

INSPECTION REPORT

GREAT ARLEY SCHOOL

Thornton Cleveleys

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119878

Headteacher: Mrs Jean L Johns

Reporting inspector: Alan Lemon
20165

Dates of inspection: 8 – 11 July 2002

Inspection number: 250240

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Special
Age range of pupils:	4 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Holly Road Thornton Cleveleys Lancashire
Postcode:	FY5 4HH
Telephone number:	01253 821072
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor J Anthony Condron
Date of previous inspection:	11 May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20165	Alan Lemon	Registered inspector	Art Music English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
31718	Denise Shields	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15079	Anthony Boys	Team inspector	Science Physical education Equal opportunities	
2746	Roy Lund	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
1845	Robert Tweed	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	
22948	Mary Vallis	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22695	Raymond Cardinal	Team inspector	History Religious education Special educational needs	
10391	Val du Plergny	Team inspector	French Foundation Stage	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Great Arley School is a community special school providing day places for up to 120 pupils. There are 103 pupils on roll, 62 boys and 41 girls in the age range of four to 16 years old. Two pupils are under the age of five. Over half the pupils are of secondary school age of which the largest group are in Year 9. All the pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs, which are mainly related to moderate learning difficulties. There are smaller groups of pupils with severe learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties or speech and communication impairments. All but one of the pupils are white. They all speak English and a large proportion is eligible for free school meals. Pupils are admitted to the school at various times in their school careers and all are below the expected level of attainment for their age because of their learning difficulties. The school is currently part of a wider review, being carried out by the local education authority, of special educational needs provision. The school aspires to becoming, in the near future, a generic special school for pupils of secondary school age and students over the age of 16.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Great Arley School is a very good school. Overall, pupils are achieving well and teaching is very good. The school is very well led and managed and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school has very high expectations and creates a very good climate for learning. It meets the needs of all of its pupils very well.
- It achieves in pupils very good attitudes towards learning and a desire to behave very well. Their personal development is very good, particularly their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The teamwork of staff in planning learning opportunities and supporting pupils is very good. The shared sense of purpose is excellent.
- Overall, it teaches most subjects well and teaches mathematics and music very well.
- The school provides very good opportunities for its pupils to mix and learn with pupils from other schools.
- The provision for work related activities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is excellent.

What could be improved

- Opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop as independent learners.
- The range and challenge of externally accredited courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1998 and since then it has improved very well, which is very much the result of increasingly effective leadership and management. As a consequence standards have risen overall. The key issues for action have been dealt with successfully. The appointment of a specialist science teacher has strengthened the management of the subject, leading to a better curriculum and higher standards. The assessment of pupils' progress is in place in all subjects and a very good improvement has taken place in measuring, monitoring and setting targets in relation to pupils' performance. Teaching is monitored systematically and this has helped increase significantly the amount that is now very good and excellent. The school has made important developments in its provision through better strategic planning; in particular, establishing very good partnerships with other schools and organising with them shared learning opportunities. Despite the constraints imposed by pupils' transport arrangements to and from school, teaching time has been increased. The improvement in the subjects of the curriculum is good overall. It is very good in mathematics and French but unsatisfactory in art, where several issues from the last inspection have not been resolved.

Accommodation has improved well, particularly with the addition of rooms for science, information and communication technology and music.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to the targets in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Progress in:	by Year R	By Year 6	By Year 9	by Year 11	Key very good A good B satisfactory C unsatisfactory D poor E
Speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	
Reading	B	A	B	B	
Writing	C	B	C	B	
Mathematics	B	B	B	B	
Personal, social and health education	B	B	B	B	
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

* IEPs are Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs.

The school is developing a secure method for measuring pupils' performance despite the small steps in their progress. They have used this to set targets in English, mathematics and science for groups who will be at the end of Years 6, 9 and 11 in 2003. The pupils involved are making very good progress towards their targets and a few have already achieved them one year ahead of schedule. This indicates that for them the targets were not challenging enough. Like most similar schools, this is a new departure. While measurement and target setting need further refinement, the school is well ahead in accomplishing this.

Overall, pupils are achieving well. The two children under the age of five are achieving very well in their personal development, communication and literacy and in mathematical development. They are making good progress in knowledge and understanding and creative development. Their physical development is satisfactory but limited by a shortage of suitable equipment. Pupils are achieving well in English and make very good progress in speaking and listening because of the many good opportunities they have to communicate throughout the school. They achieve well in reading but do better in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is more effective. Phonics is taught well and reading is encouraged and is well resourced with good books. Pupils' writing is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 7 to 9. It is good in Years 3 to 6 and in Years 10 and 11. Pupils develop good spelling and handwriting but the overuse of worksheets by teachers reduces the challenge for pupils to write more. Pupils throughout the school are making very good progress in mathematics. Higher-attaining Year 11 pupils pass the GCSE examination and most gain distinctions or merits in the Certificate of Achievement test. Pupils achieve very well in music, except in Years 1 and 2 where progress is satisfactory. Their progress is good in science. Higher-attaining pupils achieve high scores in national tests. However, they could make better progress by managing experiments by themselves and evaluating the outcomes of investigations. Pupils make good progress and get accreditation in information and communication technology and geography. They achieve well in design and technology but less so in work with wood, metal and plastic because of a lack of expertise in teaching. The limited expertise in art restricts pupils' progress to being satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in history, physical education and religious education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
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Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and share in its sense of purpose. They take learning seriously and work hard to achieve as much as they can.
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Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils make considerable efforts to behave well. They have a high regard for daily routines and show great respect towards each other and adults. The number of exclusions is very low.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities. They carry out jobs with independence and maturity.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are punctual at the start of each day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 & 2	Years 3 to 6	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 & 11
Lessons seen overall	good	good	very good	very 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.

Teaching and learning are very good overall. There is a high proportion of teaching that is very good and excellent, which is much more than when the school was last inspected. Teaching in English is good but it is very good in Years 3 to 6 because of the teachers' particular expertise. Teachers promote pupils' skills in communicating very well. Teachers and speech and language therapists collaborate very effectively to ensure the youngest pupils learn quickly to communicate. Thereafter, pupils learn to speak and listen effectively through frequent lesson discussions and reading their stories in school assemblies. Literacy is taught well and reinforced through other subjects. Teaching is very good in mathematics and as a result of numeracy being taught well they learn to calculate, use money and measure time. Science is taught well. The specialist teacher has good expertise and presents lessons in a lively manner. The teaching of personal, social and health education is good.

Teachers are very effective in meeting the needs of pupils because they know them so well. Teachers create a very positive climate for learning, in particular through the very good relationships they form, which encourages pupils into making their best efforts. The teamwork between teachers, classroom assistants and support staff is of a high order in supporting all pupils effectively. They respond to the high expectations set for them and they stick to the tasks in lessons because they are very well managed by teachers and their assistants. Teachers plan the work for pupils very well and set out clear learning objectives, which are explained fully so pupils start their work knowing what they have to aim for. Strong links are made between one lesson and the next. They are organised very well and provide pupils with a variety of interesting and challenging work. Lessons begin positively, set a good pace and involve lively discussion. Teachers round off the work by summing up what has been achieved and test this with pupils through well focused questioning. For the most part, teachers know their subjects well, which allows them to present them confidently, in a stimulating manner and in ways relevant to the learning difficulties pupils experience. There is insufficient expertise in design and technology, concerning the use of wood, metal and plastics, and in art, which renders teaching and learning less effective than teaching overall, although still satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good, especially in preparing pupils in Years 10 and 11 for leaving school. The provision for work related activities is excellent. The links and shared work with other schools are very good. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including planned lunch-time activities

	each day for pupils to choose.
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Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Personal, social and health education is well planned and resourced. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss matters of importance to them. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall. Pupils are valued and strongly encouraged to achieve well. Their attendance and behaviour are very closely watched and pupils are very well supported in these respects. The progress in their work is being very closely monitored and, although teachers often do not write comments on pupils' work, they give good verbal reports to them on how good it is and how it can improve.

As pupils get older, there is too little emphasis on them learning without help. While they have opportunities to follow accredited courses, the number and range of these are insufficient.

The school has a good partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is strong leadership and management, which sets high expectations for the whole school. The commitment given by all the staff is excellent. The headteacher and the senior managers provide a very clear direction for the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governors are well organised and operate effective committees which help manage the work of school effectively. They take their work seriously and support the school well. They are kept well informed, although they do not as yet use what they know to reach an independent view on the effectiveness of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Scrutiny of the effectiveness of the school, carried out mainly by the senior staff, is clear in its purpose. The observation of teaching has led to significant improvement. However, not all staff are confident, or involved, in monitoring, although there is the capacity for them to do so. This leads to some faults in the finer details of provision being overlooked.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its resources. It plans the use of its income very carefully and makes very good use of the additional grants received. The plans for future development are good and the action taken to achieve these plans is very good. The principles of best value are understood by senior staff and governors and are applied well.

The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good. The school's accommodation and learning resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leadership and management of the school The quality of teaching The school is friendly and their children like it There are high expectations and their children are making good progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of work given to their children to do at home

The inspectors agree with parents on all of the points that please them most. There is a voluntary arrangement for homework and parents have to request it.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

THE SCHOOL'S RESULTS AND PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENTS

1. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection in how well pupils achieve. Pupils make the progress they do as a result of the high proportion of good and very good teaching they receive. They are supported very effectively by staff and the climate for learning they create for all pupils is very good. Because of this, pupils are most positive in their attitude to learning. They work hard and strive for success and all of the pupils, taking into consideration the differences in their background, are fully included in this. There are no significant differences in progress being made by boys and girls and none also in the progress made by higher-attaining or lower attaining pupils. Pupils with additional special educational needs, for example sensory impairments or challenging behaviour, are well supported and make good progress. The one pupil belonging to a settled traveller family makes comparable progress to the other pupils.
2. Pupils' attainment and progress are being monitored increasingly closely by using highly specialised measures suited for pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers are becoming skilled at scoring pupils' performance and over the past two years this has generated enough data for the school to begin forming a clear picture of their progress in major areas of learning. This means the school is finding itself better placed to determine realistic expectations for the progress individuals and groups are likely to make and they are setting statutorily required targets in English and mathematics for pupils reaching the end of Year 6, and in English, mathematics and science for pupils reaching the end of Years 9 and 11 in 2003. The school's evaluation of their progress so far suggests pupils are well on track towards the targets and this represents very good progress overall. A number of pupils have already achieved the 2003 target set for them, which indicates in these cases that targets are not challenging enough. However, the school needs more time to refine the use of the very good information it now gathers to develop the knowledge and skills to set sharply focused targets. There are additional voluntary targets for reading, spelling and mathematics based on twice yearly tests in these areas of learning and the upward trend in the scores achieved by pupils here confirms the overall positive picture of pupils' progress.
3. The two children in Reception Year and pupils in Years 1 and 2, who are grouped together, have, to a large extent, a good start to their education. They are beginning to acquire the social behaviour that aids their learning, for example, being co-operative and working with each other. They are making good progress in English because their teacher reads the story so well that the children and pupils are very interested and concentrate well. As a consequence, they are calm and take turns in volunteering answers to the teachers questions. Where lessons are effectively planned, as in mathematics where the use of the National Numeracy Strategy is very well done or in art where work is well organised and resources very stimulating, pupils put a lot of effort in and get a great deal of enjoyment out of their work. They make impressive progress as a consequence. Pupils responded very well to working in the information and communication technology room, impressed with the bank of computers and the swivel chairs. They worked hard in practising the use of the computer mouse to make choices, give commands and move objects across the screen. However, a few activities are not as well planned or as stimulating and enjoyable for the pupils and their progress is less marked. In music, for example, the teacher was not nearly as strong in leading singing as in reading stories and pupils found it hard to get involved fully.
4. Overall, the achievement of literacy skills is good across the school. Pupils are given very good opportunities for speaking and listening in all of their lessons. The youngest pupils arrive often with significant difficulties but, beginning with basic sign language and by exchanging pictures, start to interact in a deliberate way so that by the end of Year 2, they speak and some use complete sentences. Language progresses to be more precise by the end of Year 6 and answers are longer and contain explanations. Pupils learn to communicate using formal and informal styles by the end of Year 9 and, by Year 11, they are confident in asking for and receiving

information in situations outside of school such as in college, work places and in the community generally. Because of particularly good teaching up to the end of Year 6, pupils have progressed from recognising individual letters and reading their names and a few familiar words to reading stories and other text. By the end of Year 9, pupils read aloud confidently, for example extracts from *Anne Frank's Diary*. By the time they leave, most pupils have the skills to read everyday instructions and information. Up to the end of Year 6, they develop the control to write the letters of the alphabet and form words. The strong emphasis on handwriting and spelling leads to clear and precise presentation in pupils' work. The use of electronic word processing aids this although, by the end of Year 9, opportunities for extending writing are frequently lost by the minimal requirement made by pupils filling in work sheets. In science, for example, pupils do not write records of their investigations. By the end of Year 11, pupils maintain good written records, for example, of their work experience placements and use a range of styles such as letter writing or descriptive narratives.

