenged to think for themselves. In a Year 5 class the teacher used several well-chosen examples to enable pupils to understand the process of condensation. For example, cold full and empty 'Coke' bottles were used to pre-empt the misconception that the liquid on the surface came from within. By working in several groups, each supported by the teacher or by a teaching assistant, pupils had the opportunity to observe closely and express their ideas verbally before writing their explanations. Pupils in all classes record their own findings and this helps to consolidate their understanding as well as enhancing their writing skills. Teachers place great stress on the use of correct scientific terminology and, by Year 6, it is well developed. Pupils use mathematical skills regularly for measuring and for recording their results using appropriate charts, tables and graphs. There is some use of information and communication technology for handling the data but this needs developing. Teaching assistants are used very well to enable pupils with special educational needs to participate fully and to achieve as well as others. Other factors in the very good teaching are the brisk pace which keeps the pupils actively involved, good relationships and class management. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about science and work with interest and concentration.

136. The very good leadership of the science co-ordinator has contributed significantly to the high standards now achieved by the older pupils. She has fully supported teachers in the move towards learning, firmly based on investigation. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are monitored regularly to check the development of skills and the appropriate coverage of the scheme of work and useful feedback is given. The provision for assessment is good and the results are used well by most teachers to plan work to provide a challenge for all pupils. The results of the teacher assessment and the end-of-year test results are used to track and monitor progress from Year 3. The school's results in the national science test papers for eleven year olds are analysed and the findings used to enable the Year 6 teacher to target revision on areas identified as weaker than others. The curriculum is enriched by the yearly *Science Day* when all classes are involved in 'exciting' investigations, and by a *Travelling Science Show*, which this year focused on an entertaining way to teach the concept of forces. There is a twice-yearly newsletter for parents to keep them informed and useful website addresses are included, which provide advice to help pupils to learn at home. The science action plan has relevant priorities that include the development of the school environment as a learning resource.

## ART AND DESIGN

137. Pupils achieve standards of attainment in art and design that are in line with those expected for their age. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress because good support is provided to enable them to take a full part in lessons.
138. Teachers' planning indicates that a good range of media, including drawing materials, paint, printing, modelling and collage work, is provided during the year. Pupils also have opportunities to study the work of other artists and apply this to their own work. For example, Year 5 pupils have looked at the work of Kandinsky before producing their own pictures in a similar style, and Year 4 pupils created their own designs based on the work of Mondrian. Pupils develop an understanding of colour mixing, and the selection of appropriate materials. They are introduced to shade and texture and learn about tone and colour. They express themselves through drawing, painting and modelling and use simple techniques with developing control. A good example of this is the selection of self-portraits, which had been painted by pupils throughout the school. The bright, lively display in the school library clearly illustrates the development of skills and the attention to detail as pupils progress through the school. Pupils' accuracy in representing what they observe is developing well, but they also have opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings in an imaginative way. They have made some use of computer programs to support their work in art, for example the Mondrian designs produced in Year 4. However, the use of information and communication technology is limited.
139. The quality of teaching observed was good. It has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The teaching is characterised by good organisation, well-prepared resources, secure management of pupils and a shared understanding of what it is the pupils will achieve by the end of the lesson. Work is both challenging and enjoyable, and pupils are encouraged to think about the quality of their work and how they can improve it. Lessons are well planned and prepared with good introductions and clear instructions. In a Year 1 lesson on clay work, for example, the teacher demonstrated how pupils could mould the clay into balls and coils, and showed how pieces could be fastened together using slip in order to create larger models. Pupils

responded well and produced some good work. Classroom management is good and very good use is made of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs. Teachers display an enthusiasm for art work, which inspires pupils' efforts. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher skilfully used a visit from the author Bob Wilson to examine book illustrations and the art of the cartoonist. Very good questioning and clear explanations helped pupils to focus clearly on the main teaching points. They made effective use of frames to select a figure from their previous work and enlarge this to show facial expressions. Pupils make good use of sketch books to record ideas which are later developed into larger scale work. Pupils in Year 6, for example, have used photographs of landscapes, which they have developed into pencil sketches, water colour paintings and weavings. As part of the same topic they had made observational drawings and paintings of parts of the landscape, such as grasses and trees. Pupils' work is displayed with care and imagination and makes a very positive contribution to the school environment.