5. From a very low starting point in mathematics when they enter the school, pupils, by the time they leave, succeed in passing examinations. Higher-attaining Year 11 pupils gain passes in GCSE and nearly all pupils achieve distinction or merits in the Certificate of Education. Pupils make best progress in the use of number because teachers are effective in applying the school's numeracy strategy. The youngest pupils, by the end of Year 2, begin recognising numerals and count up to 10 and by the end of Year 6 they go on to adding numbers together using values up to 10. They know different coins and add up small sums of money. They also tell the time and draw simple bar charts. By the end of Year 9, pupils add greater sums of money and calculate change. They measure length and divide shapes into halves and quarters.
6. By the end of Years 6 and 9, of those pupils entered for the national tests in science, the few higher-attaining pupils achieve good levels when their learning difficulties are taken into account. The subject expertise of the teacher and the effective teaching most pupils receive are significant in raising standards in science. However, pupils in Years 1 and 2, who are taught by their class teacher, achieve satisfactorily but not at the good rate others do. They separate living and non-living things but do not know enough about the life cycle of animals. By the end of Year 6, pupils examine insects they gather from the school grounds and with help begin to sort these. They also place plants into different groups. By the end of Year 9, pupils know the basic facts of reproduction and make simple diagrams to show the structure of cells. They know about the properties of light and electric circuits. Pupils in Year 11 measure their lung capacity and know that blood circulates around the body and that the heart acts as a pump. They have a good recall of magnetism, electricity and circuits.
7. Where pupils' progress is particularly marked they are responding to well planned, lively and enjoyable teaching. This is the case in physical education, music and French. In this way pupils are doing very well to acquire a good French vocabulary, which they remember and use confidently to answer questions spoken in French. Most are enjoying music lessons and developing their knowledge and skills very well because of the inspired and energetic teaching they receive. Younger pupils tell a percussion instrument by the sound it makes, they sing harmoniously together and, when older, work hard to perfect their performance on the keyboard. Pupils have good map reading skills, for which they gain accreditation. They know the characteristics of their locality and about others' countries, although too little about factors that influence their development. Similarly, while they recall interesting historical facts, for example, about the causes of World War I, a deeper understanding is limited by pupils not, for themselves, examining the historical evidence. They are developing knowledge and a good range of skills in using a range of information and communication technology, although this is slightly held up by the few opportunities to use the technologies in some subjects. The lack of subject expertise in aspects of art and in design and technology affects the delivery of some relevant and challenging learning opportunities. It holds back achievement in art generally and in design and technology in Years 7 to 9.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

8. Pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour and personal development are very good. These very positive features help to create an atmosphere where pupils are able to learn. Since the last inspection standards in all of these areas have been maintained.
9. Pupils are well motivated and show interest in what they are doing. Most work steadily and conscientiously, even over long lessons. They are usually keen to learn and take the business of learning very seriously. For example, throughout a lesson on information and communication technology, pupils in Years 1 and 2 managed sitting on the large swivel chairs and enjoyed being in the computer suite. They concentrated very well on selecting and counting objects on the screen whilst they completed the task to "tidy up the bedroom". Only very occasionally, and despite the best efforts of adults, do pupils lose interest and stop working. This is a result of a few pupils' challenging behaviour, which over time is dealt with effectively.
10. Because of the school's high emphasis on moral and social development, pupils accept that they must behave well. They try to live up to this expectation and in the vast majority of cases they succeed. When moving around the school building, such as to or from assembly, they do so sensibly and with the minimum of fuss. Younger pupils are encouraged to behave well and to respect the school's values regarding behaviour because they receive good support from older pupils. For example, during assembly older and younger pupils sit together. The younger pupils are very quietly reminded by a simple "shush" from their elders if they start to talk or fidget. Pupils behave very well when they are away from the school site. The behaviour of a group of Year 7 pupils was exemplary when they visited the local secondary school to take part in a drama lesson, as was their response to the drama teacher. There were two fixed term exclusions in the last school year. The number of exclusions is very low compared to that of similar schools.
11. Relationships between adults and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are very good. Because of this pupils will seek help when they need it. These secure relationships also give pupils the confidence to answer questions even if maybe the answer is wrong. The school is a harmonious community; school's records show that incidents of bullying are rare and quickly dealt with. Pupils show respect for the school environment and handle resources and equipment with care. There is no evidence of damage to school property or of graffiti.
12. When given the opportunity pupils undertake responsibility with pride and carry out tasks sensibly, such as stacking the chairs away after the morning assembly. Most take part in lunchtime clubs with enthusiasm. Older pupils are able to have a bus pass so that they can make their own way to school. Their acceptance of this responsibility is evident because only very rarely are they late arriving for school. In lessons, sometimes pupils show initiative: for example, they set the stools out and select resources ready for the textiles lesson. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to show even more initiative; for example, when it is the teaching assistant who gives out the books or equipment at the start of the lesson.
13. Attendance is good. It is above the average of similar schools and unauthorised absence is much lower than average. Pupils arrive punctually for the start of the school day. This is because of the emphasis the school places on the importance of regular and punctual attendance. It is also because the great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. There is a good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. The amount of teaching that is very good and excellent has increased markedly and largely it is distributed evenly across the school. In nearly three out of every four lessons, teaching and learning are at least good, and none is unsatisfactory. This improvement is accounted for by the fact that the headteacher has the highest expectations and has the full support of the staff in meeting these. The work of teachers and classroom assistants in classrooms is observed by senior staff and, at the request of the school, sometimes by the local education authority's adviser. This support is well received and a culture of self-review is established. Teachers are concerned to be effective. They are prepared to negotiate the focus of the observations when their

classrooms are visited by senior staff, which is a reflection of their own on going evaluation of their work. Teaching and learning is good in all subjects except for mathematics, French and music, where it is very good, and in art, where it is satisfactory.

15. Teachers are very effective in meeting all of the special educational needs of all the pupils. There is very good teamwork between teachers and their classroom assistants, which ensures all pupils in each group are supported in learning. Equally, individual pupils who require additional help are known and their support is carefully planned into lessons. For example, the speech therapist works alongside the teacher and classroom assistants for the youngest pupils on developing their communication and social skills. The treatment of pupils with challenging behaviour is very effective. Teachers work with these pupils with great consistency, gain their co-operation and therefore ensure they are included fully in learning.
16. There is a strong and positive ethos permeating the school, which creates a very good climate for learning. The relationships between teachers, their assistants and pupils are very good. This is prominent in explaining the success of so many lessons. In an English lesson for Year 9 pupils the relationships were so good that pupils eagerly volunteered answers and confidently read aloud extracts from "Anne Franks' Diary" to the class. The interaction between the staff and pupils is relaxed, open and based securely on strong mutual respect. Teachers are confident and friendly in how they address pupils and this gets their co-operation. In the very best lessons it leads to lively, interesting and enjoyable exchanges around the topic pupils are learning. They, as a result, are engaged fully and ready to make their best efforts. In music lessons, for example, groups of pupils happily join in singing and work hard at perfecting their rhythm and style. For much the same reasons, French is very enjoyable. The teacher knows the language and conducts the lesson largely in French with enthusiasm and energy, which draws pupils into speaking and singing. While some find it hard not to over-react, the teacher is able to channel this effectively. Pupils are very well managed. Poor discipline is hardly an issue and does not get in the way of lessons being a success. There are pupils whose behaviour can be challenging at times and if there are transgressions these are dealt with very well. Teachers and their assistants take a firm line on high standards; this is accepted by pupils. Teachers are able to identify potential problems because they regularly monitor pupils' progress and personal development. They are sensitive to the needs of all pupils and treat all groups with equal courtesy and respect, making it clear that all individuals are valued in the school.
17. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good across the school. The varied structure of teaching reflects the approaches set out in the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, both of which have been well implemented. As a consequence, in much of the teaching there is consistency in the way teachers organise lessons. For example, they start well, usually with lively and well focused discussion supported very effectively by the teacher's questioning. Frequently, this is expertly targeted so that pupils are being challenged in their thinking by what they are asked. It leads to pupils acquiring very good skills in listening and communicating their knowledge and personal views. Teachers divide time into a variety of related activities and pupils will work, for part of the time, as a group then change activities and work as smaller groups or individually. This ensures lessons proceed at a good pace in relation to how best pupils learn. In one science lesson in which Year 9 pupils dealt with reproduction, the pace was quite brisk as the objectives were concerned with imparting facts. The teacher started with a discussion and then showed a video presentation leading to pupils completing a written exercise on the topic. Tight deadlines were set for pupils to complete tasks so that there was sufficient time at the end to share what pupils had learned. The pace was less hurried in a Year 10 English class but good for pupils learning adverbs and using these in their writing. Much depended upon their imagination and this needed the time to emerge. However, in a few instances, the tempo of work is not right, for example, when pupils are given worksheets to fill in. Not enough thought is always given to their value to pupils' learning. These turn up occasionally in this way in English and mathematics lessons. In English, for instance, the worksheet only demanded a pupil use the writing skills he had already acquired.
18. Teachers have a broad range of subject knowledge. Much of this is good and it contributes significantly to pupils' learning. The manner in which teachers plan the work for pupils is very

effective. They are consistent in setting out clear learning objectives. These are arrived at in a well thought out way drawing upon the long-term curricular planning and in relation to pupils' learning needs. What teachers want pupils to learn is carefully explained to them at the outset. For example, some teachers write the objectives on the board and go through these with pupils to explain how the lesson will proceed. They justify the intended activities in terms of what pupils have done in previous lessons and point to where it is leading. This got a Year 11 mathematics lesson off to a good start with pupils participating in a challenging mental calculation game. They knew they would be working on graphs later in the lesson and were ready to discuss what they had learned previously. With the support of explanations from the teachers they moved on purposefully to drafting a graph charting temperature gradients. Generally, teachers use information and communication technology well in their lessons, for example, in mathematics and history. Children under the age of five use the computers in the information and communication technology suite each week and learn to control the mouse and what is happening on the screen. However, this technology is under used in science, design and technology and religious education. While teaching throughout the school is at least satisfactory, where there are some shortcomings these are related to a lack of expertise with the subject being taught. In design and technology, for example, teaching in the uses of wood, metal and plastics is not informed with sufficient subject knowledge and pupils, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9, are not achieving as well in this part of design and technology as they do in food studies and textiles. Similarly, in art and design the lack of expertise slows the rate at which pupils make progress compared to the good and very good progress they make in most other subjects. While teachers often plan art lessons and organise them effectively, they lack the depth of knowledge and technical skills to ensure pupils can learn well.

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

19. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities are very good. The curriculum is broad and balanced throughout the school and made particularly relevant to pupils in Years 10 and 11 as they look to the future. Although the curriculum provided for children under five is good, it could be enhanced by better provision for play activities, especially outdoors. At the previous inspection concern was expressed that the school day was too short for pupils in Years 7 to 11. The school has addressed this problem to the best of its ability, given the constraints of transport, and the school day has been lengthened for these pupils with sufficient time now being available for all subjects.
20. All pupils receive their entitlement to the full National Curriculum together with religious education and personal, social and health education. Citizenship is a recent addition to a curriculum that is enriched considerably by a significant number of cross-curricular theme days and weeks. These include the European day of languages and several weeks devoted to special themes including science and industry, mini enterprises and outdoor adventure activities. The curriculum is at least satisfactory in all subjects except for design and technology in Years 7 to 11, where the provision for pupils to work with wood, metal and plastic is a weakness. The curriculum is very good in English because of its breadth and relevance. Mathematics, information and communication technology, music and physical education provide a good curriculum well supported by detailed and well planned schemes of work. The curriculum for all other subjects is satisfactory and provides pupils with a clear structure for learning but this has resulted in some constraints in independent learning and research. For example, more provision for writing needs to be made in English, for experimentation in science, research and exploration in art and for the application of skills in history. Although the school offers a variety of externally accredited courses, there is scope for more, particularly in English. An increase in the range of accredited courses is already planned for by the school.
21. The provision for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is good. The school has made very good provision through training and resources for the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. It has benefited considerably from having both a leading literacy and a leading numeracy teacher on the staff. They have spread their expertise wisely so

that pupils and staff, in school and also in the schools they are linked with, have observed and learnt from their knowledge and skills. The curriculum provides very good opportunities for pupils to practise the skills of communication. Although all teachers teach basic skills very well, there is room for further improvement in providing planned opportunities for the practical application of skills learnt during literacy and numeracy lessons.

22. The school succeeds in ensuring equality and access for all pupils. Provision for pupils with additional special needs is very good. All lessons are planned with individuals in mind: the excellent support staff are targeted well to work with groups or individuals, resources are adapted to meet particular needs and advice from outside agencies is implemented fully. Inclusion for all pupils is encouraged by good team work with professionals, such as speech and language therapists or advisory teachers for sensory impairment, who not only train staff but work alongside them within the classroom. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have regular access to a counsellor who visits the school weekly.
23. Provision for work related activities is excellent in Years 10 and 11. These pupils have opportunities to suggest and complete demanding personal challenges as part of their Trident Gold awards. They demonstrate their increasing maturity and competence in community placements at a home for the elderly and play groups. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend Blackpool and Fylde College and Myerscough Agricultural College sampling eight courses ranging from electronics and motor vehicle maintenance to wrought iron work, farming and horticulture. They are enthusiastic to attend; they work very hard and benefit socially from these experiences. Several pupils have chosen to attend college as a direct result of these placements or have gained employment after work experience. Very good links with training providers and the careers service ensure that pupils and their families have access to excellent advice about what is available after school. This is through direct careers education, through discussion with local employers, including mock interviews, and through the challenge of a fortnight's work experience. Pupils' confidence is boosted significantly by this opportunity to apply independence skills they have learned: reports about their achievements are impressive. A very positive initiative has been extended work experience for a small number of pupils whose needs are best met by a balance of regular work combined with some attendance at school.
24. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good because the curriculum is very well planned and supported by good teaching and resources are of high quality. Relationships within the school are very good, so pupils benefit from opportunities to discuss issues such as drug awareness or sexual relationships. Increasingly good links with the community mean that there is good input and advice from the police liaison officer and health visitor. The school is in the Lancashire pilot scheme for the Healthy Schools Standard. Learning about life in a democracy is seen in action within the School Council, which make suggestions, for example, about how to spend money raised for charity and how to improve life in various aspects of school.
25. The school provides very good early morning and lunch-time activities. To ensure a calm and purposeful start to the day for all pupils, and to encourage positive behaviour, a small minority are invited to join an early morning club. This has proved to be a very positive addition to an already very orderly school and to the raising of esteem. All pupils have the opportunity to attend a host of lunch-time clubs well structured and run by efficient support staff. These include computer skills, the development of social language and board games. The oldest pupils socialise together, making drinks, playing pool and listening to music. Older pupils join with staff to ensure dinner times are safe times of play and fun for the youngest pupils. Year 7 and Year 10 pupils engage in physical challenges and learn to be self-sufficient during residential trips.
26. The school has very good links with the local community. Pupils use local sports facilities and the community swimming pool. Employers and local residents give generously of their time to prepare pupils for work related activities or to broaden the curriculum. For example, community members have spoken recently about India, guide dogs for the blind and the work of the Gideon society. Local firms and trusts have contributed generously to a number of school initiatives.
27. Relationships and collaboration with other schools and partner institutions are very good. There are good inclusion links with several local schools. Pupils are taught drama and physical

education by specialist teachers in local mainstream schools. There is a significant two way integration initiative involving Class 2 and an entire class from a mainstream school and a small number of pupils take part in individual inclusion programmes suited to their needs. Pupils transferring from mainstream schools are introduced sensitively and gradually to the school so that the move is a positive experience. Links with colleges and other agencies are positive and productive.

28. Overall, the quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
29. Pupils' spiritual development is very well fostered through a school ethos which is calm and purposeful, and encourages pupils' self-respect. Assemblies provide opportunities for both prayer and reflection. Other collective activities, such as lunchtime, are conducted in a mutually respectful atmosphere. These occasions encourage pupils to develop a sense of their own identity, of self-worth, and a respect for each other as individuals. When classes conduct assemblies, for instance, the headteacher is very scrupulous in praising the contributions of all individual pupils. Work in lessons also contributes to pupils' spiritual awareness, as in a science lesson where the teacher encourages a sense of the mystery of creation in looking at insects pupils found in the school grounds. Religious education lessons give pupils the opportunity to write prayers for their own families, and for people who are hungry. They also learn more about the meaning of worship through their knowledge of churches in different faiths. In history, pupils study past spiritual cultures such as that of the ancient Egyptians.
30. The school consistently lays down a moral code which acts as a firm foundation for pupils' behaviour and gives pupils a very clear understanding of right and wrong behaviour. Teachers set very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Rare instances of misbehaviour are challenged calmly but firmly. Teachers themselves provide exemplary role models in the way they treat pupils and each other with fairness and respect. In both their attitudes and their behaviour, pupils respond very well to the school's moral climate. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions. Opportunities which arise in lessons, for instance in English, allow pupils to discuss and evaluate moral issues through literature. A lesson on personal and social education was particularly effective in using a video to show how the members of a pop group both succeeded and failed in meeting their responsibilities to each other. This lesson also made good use of discussion between pupils to bring out responses to both moral and social issues. Broader moral themes such as global warming are explored through discussion in science. In geography, older pupils learn about moral aspects of international development, such as the problems of poverty in the Third World.
31. Pupils' social attitudes are developed very well in many ways. As with all aspects of personal development, the school provides a secure framework within which pupils can develop a strong sense of community, and of shared responsibility. Older pupils take responsibility for aspects of school life, such as helping younger pupils in assemblies and other settings. Pupils are encouraged to work together co-operatively in making presentations to the whole school in assemblies, and in lessons such as science, where social skills are actively promoted. Group warm-up activities in mathematics are conducted in a way which contributes to a sense of social identity. The school offers a good range of visits, including residential experiences, which help pupils to develop strong relationships in an educational context. Work in geography and history is particularly effective in helping pupils to appreciate how societies evolve and function interdependently. Links with neighbouring schools enable pupils to make social relationships with others with confidence.
32. The school provides a very good foundation for pupils to understand their own and other cultures. Visits to art exhibitions and work in music foster pupils' understanding of cultural development. Physical education provides opportunities for appreciation of traditional culture through folk dancing. Work in history, geography and religious education helps pupils to compare and contrast their own cultural heritage with those of other times, places and traditions, such as the art of Native Americans. The school faces a difficult challenge in that its population is made up of white British pupils, but it deals with this by making pupils aware of the dilemmas and difficulties

faced by black and Asian people in Britain. Pupils respond very well to these opportunities in the appreciation they show of other cultures and the respect they show towards each other, whatever their different backgrounds.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school has very good arrangements to care for and support pupils of all ages. These are generally in line with those of the previous inspection although there are some aspects that have improved.
34. All staff, including the secretary, mid day supervisors and classroom assistants, provide a very good level of care for all pupils. All pupils are valued and encouraged to try their best and overcome their difficulties. The success of the school's care arrangements can be seen by the improvements that pupils make in their self-confidence, behaviour and achievement. Parents' confidence in the support and guidance provided for their children is well founded.
35. Child protection arrangements are very good. The designated member of staff has a detailed knowledge of local procedures; any concerns or issues are dealt with very sensitively. Teachers are vigilant regarding the health and safety of pupils both on and off the premises. The school records health and safety audits well and the governing body takes an appropriate part in monitoring this aspect. The medical needs of pupils are very well catered for, detailed records are kept and systems to administer any medication required during the school day are clear. There are an appropriate number of staff qualified in first aid who are able to deal quickly with any incident or illness when it occurs. Supervision arrangements are good and there are always sufficient adults on duty at break and lunchtime.
36. Attendance is very closely monitored and, as a result, the school is very aware of those pupils who do not attend regularly and on time. The education welfare officer is involved where necessary and provides good support following up the cases of those pupils whose attendance gives rise for concern. The importance of regular attendance is given a high profile. For example, each term a shield is awarded to the class with the highest attendance and prizes are given to pupils with exceptional attendance at the end of the school year. The effectiveness of the school's systems can be seen in the above average attendance level of the pupils compared to similar schools.
37. The arrangements to manage pupils' behaviour and to help pupils overcome their difficulties are very good. Class and school routines are very well established and because of this pupils know what is expected of them; they all try hard to live up to the schools' high expectations. However, there are occasions when some pupils have great difficulty controlling their behaviour. But these instances are in the main managed very well by teachers and because of this other pupils' learning is not interrupted. Behaviour monitoring cards have a positive emphasis and pupils can see clearly if they are having "a good day". Parents are very much involved in the promotion of their children's behaviour: they too see and sign the monitoring card each day. The quiet and orderly start to the school day also has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour, setting an appropriate tone before lessons begin.
38. Arrangements to deter or deal with any form of bullying, harassment or racism are very good. This very good provision, and that to promote acceptable behaviour, is also a direct result of the school's very good emphasis on pupils' moral and social development. Very good relationships and respect between all staff and pupils promote the values of co-operation very effectively from pupils' first days in the school. This contributes to ensuring the school is, for the most part, a harmonious community. The school's written records also confirm this.
39. Teachers assess the pupils' standards of achievement and progress well in all subjects and very well in English and mathematics. The assessment records for each subject are kept in a separate file and the files are updated regularly. These files contain the assessment data for all pupils in that subject. In addition to this, there is a record for each pupil, showing that pupil's progress in

all subjects. Teachers use their own informal notes of pupils' progress in order to complete the subject and pupil records. These subject files give an overall picture of the progress made by each pupil. All pupils also have regular reading, spelling and mathematics tests.