140. Pupils have positive attitudes. They listen carefully and demonstrate enjoyment and independence in carrying out art activities, and approach their work with confidence and enthusiasm. When it is time to clear up, pupils of all ages do this sensibly and efficiently.
141. An after-school art club provides further opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, and pupils attending these sessions have produced some good quality work using a variety of media. Pupils from Years 3 and 4, for example, have created paintings which depict movement as part of the topic 'People in Action.' This work has also been developed into sculptures using wire and plaster.
142. The school has a satisfactory range of resources for art and has a good collection of reference materials concerning artists and their work. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about art. She provides good support for staff and manages the subject area well. There is a school policy for art, and a clear scheme of work that provides useful guidance for staff and supports the development of skills. The school is using the national guidance as the basis for planning a programme of skill development throughout the school. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

143. There has been good improvement in design and technology since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be broadly in line with the standards expected nationally. Standards are now above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils throughout the school make good progress. Pupils display very positive attitudes towards the subject and satisfactory assessment procedures are now in place. The quality of teaching is good.
144. By Year 2, pupils have already worked with a variety of materials such as paper, card, textiles and wood. They use simple tools effectively to assemble models and components. Pupils are able to make simple hinges and construct a moving picture and a wheeled vehicle. In Year 2, they construct imaginative models incorporating a winding mechanism to illustrate the nursery rhymes 'Hickory Dickory Dock' and 'Incy Wincy Spider'. Pupils understand the need to design their model and use pictures, simple diagrams and labels in their original plans. These plans are a good link with English. Pupils can translate their plans carefully and accurately into the constructed model, using tools and equipment accurately and safely. They are then able to evaluate the outcome, having generally produced work of good quality.

145. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have been afforded good opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills, all the time following the principles of designing, constructing, reviewing, amending and evaluating. They work with an increasing variety of materials and tools. Models are more sophisticated, incorporating batteries, switches and lights, levers and cams. Constructions include a pop-up book, a musical instrument, and a toy with moving parts. The finished products show that pupils use tools and equipment carefully when cutting, shaping and fixing their models. Within the design process pupils demonstrate an awareness of the ways in which the finished product will be used and amend their plans to show where adaptations have been made during construction. Digital cameras are used well to record pupils' efforts and so create a useful bank of photographic evidence. However, more use could be made of information and communication technology in the actual design and construction process.
146. The good quality teaching stems from clear, detailed planning based on a comprehensive scheme of work. Teachers recap on prior learning and give clear explanations and instructions. They demonstrate secure subject knowledge and understanding and use appropriate terminology with confidence. Effective behaviour management strategies are employed and a good range of activities organised to ensure full coverage of the programme of study. Skilful differentiated questioning assists pupils' understanding and stimulates their thinking. Pupils show good recall of previous knowledge and are able to apply their learning to different situations. They can use vocabulary appropriately, as in Year 2 where pupils used terms like 'axle' and 'dowelling' with confidence, and show a good understanding of safety features. For example, when discussing how to design and make a toy with moving parts for young children, Year 5 pupils identified such features as 'no sharp edges', 'strong and sturdy' and 'small pieces securely attached'.
147. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress. This is mainly due to the very effective support provided by teaching assistants and the inclusion in design and technology lessons of hearing impaired pupils from the school's special education resource facility. They are fully involved in the lessons and are very well supported. Assistants are effective in ensuring that special needs pupils can play a full part, by explaining, checking and encouraging while at the same time allowing for pupils' independence.
148. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They discuss their ideas sensibly and work well both individually and collaboratively. Pupils are keen to help one another when difficulties are experienced in model making and show respect and admiration for constructions made by others. They sustain their concentration and effort for long periods and remain on task well. Pupils show very good self-discipline, and even young pupils are able to collect, use and return tools and equipment sensibly and safely.
149. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work on a regular basis, and conducts occasional classroom observations as part of the school's rolling programme of monitoring. Resources are audited regularly and augmented when necessary, leading to a situation where the subject is well resourced and tools, equipment and materials are efficiently stored and easily accessible to staff. Assessment procedures are in place and the co-ordinator's file contains details of tracking pupils' progress.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