40. The school is applying highly specialised measures to assess the progress pupils make in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education. This will be extended to include science from next term. The system is giving detailed information about pupils' attainments in these subjects, which helps teachers to have a clear picture of how well they are learning and to plan activities to build on what pupils have learnt.
41. The data gathered for English, mathematics and science are used to set whole school targets for attainment in these subjects. Targets are also set for individual pupils in English and mathematics. The pupils' Individual Education Plans include targets for literacy, numeracy and social skills and these are reviewed and updated regularly.
42. The school has put a lot of effort into developing comprehensive assessment systems, providing teachers with access to a large amount of data that can be used to effectively monitor pupils' progress. The teachers' ability to analyse this data and use it to modify their teaching is good in English and mathematics but not so well developed in other subjects. The school recognises that this is an area for development and further training is planned.
43. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress is done mainly through question and answer, observation and marking pupils' work. Teachers mark work regularly and conscientiously, often writing encouraging comments to help to motivate pupils. They do not often write comments that give pupils a clear idea of how to improve their work and this is an area that could be improved.
44. Pupils' personal development is supported and monitored very well. During their time at the school pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. This is because of the high level of day-to-day care provided by teachers and support staff. For instance, there is a very good range of opportunities offered to pupils such as residential visits, lunchtime clubs, art and music festivals, which they take part in with enthusiasm. Pupils are also fully involved in the annual review of their progress and the setting of targets for the next year. This means they are fully aware of what they need to do to improve. All staff know the pupils very well, especially their social circumstances and the targets set for their personal development. This is because they continually share information about the pupils, for example during the regular weekly staff meetings. Written records are also well maintained and this also helps to build up a picture of pupils' development during their time at the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. A good partnership has been established with parents, and this enables them to make a good contribution to their children's learning and welfare whilst they are at the school. This is in line with the findings of the previous report.
46. Parents are invited to attend all the reviews of pupils' progress and the attendance rate is very high. They are also involved at an early stage if problems arise or pupils are felt to be underachieving. The school's opposition to intimidating or racist behaviour and its systems for dealing with incidents are made clear in information sent out to parents.
47. Parents have very positive views about the school. Over two thirds of questionnaires were returned and very few parents expressed any dissatisfaction with what the school provides for their children. Parents think the school is well led and managed and they find staff approachable. They say that their children enjoy coming to school and are expected to work hard and try their best. They say the school puts their children first. The inspectors agree with the parents' view of the school's strengths. A small number of parents expressed some concern about the amount of work their children are expected to do at home.

48. The school maintains regular contact with parents, through the home/school communication book, by telephone and letter. This ensures that all those who are involved in the care of pupils are aware of any concerns. Equally, the school often telephones parents to celebrate a pupil's "good day", especially if previously there have been some concerns, for example if their child's behaviour had not been appropriate. Parents are encouraged to visit the school, for events such as open days or sports day. Many do so and, because a crèche is occasionally provided, this enables parents who have younger children to attend. The parents' support group meets in the school every month, to which a range of speakers are invited, such as the school nurse or speech therapist. These opportunities to meet other parents or specialist agencies help parents to cope with the demands of having a child who has disabilities or very specific needs. Parents also make resources to be used in school. There are many informal opportunities for the school to seek parents' views, for example during open days or social events sponsored by the Friends of Great Arley School. But the school does not formally survey all parents on a range of topics and therefore it cannot be certain it is meeting all their needs.
49. Parents are fully involved in their child's annual review process. Written information is sent to them in good time. Many parents make written contributions before the formal meeting and virtually all parents attend the meeting. This is a valuable opportunity to discuss and share information about their children and they are actively involved in setting targets to enable their children to improve. However, parents are not involved in the school's continuing review process of their children's Individual Education Plan.
50. The day-to-day information provided for parents is good and this includes contact by telephone when appropriate. Regular newsletters are sent. These give parents a good insight into school life and what their children will be learning and also provide reminders of key dates and events. The school brochure and governors' annual report to parents are well presented and contain much practical and useful advice and information.
51. Annual written reports on their children's progress are provided for parents at the annual review meeting. The school has very recently implemented a new format for writing reports and in the few reports available in this format there is an improvement in the quality of information to parents. Otherwise, reports have been very variable in quality; reports for children in their Reception Year to pupils in Year 9 are broadly satisfactory but for pupils in Years 10 and 11 they have been unsatisfactory. In these, limited information has been given in all subjects about the progress pupils have made and what they are able to do.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The effectiveness of leadership and management has continued to improve since the last inspection. This is manifest in the overall very good improvement the school has made since then, in particular, the greatly increased amount of very good teaching and the resultant rise in the standards now achieved by pupils across the school. The school continues to be strongly led and the headteacher maintains a very clear direction for its work. This is based on the very high expectations placed on all who contribute to the work of the school. The headteacher's relationship with staff and the relationships between staff are very good. Together they share an excellent sense of purpose and uphold the school's aims. These are set out clearly in writing and have been constantly reviewed over many years to remain central and to maintain their relevance and currency to the constantly changing complexion of provision in special schools. The school emphasises the need for inclusion and equality of opportunity through all its policies and practices and staff are aware of the importance placed on these aspects. The headteacher adopts a high profile around the school and is very closely involved with staff and pupils, leading strongly on promoting the school's clear values. Staff and pupils follow the headteacher's lead and strive hard to maintain the high standards being called for. The deputy and assistant headteachers make a decisive contribution to very good leadership. They perform clearly defined and distinct roles that dovetail into overall leadership and contribute to achieving high standards. They account for overseeing several very positive areas of the school's work, particularly in relation to the support and guidance given to pupils on their academic progress and personal development. The leadership and management in the subjects of the curriculum are good overall. They are very

good in English and mathematics where the combination of both co-ordinators' expertise and scope for observing and supporting colleagues have led to improving pupils' achievements and the provision for these subjects. It is unsatisfactory in art, where there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.

53. The work of the school is managed well and this is achieved to a large extent by the care taken in setting out policy guidelines, advice to teachers and the detailed records of meetings and decisions. The effective management of the school is an on going consideration leading to improvements where they are seen to be necessary. Recently, departmental meetings were set up for staff in the primary and secondary parts of the school with the aim of increasing the participation and contribution of all staff in issues relevant to the school. The school's policies are regularly reviewed and updated. The same strong structure and clear format is a feature of school development planning and this provides a comprehensive approach for achieving development priorities. A good example is the sharply focused plan for developing the use of information and communication technology throughout the school. It builds in a scheme for monitoring the use of the technology and plans to extend its use in the administration of the school and to support the school's policy on inclusion by offering resources to pupils in mainstream schools.
54. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are good. The monitoring and evaluation policy expresses the purposes of scrutiny clearly, especially the link to improving pupils' performance. The school uses a self-evaluation framework and this exercise assists in giving an indication to the school of its effectiveness. It helps to inform priorities for development, for example, seeking the evaluations from the wider school community, such as parents, and linking the school's review of its curriculum to pupils' performance. The school has developed a database on pupils' performance, which is now an established procedure giving detailed insight into the progress pupils make. It enables the identification of good targets to improve pupils' progress and the scope to challenge whether educational provision meets the needs of all pupils. The recognition that accredited courses need developing, which is now planned for, is very much proof of this. The observation of teaching is good and has contributed to a good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. It is a process of scrutiny that staff support and it is typical that teachers seek help on aspects of their work in the classroom. They are self-critical and contribute to decisions on the focus of the observations of their work. However, some of the finer detail of provision is missed, such as the lack of expertise in teaching art, and even the opportunities in teaching and the curriculum for older pupils to develop more as independent learners. The subject co-ordinators are effective as far as the development of schemes of work and informal monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress are concerned, but are not yet all engaged in the formal classroom observations in their subject areas.
55. The work of the governors in supporting the school and its pupils is good. They have full confidence in, and work closely with, the headteacher and staff. The governors are kept well-informed about the work of the school and discuss this knowledgeably although they use what they know in a limited way to monitor and evaluate the school for themselves. They are aware of the need to maintain their involvement in training for governors: for example, they have participated in courses linked to the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and they are taking up self-evaluation training for governors in the near future.
56. The school makes very good use of its resources and takes effective steps to check it gets best value from resources and its spending. The funds the school receives are appropriately used to support the learning of the groups for whom they are allocated. The arrangements for grouping pupils have had careful consideration. Special timetabling and staffing arrangements allow for much smaller numbers of pupils in lessons for practical subjects. In mathematics lessons, higher-attaining pupils are placed in larger groups. This allows lower-attaining pupils to be in smaller groups and therefore get closer attention from staff. A high priority is given to ensuring the school is doing its job as well as possible. In this respect, it is taking action by making contacts with other similar schools in order to make a wide range of comparisons and share good practice. The headteacher has analysed the school's performance against national data for special schools to help complete the picture of how well it is on track. It makes very good use of

the additional grants it receives. For example, the success in using the extra money for developing partnerships with mainstream schools to promote inclusion was very carefully evaluated and the report provides a persuasive argument for this funding to be repeated. It shows very clearly how this money enabled the staff of different schools to share expertise and resources for the benefit of all the pupils involved. Financial planning is based on careful thought about priorities and governors play a full part in agreeing how to budget the school's annual income. Each year, an appropriate sum for contingencies has been set aside and this has accumulated intentionally over several years into a substantial surplus, which is earmarked for building extensions and upgrades of accommodation. The school is hampered in making spending decisions by the current review of special educational needs provision in the local education authority, which will have significant implications for the future. The school has taken the initiative to think through and propose to the local education authority its future as a secondary phase generic special school. While this is considered it is not possible to make secure decisions on significant new areas of expenditure.

57. Overall, the school's staffing is very good and this is a very good improvement since the last inspection. There are sufficient teaching staff with suitable curriculum, phase and special educational needs training and experience to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils, and staffing has been increased since the last inspection in response to increasing numbers of pupils and their changing needs. The learning support assistants form an outstanding team. They are very well qualified and experienced and make a significant contribution to the pupils' progress in learning and in personal and social development. The school's administrative staff give very good support to the staff and to the senior management team. The caretaker and cleaners keep the school spotlessly clean and well maintained. The catering staff produce a range of very palatable dishes, which are much appreciated by the staff and pupils.
58. The school's procedures for the induction of new teachers and learning support assistants are very good and this is greatly appreciated by the newly appointed staff. New members of staff are trained in the school's policies and procedures, including policies for ensuring their own safety and the safety of the pupils, and they have a mentor to help them during the first few months. The staff handbook is very well written and provides a good introduction to the school. There is also an extremely useful handbook for temporary supply teachers.
59. It has not yet been possible to appoint a design and technology teacher experienced in working with wood, metal and plastics. This limits the quality of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 and they achieve less well in this aspect of design and technology. These adverse effects are offset for pupils in Years 10 and 11, who follow relevant courses at the Blackpool and Fylde College of Further Education. There is also a lack of expertise in teaching art, restricting the learning opportunities in that subject.
60. The accommodation is good overall and it has been improved well since the last inspection. The school grounds are immaculate, fenced in neatly and laid out well. The buildings are well maintained. The inside of the school is bright, with effective and colourful displays of the pupils' work. Classrooms are all of good quality and there is a good range of specialist rooms including those for science, information and communication technology, design and technology and music. There is a well-organised library with a very good range of books for research and this is used effectively by the pupils. The school makes effective use of the facilities at the local swimming baths. It makes some good use of the school's grounds for science and could make more use to the benefit of pupils' learning in science. The design and technology workshop has insufficient storage for larger materials and pupils' work. There is no specialist room for art and this restricts the activities which can be undertaken. The school hall, when used by large groups of older pupils for physical education, is too small. Its central location means it is always a thoroughfare, which affects the quality of activities taking place in the hall. Some classrooms have to be accessed through others, which disturbs the teaching and learning in those used as corridors.
61. The school's resources are good overall and often of a high quality. They are used effectively to support the pupils' learning and are easily accessible for classroom use. They are monitored well by the curriculum co-ordinators.

62. The resources were judged to be adequate in the last inspection report. Since then, amongst other new resources, new computers, computer software and library books and videos have been purchased, indicating a good improvement since then.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to further consolidate and build upon the good standards pupils achieve and the school's very good provision, the headteacher and governors should:

(1) develop the whole curriculum, but particularly in English, science, art, design and technology, history and physical education, to provide challenges for pupils to develop as independent learners;

(See paragraphs: 20, 71, 93, 102, 104, 116 and 143)

(2) continue the work already started to expand the range of accreditation for pupils in Years 10 and 11, which ensures the courses they follow in school and beyond reflect their levels of attainment. (This is already a priority in the current school development plan)

(see paragraphs: 20, 54, 77 and 103)

The headteacher and governors should also consider:

i) improving the expertise with which art is taught and the accommodation for art;
(See paragraphs: 60, 102 and 103)

ii) developing consistent practice of marking pupils' work to give them clear messages on how well they have achieved and what they need to do to improve
(See paragraphs: 43, 77, 86, 93 and 125)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	94
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	27	47	18	0	0	0
Percentage	2.1	28.7	50	19.2	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	103
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	37

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	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.4 (8.4)

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1 (2.4)

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year. Figures in brackets are the national levels for similar schools

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	102
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.75
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.6
Average class size	14.6

Education support staff: YR – Y11

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	350

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	803462
Total expenditure	738483
Expenditure per pupil	7613
Balance brought forward from previous year	65519
Balance carried forward to next year	130498

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.59

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.59
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	103
Number of questionnaires returned	72

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	31	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	33	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	43	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	38	14	7	4
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	29	3	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	22	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	14	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	71	24	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	83	17	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	24	1	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	33	4	0	10

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The two major strengths for parents are the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the school. They also see the school setting high expectations and that their children are making good progress. This is a friendly school for parents and their children like attending. Some see that transferring to this school has made a big difference for their children. Inspectors agree with the views of parents on all of these points. Parents are not as emphatic as a group about the amount of homework their children receive. Inspectors have discovered that homework will be set if specifically requested by parents.

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

Overall, the provision for the two children who are under five and at the foundation stage, is **good**.

Strengths

- The teamwork of the teacher and the classroom assistants
- The provision for communication, language and literacy and for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world

Areas for improvement

- The resources to support children's physical development

64. Children are achieving well in relation to most of the Early Learning Goals, although they will not reach these goals by the age of five because of their special educational needs. Teaching and learning is good. It is very good in relation to communication, language and literacy and the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world. There is very good teamwork between the teacher and the learning support assistants, and this makes a very valuable contribution to the well-being and happiness of the children. There were no children under the age of five at the time of the last inspection and this area was not reported, so no judgement on the improvement since the last inspection is possible.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Very good role modelling by all the adults in the classroom helps children to distinguish right from wrong, and enables them to begin to lay the foundations of social interaction with each other. They are further helped by good planning which takes account of their precise stage of development, so that, over the last academic year, very good progress has been made. At the end of every lesson there is a little time where the activities which have been undertaken are reported on by the children, so that they can be summarised by the teacher. This gives children the responsibility of reporting to the others, and the confidence to do so.

Communication, language and literacy

66. The development of children's language is taken very seriously by the teacher and classroom assistants, which results in them making very good progress. Every opportunity is taken to foster children's language and pre-reading development. Children listen carefully to their adults and are beginning to learn to ask questions about the stories they hear. They are gradually developing the ability to write their names and know some of the letters of the alphabet. For example, the word 'Saturday' was put on the wall, but upside down. A child knew there was something not quite right with the word. This is good teaching, and good attention by the children in all situations. The first activity at the start of each day and break times and lunchtimes are also crucial opportunities for the development of speaking and listening.

Mathematical development

67. Children make very good progress. They show great interest in the shapes of things and know the difference between a circle and a square. They sort shapes and use play dough to make their own versions of cylinders. They know some of numbers between one and ten.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. The provision for this aspect of the children's development is very good. They have a weekly session in the information and communication technology suite, where they work on their own

programs for the development of keyboard and mouse skills. They work with a will, and are interested and highly motivated by the very appropriate range of programs available. They learn about the difference in temperature between a sunny window sill and the inside of a fridge, and discover whether a loaf of bread on the sill will melt or not.

Physical development

69. Children's physical development is satisfactory. The class teacher makes the best use of a limited range of resources. Children are developing confidence in moving independently and acquiring finer physical skills such as in holding and manipulating objects. They are also beginning to use crayons and pens purposefully. In relation to movement, bodily co-ordination and balance, children use the crawling tunnel in the classroom and they play ball outside. There are tricycles available and children use these on the enclosed hard play area. This play area has no climbing frame or the soft surface to accommodate one. However, one day a week the children go to a nearby public playground with a range of equipment on which children develop their physical skills.

Creative development

70. Children roll and cut shapes from coloured play dough. They paint using ready mixed paints and learn to manipulate both brush and colour. They colour in on worksheets, but some of this is still very inaccurate. By playing in the Ark with the animals, children use their imagination and begin to make sense of their surroundings, and they tell each other stories sometimes, but more often tell them to themselves.

ENGLISH

The overall provision for English is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall and often very good so pupils make good progress
- Classroom assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning
- The management of English is very good so that teaching and learning are very well monitored and supported
- Pupils behave well and try hard
- The very good curriculum is well supported by very good resources

Areas for improvement

- The opportunities for pupils to show how well they can write
- The opportunity for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to follow nationally accredited courses
- The marking of pupils work to make clear what they have learnt and how they can improve

71. Pupils achieve well because they are taught well. Communication is a strength because there are very good opportunities for speaking and listening across all areas of the curriculum. Strong leadership has ensured very clear direction so that there is a clear sense of purpose to all initiatives. Although pupils have the technical ability to write well, there are insufficient opportunities for them to express their independence and imagination in less structured situations.

72. Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening throughout the school although many pupils have significant difficulties of communication on entry. Activities are planned well to develop vocabulary, articulation and understanding, with close liaison between staff and the speech and language therapy service a strength. Some signing and a modified picture exchange communication system supports total communication. The youngest pupils clearly enjoy singing favourite nursery rhymes and anticipating the next word or phrase in well loved stories. Their limited vocabulary, which sometimes causes frustration, develops slowly but surely so that by the end of Year 2 they take turns in conversation, listen for an increasing length of time and

sometimes answer in complete sentences. The language development of pupils in Years 3 to 6 continues to be very good. Answers are longer and sometimes contain fuller explanations. *'The polar bears have white fur as camouflage'* was one pupil's contribution of a factual sentence. Confidence improves to the point where every pupil in a school assembly was clearly audible throughout the hall. By the end of Year 6 pupils focus their answers, speak for a range of purposes and usually listen with courtesy. During Years 7 to 9 pupils adapt their speech for different audiences, improve social skills and understand non-verbal communication. The four pupils in Year 7 benefit from specialist drama teaching in a local mainstream school. One outstanding pupil conveyed the compassion, care and nervousness of holding a young baby with complete conviction. Pupils with hearing impairment participate equally in lessons through the consistent use of radio aids. There are some occasions when the desire to be heard by pupils in Years 7 and 8 outweighs their ability to listen actively but by the end of Year 9 pupils are competent communicators. Very good preparation and out-of-school opportunities help to develop the verbal and social skills of the oldest pupils so that by the end of Year 11 they have the confidence and competence to cope in college, the community and the work place.

73. All pupils achieve well in reading and, in Years 3 to 6, they achieve very well because of particularly good teaching. The outstanding number and range of books of good quality and the care with which they are displayed and handled encourage reading. Teachers are very good role models for reading aloud. By the end of Year 2 some pupils can match letter names and sounds, recognise their name and read a few common words. Good teaching of phonics improves word-building skills. Pupils enjoy playing word games, recognise rhyming words and read simple stories. By Year 6 pupils read a selection of fiction and non-fiction with more able pupils showing understanding of the text and justifying their answers by reference to it. Pupils throughout the upper part of the school benefit from a good balance between learning the skills of reading and using those skills for reference or pleasure. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 read aloud from "Anne Frank's diary" with print enlarged for some pupils. They ask for meanings of words such as *'ambition'* and are supportive of peers who are still struggling. The oldest pupils are unusually enthusiastic to read aloud, showing some knowledge of implicit meaning. By the time pupils leave school, the majority have sufficient skills to read and follow simple instructions, order from a menu and catch the right bus.
74. Achievement in writing is satisfactory for the youngest pupils and for those in Years 7 to 9. It is good for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and for the oldest pupils in Years 10 and 11. The structure and support for writing are good so that pupils develop good spelling and handwriting skills and learn how stories are constructed. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a range of writing tools to make marks on paper, trace over patterns and letters and gradually form individual words. Emergent writing continues for pupils within Years 3 to 6. The consistent linking of spelling and handwriting throughout the school with the early introduction of a cursive script ensures that pupils have usually developed a pleasing style of presentation by the end of Year 6. An increasing vocabulary, some use of information and communication technology and good opportunities for contributing to anthologies provide good stimuli for writing. One pupil wrote: *'The journey is a mystical journey/There could be magical things ahead today.'* This concentrated attention on writing for short periods of time shows just how well pupils achieve when given the opportunity. The completion of too many work sheets, sometimes for practising skills already mastered, also constrains progress especially in Years 7 to 9. However, technical skills are good and pupils are keen, so there is much to build on. Pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11, especially in practical writing related, for example, to records of achievement and work experience. They adapt the way they write to suit the purpose. In a letter of protest, they write: *'We aren't noisy, lazy, good for nothing kids with cans of spray paint'* whereas in their reflections on a grand father, prompted by a discussion in religious education, they write: *'His hands were wrinkly and his feet were too old for walking but we were good friends.'*
75. Teaching is a strength. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is mostly good. The very warm relationships all staff have with pupils and their very good subject knowledge contribute significantly to the good progress pupils make. Teachers usually plan lessons very well in conjunction with support staff so that pupils of all abilities and with additional special needs can succeed. Support staff are calm, well trained and confident to use their initiative, thus playing a

significant part in pupils' progress. In one very good lesson pupils worked hard and behaved well because the tasks were interesting and challenging and planned to meet their individual needs. One group worked with the speech and language therapist, another group used soft modelling compound to form letters and a third group word processed their sentences. In another lesson, older pupils enjoyed acting out adverts and compiling amusing advertising slogans. There was minimal interruption as the teacher dealt effectively with a behavioural incident. Where teaching is less challenging, pupils obviously make less progress. In one lesson, a pupil spent too long observing her peers without having a clear role herself and in another lesson work sheets were an unnecessary support for pupils who can already write unaided. The setting of homework is satisfactory with much centring on reading activities.