150. Only two geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Other evidence was obtained from a scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the national expectations. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring knowledge and skills over time.
151. By Year 2, many pupils have a good knowledge of their own environment and can express their views about what they like and dislike and how the environment can be improved. From a study of the island of Struay in Scotland they can talk about similarities and differences between their own locality and the island. They know the difference between natural and man-made features and understand terms such as 'island', 'river' and 'mountain'. Pupils understand the use of maps and plans and they can locate places using the contents and index pages of an atlas. They understand that maps are 'like looking down from space'. Pupils can locate the British Isles on a globe as well as other countries and they know that the areas around the poles are cold and that areas around the equator are hot. Pupils enjoy talking about what they have learned.
152. Overall, pupils in Year 6 have a satisfactory knowledge of the elements of the geography curriculum they have studied. They use atlases well to find information but have not yet used Ordnance Survey maps. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the effect of humans on the environment and can recognise ways in which it could be improved, for example by reducing pollution. Their knowledge of the formation of rivers and of their main features is good. It has been enhanced by the study of the local river Darwen. Pupils are less secure in their knowledge of their own town or of a contrasting locality.
153. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that teaching is good overall. It was very good in both the lessons observed. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and explain clearly to pupils what they are going to do and find out. Activities provide challenge for all pupils and well-chosen resources enable them to be fully involved in their own learning. In Year 2 a wide range of reference books enabled pupils to develop very good knowledge and understanding of the features of a seaside locality. Pupils with hearing impairment and others with special educational needs were very well supported and were able to play a full part in the lesson. Year 6 pupils were able to prepare and present good quality reports on the weather and on climatic disasters because of the clear explanations and expectations of the teacher. Their knowledge and understanding was deepened at the end of the session when a comparison was made between natural disasters in the United Kingdom and those in other parts of the world. Good use was made in both lessons of information and communication technology for research. Secure class management and good relationships between pupils and teachers in both lessons led to purposeful working environments, with pupils fully on task. In the Year 6 class, co-operative skills were developed as pupils worked together to prepare their reports. Pupils work with enjoyment, they concentrate hard and this has a positive effect on their learning.
154. The leadership and management of geography are satisfactory. The long-term absence last year of the co-ordinator, appointed two years ago, has meant that the developments are only just beginning to take place, but there have been recent improvements in provision which should help to raise standards. Resources have been bought to meet the requirements of the new scheme of work. Good assessment systems have been put in place to judge and record pupils' skills as well as their knowledge and understanding. Lessons are evaluated in order to influence future

planning. The co-ordinator's monitoring role, to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, has not yet been developed.