76. The school has instigated the National Literacy Strategy very successfully across Years 1 to 9 and the benefit can be seen in the progress pupils make and the assurance with which staff teach. Resources to support literacy are very good, in particular, the library, which is a very pleasant resource. Literacy is reinforced throughout the curriculum. Vocabulary is developed well through key words on each subject and much time is given to discussion and evaluation of work. Reading and writing are used consistently across the curriculum but in some subjects, such as science, there is too much structure for writing and too few opportunities to write independently.
77. The management of English is very good. The co-ordinator, who is a leading literacy teacher, leads by example, sharing his extensive knowledge and very good teaching skills with all staff. His informed interest in assessment means that all pupils are tracked very carefully and their progress monitored closely, this knowledge being used to help plan future work. Much needed improvement in annual reports to parents has just been implemented. The marking of pupils' work is another area for development because comments, although encouraging, do not reflect what has been successful or how pupils can improve. Although the curriculum is very good, except for some missed opportunities for writing, there is room for more accreditation of work for pupils in Years 10 and 11 besides the certificate of achievement some are entered for. English contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the value placed on individuals and their good work, through opportunities for group working and through focused attention on book weeks, poetry days or theatrical productions during the year. Improvement in English since the previous inspection is good especially in teaching and monitoring.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress across the school
- Teaching is very good and pupils get good support from classroom assistants
- Pupils behave very well and work with sustained effort and concentration
- Pupils' work is assessed carefully and the results used to track their progress
- The subject is very well led and managed; teaching is monitored and evaluated and there is a consistent focus on improvement

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' achievements in shape, space and measurement, which are not as good as in the other aspects of mathematics
- The opportunities for more challenging work for higher-attaining pupils

78. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics. By the end of Year 11, a small group of the more able pupils obtain GCSE passes and almost all other pupils get merit or distinction grades for the Certificate of Achievement. Taking account of the very limited knowledge and skills in mathematics that most pupils have on entry to the school, and the extremely wide spread of ability of pupils, this represents very good progress. Boys and girls progress equally well, and pupils with additional special educational needs also make very good progress against the targets in their Individual Education Plans.

79. This progress is reflected in pupils' achievements throughout their school careers. Pupils show considerable benefit from the National Numeracy Strategy in that they make their best progress in number, which they apply particularly successfully to calculations involving money and time. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adapted well to the needs of pupils. Pupils also make good progress in their understanding of measurement. They make satisfactory progress in understanding shape and space although some of their work is inaccurate.
80. By the end of Year 2, most pupils recognise numbers up to ten and colour in number sets. More able pupils show early estimation skills by telling the difference between short and long and count accurately up to ten. By the end of Year 6, most pupils add tens and units, identify coins accurately and add money up to 10p. More able pupils tell the time to the hour and half hour and some read the five and one minute intervals. They understand place value and complete simple bar charts. Most primary aged pupils draw simple but accurate bar charts to show their ability to handle data.
81. By the end of Year 9, most pupils add money accurately up to 20p and give correct change. They measure length and correctly colour in halves and quarters of shapes. Many pupils use good strategies for adding large numbers and accurately carry out long multiplication by eleven. More able pupils subtract money in tens and units, measure lines and record time in hours and half hours accurately. They produce neat and accurate temperature graphs.
82. Higher-attaining pupils occasionally need more challenging work, as in a lesson on learning to tell the time, which for a few pupils involved repeating a task they were already fully capable of. In a lesson for less able pupils in Years 10 and 11 on practical measurement skills, they lacked confidence because they were unaware of their learning targets.
83. Pupils' progress is mainly the result of very good teaching. Lessons are very well planned, with objectives which are clear to pupils and teaching methods which make the best use of pupils' skills. For example, a lesson for pupils in Years 8 and 9 on money accurately showed pupils clearly how to work out change either by subtraction or adding on, and used multi-link cubes as practical apparatus very effectively. The real-life context, with tins of soup and drinks cartons, helped pupils to understand the task effectively. Very good use of questioning is shown by a lesson for pupils in Years 7 and 8 in which the teacher gets pupils to say how they would measure the perimeter of their classroom. For younger pupils, there is still an over-reliance on worksheets as a means of recording.
84. Teachers use information and communication technology well to teach mathematics. In a lesson for Year 8 and 9 pupils, for example, the teacher uses a programmable robotic toy to help pupils understand right angles. In a lesson on number skills for pupils in Years 2 to 5, less able pupils are encouraged to learn by the use of a computer program to spot numbers at different angles. Warm up activities at the beginnings of lessons make good use of random number programs to generate sequences which pupils have to predict. However, pupils have few opportunities to use spreadsheets to produce simple bar or pie charts. Teachers encourage the development of literacy skills through mathematics by encouraging pupils to speak and listen carefully, and to use key words correctly. Difficult words in mathematics, such as '*denominator*' or '*perimeter*', are generally written on the board.
85. Teachers show very good classroom management skills. A brisk pace and good relationships with pupils enable them stay on task and work with sustained effort in all lessons. Minor disruptions are dealt with calmly so that the flow of the lesson is not interrupted. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning in mathematics. They respond to well managed teaching with confidence and, in all lessons, the sense of purpose and effort that they display is apparent. They work co-operatively in pairs or small groups, ask and answer questions with enthusiasm, and take a pride in their work. Written work is well presented with neat graphs and diagrams and sums in tens and units are accurately aligned. Pupils get good support individually whenever they are "*stuck*", not only from teachers but also from classroom assistants who show strong professional skills. There is clear evidence in all lessons that assistants are fully involved in lesson planning and their contribution is very good.

86. Assessment is thorough and effective. Teachers make good use of brief oral reviews at the ends of lessons to check on what they have learnt. These reviews also serve to reinforce pupils' knowledge. Progress through the attainment targets is carefully recorded so that pupils' attainments can be tracked. Progress is assessed using specially adapted scales for pupils with learning difficulties, which gives a detailed breakdown of the early development of mathematical skills. There are too few opportunities for pupils to assess their own work, however, and although marking of written work is conscientious, it rarely provides the kind of formative comment which would show pupils how to improve their work. All pupils have a 'Best work' folder, which contains samples of work of which they are proud. Reports to parents have begun to be produced in an improved format and are now satisfactory.
87. The subject is very well led and managed. The focus on improvement in mathematics is very evident from discussion with teachers. The co-ordinator has worked hard to fulfil the requirements of the improvement plan and shows energy and enthusiasm in his commitment to the subject. He is a leading mathematics teacher and demonstrates lessons to colleagues. He undertakes monitoring of mathematics teaching across the school and analyses pupils' performance systematically. The curriculum is kept under constant review and the school is very active in seeking the most appropriate external accreditation for pupils' achievements. The school is collaborating with its visiting educational psychologist to achieve progress with the least able pupils through an experimental approach to learning simple number facts using Cuisenaire rods. The school has achieved very good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

Overall, the provision for science has improved considerably since the last inspection and is **good**.

Strengths

- The curriculum and the management of the subject
- The science teacher is improving standards
- The quality of teaching is good overall and classroom assistants play a key role in supporting pupils
- The pupils have very good attitudes to learning and respond well to good teaching
- The high quality science laboratory and very good equipment for science

Areas for improvement

- The breadth of the science curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2
- The opportunities for pupils to undertake investigative work involving planning experiments and evaluating the results
- The marking of pupils' work so they are advised on how to improve it
- The opportunities to do more independent writing about their science work
- The use of the computer equipment for science

88. Pupils achieve well in science. The results of national tests show that, of those entered, most higher-attaining pupils achieve results that are in line with expectations and some exceed this. The results in the national tests for Year 9 pupils are above the average for pupils in similar schools. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls or of different groups of pupils.
89. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making satisfactory progress in their learning and achieving the standards that would be expected, given the nature of their special needs. Most pupils can correctly identify melting and freezing and can group things into 'living' and 'non-living'. Many can also identify the major parts of plants and can name parts of the body correctly. However, their work on life cycles shows little understanding and their recall of earlier work is very limited. The sample of work examined shows patchy coverage of the scheme of work, with little work on physical processes and no real development of experimental and investigative science. These are both areas for improvement. Some of the pupils have special needs that result in unsatisfactory

behaviour at times. On the whole, the teachers and learning support assistants deal effectively with these incidents and do not allow them to seriously disrupt learning.

90. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in their learning. They can collect samples of small invertebrates from the school fields and use a simple key, with help, to identify them. They can use a hand lens to help with this process but many have poor powers of observation and find this difficult. Most pupils have reasonable recall of work they have done recently, although they find it difficult to remember work they did some time ago. Some pupils show good understanding of their work on classifying plants and animals and they can sort samples of different plants into appropriate groups without much help.
91. As with younger pupils, those in Years 3 to 6 are taught in mixed age classes. Their attainment varies widely in these classes but the pupils generally make good progress. The pupils' records of work show that they have covered a balanced range of topics on materials, living things and physical processes. They have quite good recall of their work on cell structure and some can draw simple diagrams to illustrate this. Older pupils have quite a good grasp of recent work on the blood system and they can correctly label a diagram of the heart and explain how it works. Pupils studying human reproduction demonstrate appropriate understanding and they behave in a sensible and mature fashion when discussing conception and fertilisation. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 show a reasonable understanding of work they have done on photosynthesis and they can remember some of the important words associated with the topic, such as 'chlorophyll' and 'carbon dioxide'.
92. In most classes, the pupils can use the correct scientific words in each topic and can make good attempts at correct spelling. When they use apparatus they are careful to use it properly and they observe safety precautions. Older pupils use microscopes well and are able to focus correctly and describe what they can see.
93. The pupils' notebooks show plenty of evidence that they regularly undertake practical work. However, they have been given limited opportunities to write in more depth and plan their own investigative work, including devising fair tests. They are also weak on interpreting data and evaluating the outcomes of experiments. These aspects of the teaching of experimental and investigative science could be improved, particularly for older pupils. The teachers regularly mark pupils' work and write encouraging comments on it. They do not always tell pupils clearly enough what they need to do to make their work better. This is another area for improvement.
94. The quality of teaching in science lessons is good overall, with some very good teaching on occasions. The teachers plan their lessons well and make it clear what pupils need to learn. They usually manage the pupils' behaviour effectively and they have clear expectations and well established classroom rules. A specialist science teacher, who has good subject knowledge and relates well to the pupils, does most of the teaching. All these factors help the pupils to learn well and make good progress. The classroom assistants also play a key role and they provide very effective support for pupils' learning. In a minority of lessons the pace is too slow at some points and the pupils become restless and more difficult to manage. This has a negative effect on the quality of learning. There is appropriate equipment for using computers to enhance science teaching but this is not yet being used consistently. This is an area for further improvement.
95. Where the teaching is good, the pupils respond very well. They are well motivated and show interest in science. They generally try hard and persevere quite well even though some have very limited powers of concentration. They have good relationships and co-operate well with each other. These factors help them to learn effectively.
96. Science is well managed overall. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and since her appointment she has brought about good improvements by addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection. The resources for teaching science are good. Assessment of pupils' progress is carried out regularly and records are kept up to date. However, the use of assessment data to set targets for attainment is not yet well established. There is also a need for closer monitoring of curriculum coverage in Years 1 and 2 to make sure that programmes of study are fully covered.

The teachers makes occasional good use of the school grounds as an extra resource for teaching science but this is also an area that could be further developed.

ART AND DESIGN

The provision for art is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils draw and experiment with a range of art materials
- Pupils experience a variety of art forms from around the world
- Art activities are stimulating and interest pupils

Areas for improvement

- Teachers lack sufficient expertise in art
- There are too few opportunities for pupils in Year 7 onwards to refine ideas through their own research and experimentation.
- A dedicated area for art in which pupils in Year 7 onwards have access to a wide range of art resources

97. Overall, pupils throughout the school are achieving satisfactorily. They have regular opportunities to develop ideas creatively but, because there is a lack expertise in teaching art, pupils are not acquiring the knowledge and skills to make better progress.
98. By the end of Year 2, pupils have explored colour and paint effects, for example, what happens to red as it mixed with other colours. They have looked at snowdrops and made paintings. Pupils print patterns of alternating shapes and colours in which there is a close link to what they learn in mathematics. In a lesson they developed a conversation around the sections of fruits being used for printing. One described the skin of the pear as *“green and brown”* and another says its inside is *“white”*. The whole group looked closely and in wonderment as each fruit was sliced to reveal its inside. Seeing the seeds encased in the apple, one boy knew there is a link with apple trees. Each pupil chose the fruit to print with and decided on the colour to use and where to place the imprint. Seeing the result from using the nectarine a pupil described it as *“round with a hole”*.
99. By the end of Year 6, pupils work imaginatively in developing their ideas and experiment with new methods. However, their knowledge of how such elements as pattern, texture, tone and colour are manipulated creatively lags behind this. They explore the colour and shape in Mondrian’s geometric abstracts and make close copies of Mondrian’s compositions using squares and rectangles filled with primary colours. Most pupils achieve smooth brushwork and an even application of paints. In sketchbooks, using colouring crayons or pencil, pupils make observational drawings of a variety of objects. In a lesson they developed individual ideas on illustrating a map of their locality, drawing key features like fishing boats and designing symbols for other features. A few are very imaginative in creating symbols, for example, using a collage technique and assembling designs by combining different materials.
100. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils have developed their observational drawing skills soundly. In a drawing of a vase of flowers, they show the colour tones in flower stems and represent the details found in the structure of flower petals and one pupil dealt with the shape, transparency and perspective of the glass container effectively. However, creative development is not supported effectively because pupils lack the knowledge of how materials and processes can be experimented with to extend and refine their ideas. In a lesson which had an interesting and challenging theme based on the pupils’ responses to war, pupils did very little with the imagery supplied by the teacher other than what the teacher suggested. Other Year 9 pupils achieve more from developing ideas in response to a Rousseau jungle painting. They appreciated the visual effectiveness of Rousseau’s stylised foliage and sought to reproduce this but often did not have the technical skills to transpose their drawn ideas into cut out designs.

101. By the end of Year 11, pupils show a fascination with Bridget Riley's Op Art paintings and have understood how to squash, expand and twist shapes within a black and white grid to create similar optical effects. One pupil made his work using the drawing facility of a computer.
102. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many aspects of teaching in art lessons are good but there is not enough art expertise in the school to ensure the good efforts teachers make result in good learning. Pupils learn to experiment with art materials and grow to enjoy the imaginative use of these. They get to know about artists and diverse art forms such as Islamic art. However, the work they create often lacks individuality because outcomes are over-prescribed by teachers. Teachers do not appreciate fully, particularly in connection with pupils in Year 7 and beyond, the need for starting points from which pupils set out to explore in their own directions. Teachers then need the knowledge and technical skills to support them in this to ensure pupils are being challenged sufficiently. The approach teachers have to art lessons is often good or very good in terms of the planning and organisation of activities and use of time. This ensures pupils' good interest and involvement. Planning is not focused sharply enough on objectives that promote pupils' learning about visual and tactile elements such as pattern, texture, line and tone. As a consequence, the attention to assessing the knowledge and skills associated with these is not close enough. Resources are thought about and prepared carefully. In Year 2, for example, the group were well placed to see the teacher introduce the fruit for a printing activity. Clear descriptions and good questioning stimulated a flow of observations from pupils on colour, shape, smell and their knowledge of the fruits. Similarly good conversations took place around Rousseau's painting in Year 9 and Bridget Riley's work with Year 11 pupils. In these instances pupils had a little more freedom to respond creatively. Year 11 pupils had a selection of art books to hand, which they flicked through with interest as they worked on their drawings.
103. The improvement in art since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Several areas in teaching and provision identified then as needing development have not been addressed. They persist and standards have not improved. This is a consequence of leadership in the subject over this period being unsatisfactory. The curriculum is the QCA scheme of work for art for mainstream schools, which has not been translated sufficiently to be relevant to the learning needs of these pupils. Overall, art resources are satisfactory but more books on art and illustrations of artists' work are required as points for pupils to start from and to inform their ideas. The progress of pupils in Year 7 onwards is also hampered by the lack of a dedicated art room, where they would have direct access to a wide range of resources. Towards addressing the shortcomings in art, the school has begun exploring ways of developing the subject through a link with a Beacon Special School. An accredited course in art and design will also be investigated.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, provision in design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils' achievement in their work with food and textiles
- The relationships between teachers, classroom assistants and pupils
- The teacher's expertise in food studies and textiles
- Well planned lessons with interesting and stimulating activities for pupils
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed well through the subject

Areas for improvement

- The teacher's expertise in work with resistant materials
- Pupils solving problems by designing products and evaluating the effectiveness of these
- The use of information and communication technology

104. The design and technology curriculum includes work with food and textiles as well as with resistant materials like wood, metal and plastics. The work with resistant materials has not been as strong as work with food and textiles. This is due to the fact that there is a temporary teacher

for resistant materials since the beginning of the school year. This has reduced the range of materials pupils work with and has restricted the design and evaluation dimensions involved in making and analysing products. This particularly affects pupils in Years 7 to 9. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 spend part of their time at the Blackpool and Fylde College of Further Education, where they undertake AQA certificated courses using metal as well as in painting and decorating.

105. Overall, taking into consideration all of the materials pupils use, their achievement is good throughout the school. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when pupils were achieving satisfactorily. Their achievement is good up to the end of Year 6 and in Years 10 and 11. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9 in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills using resistant materials and this is related to the lack of a suitably qualified and experienced teacher at the present time and the consequent limitations to the curriculum.
106. By the end of Year 2, pupils cut and fix card, weave patterns with paper and make fruit salads. Lower-attaining pupils join in these making activities, with support. By the end of Year 6, pupils take preformed medium density fibreboard (MDF) shapes and attach dowelling and pre-cut wheels, assemble them with glue and paint them to make simple vehicles. They know that there are different kinds of bread from around the world and evaluate the fillings of pasties. They design and make a soft toy for a toddler, using felt and simple assembly techniques. Lower-attaining pupils produce the same artefacts, with support. By the end of Year 9, pupils finish pre-cut wooden shapes and assemble them with glue and paint and attach fabric to make simple puppets. They plan and make breakfasts, including shopping for ingredients. They design and make pump bags and know about the production of cotton. Lower-attaining pupils produce similar items and follow the same processes, but need more help. By the end of Year 11, pupils have completed AQA examination courses. They have designed and made a wrought iron decorative house number at college. In school, they know about handling and storing food safely and they can design and make a patchwork cushion cover.
107. Teaching and learning are good overall. It was not possible to observe the teaching of the group of Year 1 and 2 pupils but, from discussions with teachers and an examination of work, digital photos and teachers' records, teaching is good. Where lessons are very good, they are planned well, with a wide range of stimulating activities appropriate to each pupil, which maintain the pupils' interest and concentration. Objectives are shared well with the pupils and well-focused questioning enables the pupils to recall what they already know and gives them confidence. The relationships between the teachers, classroom assistants and pupils are outstanding. The pupils are valued and there is very good teamwork, which means that the pupils have the confidence to undertake tasks which really stretch them. The pupils' attitudes are usually very good. There is an air of industry in lessons and the pupils work hard, maintain interest and behave very well. Literacy is promoted well, through well focused questions which promote communication, speaking and listening. Numeracy is promoted effectively through estimation, weighing and measuring during making activities. As they move through the school, higher-attaining pupils are increasingly able to work on their own without supervision and lower-attaining pupils are effectively and sensitively supported by teachers and learning support assistants. There is a very good mix of enabling and direct instruction. Very good attention is paid to safety and hygiene issues. Homework is used very effectively in food technology and textiles. Although digital photographs are used to record work, it is not used systematically to assess the pupils' progress and in general, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology for individual research and to enable the design and evaluation process.
108. The leadership of the co-ordinator for food technology and textiles is very good. She has a considerable vision for the way these parts of design and technology should be taken forward. The acting co-ordinator for resistant materials is doing a very good job in maintaining most elements of this part of the subject until the school appoints a qualified and experienced teacher. The accommodation is good overall, with a well equipped food technology and textiles room and a workshop for resistant materials. However, there is insufficient storage for materials and for ongoing pupils' work. The improvement in design and technology since the last inspection has been good overall, with improved teaching, better schemes of work and more effective

assessment procedures in food technology and textiles, all of which have helped to improve standards.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils' map reading skills
- The quality of teaching and the very good teamwork of teachers and classroom assistants in supporting pupils
- The assessment of pupils' progress
- The leadership and management of geography

Areas for improvement

- The element of physical geography in the curriculum
- The promotion of pupils' numeracy skills through geography

109. Pupils achieve well in geography. In Year 11, they gain certificates accredited by the AQA for basic map reading skills, and for completing studies of the United States of America and European Studies. In map work, they use four figure grid references and identify map symbols accurately. They recognise and correct obvious errors of scale. They locate key features of Europe and North America such as major cities.

110. By the end of Year 6, they show a basic understanding of the water cycle and compare Fleetwood with other towns. They distinguish different kinds of buildings, such as churches from photographs. They make simple maps of their local environment and describe its main features. They relate different occupations, such as fishing, to their environments and accurately draw a cross section of a volcano. By the age of fourteen, they show an awareness of other world locations such as Brazil and India, and show a good understanding in comparing and contrasting them with their own locality. Pupils show a satisfactory knowledge of geographical facts and some good skills in map reading but their understanding of geographical processes, such as the factors that lead to different settlement patterns, is more limited.

111. Geography is taught well. Lessons are well planned, as in a lesson on the theme of tourism in Brazil for pupils in Years 8 and 9, which carefully organised tasks for group and individual work. Good subject knowledge in this lesson ensured that pupils drew appropriate comparisons between Brazil and Blackpool. A lesson as part of the coursework for the AQA unit on map reading gave pupils very clear and suitably challenging objectives and included very careful rehearsal of previous work on grid references and on methods of estimating distances along curved lines. Teaching methods and strategies provide a good mix of exposition, use of video and question and answer. Resources are used well, with globes available to all classes and used appropriately to demonstrate global environments. Teachers use many opportunities to encourage pupils' literacy skills, as in a lesson on India which focused on pupils' speaking and listening. Teachers use information and communication technology satisfactorily to teach geography but do not exploit the full range of opportunities available to help understand geographical processes such as river development. Some work on Japan contained large amounts of Internet text, which is unhelpful to pupils' understanding. Teachers show very good classroom management skills which help pupils to progress well. Most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, which helps to keep pupils' attention focused on the task, and teachers deal skilfully and discreetly with minor interruptions. Teachers and learning support assistants combine very well to give pupils individual support.

112. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning in geography. They are very attentive and work with sustained effort and concentration. A rich teaching environment, in which the teacher deploys a good breadth of techniques, helps to nurture pupils' interest in the subject. Pupils produce some good written work with neatly labelled maps and diagrams and explain their work enthusiastically and with a sense of pride to adults. They work very co-operatively in small groups

or as a whole class. Pupils are polite and respectful to adults in the classroom, and respond very well to visitors. They behave well and are quick to respond to requests from teaching staff or learning support assistants.