## HISTORY

155. Standards in history by Year 2 and Year 6 meet national expectations. These standards match those found during the previous inspection. All pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills of historical research and in acquiring knowledge. This shows an improvement from the last inspection in Years 1 and 2 but a similar finding for Years 3 to 6.
156. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a satisfactory knowledge and appropriate sense of the past. They are developing their ability to compare the past with the present, for example they can describe the similarities and differences between seaside holidays in the 1950's and today, pointing out that most people went on a steam train then, whilst most now go in a car. They are able to use photographs to compare then and now and learn about life from first hand accounts from people who lived through the period. They are developing a good sense of how things change over time including comparisons of toys from the past and now.
157. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed a satisfactory knowledge of how people lived in the past. Year 3 pupils study life in Tudor times and confidently compare 'then and now'. They are able to describe the key features of Tudor houses and use household inventories to compare how rich and poor people lived. Year 4 pupils study the invasions of Britain by the Romans, Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings. They make comparisons between the weapons and armour of a typical British fighter and a Roman legionnaire. Year 5 pupils compare and contrast life in Ancient Greece and Sparta, learning about the key laws that governed these two societies. They later extend their research skills when looking at the great age of exploration. Year 6 pupils use digital cameras to compare Victorian buildings in the locality with modern ones. They can explain the key differences between how people lived in Victorian times in comparison with the present and extend this work to schools and the employment of children. They have a growing awareness of key Victorian social reforms. They use old maps and primary sources such as the 1871 school log books to help in this work. Pupils sometimes use the Internet to find additional information about life in the past but their limited use of information technology to support learning means that some key skills are undeveloped.
158. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. It has improved throughout the school since the last inspection. The adoption of the nationally recommended scheme of work has provided the school with a good framework on which to improve teaching and learning. Teachers plan effectively from the guidance and incorporate first hand evidence from grandparents and visits within the locality and further afield, such as Skipton Castle and Little Moreton Hall. Teachers use the expertise of classroom assistants to help all children make progress. A good example of this was observed in a Year 1 and 2 lesson, for which the classroom assistant had recorded her mother talking about holidays in Blackpool. Assessment grids for each unit of work ensure that teachers are able to build upon pupils' prior learning. Where teaching is relatively less successful, insufficient time is allowed for pupils to complete their written work and there are limited opportunities for pupils to become actively involved in the lesson other than through listening. Teachers' planning for the use of computers to support learning in history is limited.

159. The good teaching observed during the inspection ensures that pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, and this has a positive effective upon their learning. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when responses in Years 1 and 2 were unsatisfactory. Pupils show a genuine interest in their lessons and are keen to learn. They listen well, sometimes over lengthy periods, and respond well to the creative use of resources, for example when looking at the home made book to accompany the tape of holiday memories. When attitudes become less positive, it is directly related to too much teacher input.
160. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the post but has made a significant impact upon its development. She has monitored standards of pupils' work, producing written reports on the findings. Good use has been made of a self-evaluation tool developed by the Local Education Authority and this shows an increasingly positive attitude to the subject throughout the school. The availability and quality of resources are good, although more artefacts would further improve the quality of teaching and learning. Boxes of resources to support each study unit have been assembled and are easily accessible to staff and pupils. The current policy document is out of date but the co-ordinator has identified this in the subject development plan.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

161. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Throughout the school, all classes now have regular timetabled lessons for ICT and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has relocated computers into a designated area but the space available is currently insufficient to accommodate a full class and there are not enough computers to allow pupils to fully develop their skills. Pupils' learning is similarly affected when computers are not working properly. The use of multi-media technology in Years 5 and 6 has improved standards of attainment. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in both classes are roughly similar and should improve further as Year 5 pupils move into Year 6.
162. By Year 2, pupils know how to load programs and use a mouse and the keyboard effectively. Pupils use art packages to produce both abstract and representational pictures, sometimes of a high quality. They are able to print out their work. They understand the basic commands needed to move programmable floor robots (roamers) and are developing their skill in programming them to move around. Their learning is, however, restricted by the limited number of roamers available. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress in skill development through the regular completion of individual checklists. These provide teachers with some good assessment information about skills development. Pupils use data handling packages to help organise data collected about their pets. They create simple pictograms using the software, which they then use to describe their findings.
163. By Year 6, pupils use word processing software to extend their learning in English when writing letters. They confidently use multi-media software to highlight text being read in literacy lessons and to create artwork using graphics packages, which they use to cut and paste pictures. They select pictures and then use the mouse to click and drag them to a new location where they are able to resize them. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 have a good understanding of control software. They select input and output devices and link them using control modules. They are able to type in the instructions needed to make the output work and then select appropriate sound effects to accompany the actions. In one Year 5 lesson, two pupils showed an impressive understanding of this by using the multi-media technology to demonstrate their work to the rest of the class. All pupils are confident in saving and retrieving their work and, in one class, pupils

saved work done in the computer area onto a floppy disk to show the rest of the class during the plenary session. Pupils are able to describe the uses of computers in modern life. They know how to access the Internet and can locate information using search engines. They also use electronic mailing systems.

164. The quality of teaching is good overall, although it should be reinforced with greater use of class-based computers during daily lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. No clear judgement was made about teaching in the last inspection but the current evaluation is that it has improved. Teaching is better in Years 3 to 6, particularly in the older classes, where the key feature is the effective use of interactive whiteboards and multi-media technology. Teachers demonstrate very good technical skills when using this equipment and its introduction has done much to enhance pupils' learning.
165. All teachers plan effectively, setting clear learning objectives, which they convey to pupils. In the best lessons, teachers effectively build upon previous learning and provide opportunities for skill development. In one control technology session, for example, the teacher reminded the pupils of the work covered in the previous lesson, when they established input and output devices. This work was then extended by the addition of sound modules and then additional input devices to control the same output.
166. The limited accommodation and resources in the computer area restrict pupils' learning. Teachers have developed strategies to help overcome these limitations and these, together with their own good class management skills, minimise the problems. Teachers work very effectively with classroom assistants to support the learning of hearing impaired children, who are fully integrated into ICT lessons. Teachers pay particular attention to ensuring that these pupils are given the opportunity to demonstrate their skill in this subject.
167. Where teaching is less effective it is related to lack of expertise in using computers and to poor time management, which does not allow pupils sufficient time to practise skills. During the inspection, ICT skills were underused in supporting learning in other subjects. This was also an issue in the previous inspection.
168. When using the computers, pupils show great enthusiasm and interest. They co-operate well with each other, sharing the resources, and support each other when help is needed. They talk to each other and respond well to teachers' requests to pay attention. They are keen to answer questions and to display their developing skills. They respond well to the inclusion of hearing impaired pupils in the lessons. They are well behaved in the crowded computer area. Girls perform as well as boys and they both talk freely about the use of computers at home and in school. This makes positive contributions to pupils' social development.
169. The modern multi-media resources are very effectively used in Years 5 and 6. Teachers use them creatively in a variety of subjects and this raises pupils' enthusiasm for and interest in their lessons. However, other class-based computers are less well used and this is particularly the case in other year groups. The school has invested in a suite of software programmes designed to track progress in mathematics and then provide specific work in skills development. The range of software to support other subjects is limited, this is particularly the case in music and art and to a lesser extent in mathematics. The school has noted these in the development plan for the subject.

## **MUSIC**



170. Attainment in music meets national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These standards match those noted at the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Extra-curricular activities make a positive contribution towards attainment. This is a similar finding to that of the last inspection.
171. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen carefully to music and can identify rhythm and pulse in response to teachers' focussed questions. They are developing their musical vocabulary and can recognise when pitch is ascending, descending and staying the same. They can also pick out from memory simple tunes on pitched percussion instruments. Pupils sing with expression and add suitable actions. This helps to develop their sense of rhythm.
172. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 understand the term ostinato and are able to compose repeating patterns, some with quite complex rhythms. They are able to play the limited quantity of pitched percussion instruments but insufficient numbers of such instruments means that their performing skills are under-developed. They are beginning to develop their appraising skills as they listen and comment upon the performances of other pupils. Pupils learning to play instruments are able to recognise and name notes on the staff and understand the relationship between types of notes and their duration. Their ability to name crotchets and minims etc is less well developed. Pupils in Year 6 are enhancing their concept of rhythm and pulse through country dancing activities. These activities create a sense of fun and enjoyment whilst requiring pupils to respond to the rhythmic beat of the music with precise steps. This also does much to promote their listening skills.
173. All pupils respond well to the music and, overall, they show good attitudes to the subject. They are particularly keen to participate in practical music-making activities. When given the opportunity to work in groups they co-operate well, taking turns to share the limited instruments. They listen well to teachers and to the classroom assistants supporting the hearing impaired pupils. Pupils begin to lose interest in lessons when resources are not well organised, when they are allowed insufficient time to practise skills and rehearse performances, and when the tasks are not suited to their age and ability. These features were also noted during the last inspection. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to perform in assemblies, school productions and in partnership with other schools at the local centre of music excellence.
174. Teaching varies from satisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. The lack of any unsatisfactory teaching is an improvement since the last inspection. All the lessons observed had good plans adapted from the recently purchased commercial scheme, which is itself based upon national guidelines. A very positive feature of the music provision is the inclusion of pupils with hearing impairment in mainstream lessons. They are well supported by class teachers and classroom assistants, who use a variety of communication techniques to maximise their participation. Good lessons promote active participation. For example, one Year 3 lesson began with a call and response session with the teacher leading. Pupils paid close attention to what the teacher was doing so they could respond accurately. In the same lesson, the teacher effectively built upon previous learning by consolidating and then extending the work covered.
175. Teachers' own subject expertise sometimes limits pupil progress, for example when percussion instruments are wrongly chosen to perform selected rhythms. Where teachers show good subject knowledge, as in the ability to spot incorrect note duration when playing recorders, children make better progress.

176. The school has rightly focussed on improving standards in literacy and numeracy and, because of this, there have been no opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in lessons. Thus, the co-ordinator's ability to influence practice and raise standards has been limited. The lack of assessment procedures, which was also an issue at the previous inspection, means that the school is unable to monitor standards of attainment effectively. The introduction of the new scheme of work has done much to provide structure and organisation, and has also boosted the confidence of non-specialist teachers. The school makes good use of CD-ROM based resources to support music education in assemblies and in classrooms but computers and other modern ICT equipment are underused. Music software is very limited. The co-ordinator has identified most of these issues in the development plan.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

177. All of the lessons seen in the inspection were related to dance or floor work. Other forms of activity, such as gymnastics using apparatus or outdoor games, were not seen. In these activities, standards by Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. This is a similar picture to that reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school provides a programme of physical education that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils learn to play games, participate in gymnastic activities and respond to music through dance. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have opportunities during the year to attend the local swimming pool for instruction. In recent weeks, swimming has not been possible due to difficulties at the local pool. However, these have now been resolved and swimming will resume in April 2003.
178. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported. For example, staff ensure that hearing impaired pupils have a clear understanding of the activities and enable them to take a full part in all lessons.
179. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make sound progress as the result of effective teaching that covers the appropriate skills and understanding. In Year 1, pupils demonstrate adequate awareness and use of the space around them. They follow instructions accurately, adjusting the pace and direction of their movement in response to signals from their teacher. By the end of Year 2, they perform simple jumps competently and are aware of the need to land safely and softly. They develop their skills of balancing using different body parts. Most pupils visibly enjoy the activities that have been planned for them. They are enthusiastic, try hard during the lessons and have positive attitudes to their work that enhance their quality of learning. All pupils are becoming increasingly conscious both of the benefit of exercise and the importance of warming up for physical activity.
180. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make sound progress. As a result of a series of effectively planned lessons, pupils develop a satisfactory range of skills in dance. Year 5 pupils worked well with partners when developing a dance sequence. They used a variety of body shapes and responded well to interpret the beat of the music. Year 6 pupils used a variety of steps and movements as they performed a country dance and then worked well in groups to develop their own dance sequence using variations of the moves they had practised.
181. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers set good examples by dressing correctly for lessons, and this has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes. They begin lessons with an appropriate warm-up session and take opportunities to remind pupils of

the benefits of physical exercise. Where teaching is most effective, lessons are lively, energetic and move along at a brisk pace. Most teaching makes use of good pupil performers to demonstrate new skills to the rest of the class. Pupils also have opportunities to evaluate their own and each other's work. Teachers set appropriate challenges, provide clear instructions and explanations and encourage pupils to develop skills. Relationships and class management are good. This results in safe, controlled lessons where pupils listen carefully and follow their teachers' instructions. Teaching is enthusiastic and this is reflected in the pupils' response. However, there are times when pupils are not sufficiently busy, for example when waiting their turn to use the apparatus.

182. A good range of extra-curricular, physical and sporting activities is planned throughout the year and supports the physical education curriculum. These activities enhance physical education for those who take part. The school takes part in swimming galas and competitions with other schools in sports such as touch rugby and cross-country. Effective use is made of outside coaches to develop pupils' interest and skills in sports such as skipping, cricket, rugby and football.
183. The co-ordinator provides clear leadership. The school has adopted national guidelines as a basis for teachers' planning. There is a good selection of apparatus and equipment to meet National Curriculum requirements. The accommodation for physical education is satisfactory. In addition to the hall, outdoor facilities consist of playground areas and a playing field.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

184. Standards by Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils make satisfactory progress. No judgement on standards was made at the time of the last inspection.
185. By the end of Year 2 pupils have learned about the major Christian festivals and understand the significance of Christmas and Easter. They know that Christians believe that Jesus was the Son of God and was on earth 'to help people live a good life'. They retell stories such as the Lost Sheep and understand why Jesus told these parables, explaining their meaning in simple terms. A higher attaining pupil could explain that the good shepherd was like God, looking after everyone.
186. By Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity has developed satisfactorily. They know about the Old and New Testaments of the Bible but are unsure of the links between the Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths. Their recall of major world faiths is limited, except where they have been studied recently. Pupils have some understanding of the influence of religion on the way people choose to lead their lives and are aware of the Ten Commandments. Pupils are beginning to relate religious teaching to their own life, for example using the story of the Prodigal Son to discuss the concept of 'forgiveness'.
187. The quality of teaching is good overall. Where teaching is good pupils learn well because of clear planning, well-chosen resources and teaching methods, and by effective questioning to involve pupils in thinking for themselves. In a lesson where the teacher had confident subject knowledge, there was a very good discussion on the nature of sacrifice for human beings, which linked well to the sacrifice that Jesus made. This prepared pupils well for subsequent lessons about Easter. In Year 2, there was a short factual input on Jesus' teaching, explaining how He was carrying out the work of God. This contributed well to pupils' understanding of Christian. In the same class, role

play was used effectively to enable pupils to decide how they might react to temptation, as well as emphasising the importance of saying 'No' to something that is not right. All lessons made a very good contribution to the pupils' moral and social development because issues were discussed covering the way people relate to each other. However, in some classes, the moral principles found in the stories of Jesus, although discussed satisfactorily, were not then clearly linked back to Christian values and beliefs. In a satisfactory lesson, pupils used well-chosen stories to identify aspects of Jesus' character. However, the teacher did not use pupils' responses, such as 'he sets a good example' or 'he forgave sins,' to explain the significance to Christians of Jesus' life on earth. Opportunities were also missed to show that major faiths share similar moral principles.

188. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There have been some changes to the school's planning to incorporate national guidelines for religious education alongside the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus. Assessment systems are in place but are due to be revised to match the new scheme of work. Good use is made of assemblies, which celebrate the festivals of major faiths and support class work. Recently, a Muslim teacher talked to the school about the Hajj, Ramadan and the festival of Eid. A link has been established with a school with Muslim pupils in Blackburn and new resources are being used to strengthen the teaching of 'other' faiths.