113. The curriculum in geography is generally broad and balanced, and the interpretation and comparison of local and contrasting environments is very well provided for. Study of map reading skills is particularly well developed and accredited externally through the AQA scheme in Year 11. The school's geography curriculum offers pupils insufficient experience of physical geography processes and its contribution to pupils' numeracy skills is not yet fully developed. Work in geography contributes to literacy satisfactorily through learning vocabulary and speaking and listening activities.
114. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic in seeking constantly to improve standards in geography and offers clear guidance and support to his colleagues. Assessment in geography is very good. Pupils' progress is recorded carefully at twice-yearly intervals, and teachers are given a portfolio of moderated examples of pupils' work at different levels of attainment to help them to form an accurate view of how well pupils are achieving. Pupils are encouraged to select interesting samples of work for their 'Best work' folder. Over the last four years, the subject co-ordinator has built up a portfolio of work to show how standards have improved. This portfolio is also used to inform discussion how the curriculum needs to be adapted over time. There is good provision for whole-school in-service training. He works closely with the advisory teacher for geography and with local schools, which ensures that geography teaching is informed well by other perspectives. The school has done well to maintain the good provision in geography noted at the last inspection.

HISTORY

Overall, the provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils' achievements and attitudes
- Curriculum planning
- Co-ordination of the subject

Areas for development

- The use of assessment
- The monitoring and development of teaching
- The use by pupils of historical evidence to investigate and reach their own conclusions

115. All pupils achieve well. Younger pupils learn to sequence events in the school day and in stories. By the end of Year 2 they develop ideas of "then" and "now" by putting into order Elizabethan, Victorian and modern houses and by comparing appliances used in homes at different times. They compare holidays now with those in the past. They find information in pictures of Ancient Egypt to describe buildings and beliefs. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 start to use evidence as historians. They speculate on the use of objects found in a Viking longhouse. In a local study they identify old streets and compare old and modern maps of the area. By the end of Year 6 they deepen their understanding of past societies. As ancient Greeks they write their personal responses about what it feels like to own a slave and to be a slave. They develop further their understanding of changes over time by describing how life in Britain has changed in the last fifty years. They make good gains in their knowledge of particular periods, for example in learning and describing the main features of each of Henry VIII's marriages.
116. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 show a good understanding of particular events. They sequence the events leading to the start of World War One. They complete imaginary diary entries on their feelings both at the time the Berlin Wall was built and when it was knocked down. They produce investment brochures describing the advantages of the new Coalbrookdale Iron Works. By the

end of Year 9, pupils develop research skills in finding out about features of life in Britain on the Home Front in World War Two. They find evidence for people's enthusiasm for joining the army at the start of World War One, although in work seen there were too few opportunities for pupils to use evidence sources. In Years 10 and 11, pupils develop a good understanding of life at different times. They find evidence for changes in lifestyle, for example an increase in the issue of television licences. They describe the lifestyle of the unemployed in Britain in the 1930's. They draw conclusions from information contained in a Jarrow Crusade poster and write letters about what it was like to be on the Jarrow March. Again, in work seen, the opportunities to use evidence sources are limited. They develop further their knowledge of particular periods by completing project work, for example on popular music in Britain in the 1960's.

117. Teaching is good and pupils respond with very good attitudes and behaviour. The four lessons seen were all well planned and challenging in their content. In a lesson involving pupils in Years 10 and 11 there is a good range of resources to support learning. Good quality flashcards depicting features of life over the past fifty years provoke interest and discussion. There is a good range of other resources to help pupils classify the cards and order them chronologically. Information and communication technology is particularly effective with pupils making good use of an index of topics to assist their research. In a lesson involving pupils in Years 2 to 5, the teacher makes good use of pictures of ancient Egypt so that pupils have to justify their views of life then by pointing to evidence in the pictures. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils are challenged well when writing about daily life from the viewpoint of an Egyptian child. Both teacher and classroom assistant each work effectively with a smaller group, keeping all pupils on task. In a follow up discussion on the differences between life in ancient Egypt and life today there is insufficient reference back to the evidence, with the discussion too teacher-directed. In a lesson involving pupils in Years 8 and 9, class management is very effective with pupils' responses well used in a lively discussion on Europe at the end of World War Two. The subsequent focus on the start of the Cold War is too ambitious, lacks focus and is not sufficiently referenced to evidence sources.
118. Leadership and management are good. New schemes of work are well referenced to the National Curriculum. Resources are well organised. The monitoring of lesson planning is good, although the observation of teaching by the co-ordinator does not occur. Assessment procedures are developing well, with the planned introduction of special scales to measure the small steps of progress made by pupils with learning difficulties, which will enhance the already established use of the levels of attainment described in the National Curriculum. However, the information about pupils' progress gathered through assessment is not used to inform planning. Improvement from the last inspection is good, including the introduction of an accredited course for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Lesson planning and the help given to pupils by teachers and their assistants, especially to lower-attaining pupils
- The information and communication technology suite and the resources throughout the school for the subject

Areas for improvement

- The use of information and communication technology in science, design and technology and religious education
- The marking of pupils' work

119. Pupils' achievements are good in all years, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. All of the pupils passed the OCR examination in 2001. The overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

120. By the end of Year 2, the pupils use the program 'Dazzle' to make rainbow fish: higher-attaining pupils use the keyboard to produce simple word-processed sentences, with support. Most pupils know that day-to-day devices, like television sets and washing machines, respond to commands and signals.
121. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' skills have developed well and higher-attaining pupils use Dazzle to produce more complicated designs; changing colours and tools and 'Word' to produce sentences; changing font, font size and font colour. They load programs from the computer hard drive and for a CD-ROM. They access simple information on the Internet via a search engine with help. Lower-attaining pupils need more support and help to access the same work.
122. By the end of Year 9, the pupils have further developed their skills in word processing, use of the Internet for research, control technology and desk-top publishing. They use the 'spell-check' facility in the word processing program. Pupils look for and find Internet addresses and move between Internet web site pages. They know how to download and print information from the Internet. Pupils program a robotic toy to direct its movements through a maze. Lower attaining pupils use the same programs with support.
123. By the end of Year 11, the pupils' skills are even more proficient, using digital images and clip art to illustrate their word-processed stories. They use desk top publishing facilities to design and produce the front cover for a programme for a school event. They show increased sophistication in data handling and control technology. By this time, the pupils are using the Internet in other subjects proficiently, for example finding out chronologies in history. Lower-attaining pupils cover much of the same work but need more support.
124. Overall, teaching and learning in information and communication technology are good, with some very good teaching. No discrete information and communication technology teaching was observed during the inspection in Years 1 and 2, but from an examination of pupils' work and from discussions with teachers, teaching is good in these years. Very good lessons are characterised by the teachers' high expectations of work and of attitudes and behaviour. The pupils' attitudes to information and communication technology lessons are good and sometimes very good. They enjoy the activities on offer and work hard in most lessons. Most pupils maintain interest and behave well. They become increasingly able to work on their own as they get older and help each other to access files. The pupils are sensible and mature in the computer suite and look after the equipment well. These positive attitudes are directly related to the clear routines which have been established for information and communication technology lessons and to the teachers' and learning support assistants' high expectations of behaviour.
125. Lesson planning is good, especially for pupils of differing skills, and the teachers make the pupils aware of what will be happening in the lesson at the beginning well. Questioning is used effectively to enable the pupils to recall what they have already learned and to prepare for the practical activities in the current lesson. There is a good mix of direct instruction and enabling, which gives the pupils information and, at the same time, makes them think about the tasks in hand. The activities are carefully chosen so that the pupils feel confident and, as a result of this, they remain involved and interested throughout each lesson. Lower-attaining pupils receive very good help and support from the teachers and from the learning support assistants. The relationships between the teachers, learning support assistants and pupils are outstanding: the pupils know they are valued, trust the adults and work very hard for them. The teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils extremely well and use ongoing assessment effectively to plan tasks. The teachers and learning support assistants use praise and encouragement well, giving the pupils confidence to practise skills they have already acquired and undertake new skills. However, pupils' work is not marked and annotated in order to demonstrate to pupils their progress and how they can improve.
126. The overall leadership provided by the subject co-ordinator is good. He has a clear vision for developing the subject and is well qualified and experienced. He offers very good support to his colleagues. The teachers and learning support assistants are confident in the use of information and communication technology. Staff have taken part in training led by the co-ordinator, who is an accredited trainer. The staff use information and communication technology well in other areas

of the curriculum and its use was observed in most curriculum areas during the inspection. However, the use of information and communication technology in science, design and technology and religious education is unsatisfactory. There is a well-equipped computer suite and the department is well resourced.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

Overall, the provision for French is **very good**.

Strengths

- The very good teaching and the contribution of the classroom assistants
- The well-balanced curriculum

Areas for improvement

(none)

127. It was only possible to see three lessons in French during the inspection. These, together with a scrutiny of work covered, listening to recordings of pupils' growing confidence in the language, and a review of the planning for the subject, enable a secure judgement to be made.
128. Pupils' achievement is very good. They have made very good progress over time, and particularly with their pronunciation and their ability to recognise, and spell, some key French words. By the end of Year 6, pupils respond promptly and accurately to questions about their birth date, and enjoy playing a card-matching game to establish the sound and spelling of the words for a fish, a rabbit, a cat and a dog. By the end of Year 9, pupils develop their vocabulary through a variety of means, particularly very jolly and tuneful singing, where the pronunciation is better than in the spoken word. These pupils sing confidently '*le port – c'est loin?*' and know the words for the harbour, the football ground, the beach and the hotel. They are learning about the weather in France, so that they know how to say it is sunny, raining, foggy or windy, and follow clear instructions which enable them to associate sunshine with the south of France and rain with the middle and the west, and all on a large size map of France. This is well known, as one pupil realises that his is upside down, and quickly puts this right. They also increase their vocabulary about sports, and how to say their address in French.
129. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen is very good. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned, lively and interesting, rigorous, and enormous fun. The teacher has secure knowledge of the subject, good pronunciation and fortunately a good singing voice, and is sufficiently confident to conduct much of the lessons in French. The pupils are expected to behave themselves, work hard, work happily together, and to enjoy their lessons. All of these things they do with willing hearts. High expectations of enjoyment and success, and the enthusiastic and energetic style of teaching, lead to very good response and progress. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are very good. Some pupils find it difficult to inhibit their natural exuberance, but the teacher ensures that energies are properly channelled. The lessons are planned carefully, with very good attention to the part played by the invaluable classroom assistants, and a nice sense of the balance between the prior learning of the pupils and their ability to absorb new phrases and pronunciations.
130. The curriculum for French is a sensible and logical blend of listening, speaking, reading and writing. This represents considerable improvement since the last inspection, when there was deemed to be too much emphasis on the written word, and on the previous one, where there was deemed to be too much aural and oral work. The school is adequately resourced for the language, and the subject co-ordinator has wisely assembled the French curriculum using a

variety of sources. This has the huge benefit that it can be readily changed to suit a particular group of pupils coming into the school.

131. The provision made by the school for French is, overall, very good. This represents very significant improvement since the last inspection in terms of both the quality and standard of teaching, and in the content of the lessons. There are now exciting plans afoot to extend this provision and to develop contacts with French schoolchildren.

MUSIC

Overall, the provision for music is **very good**.

Strengths

- The expertise of the music teacher
- The importance attached to music and its promotion, especially singing, in the work of the school
- The resources for music

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring and support of others who teach music

132. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily by the end of Year 2 and achieving very well thereafter because the teaching they receive is consistently very good or better. Singing and performing plays a significant part in the life of the school; regularly in assemblies and in public performances both in school and beyond.
133. By the end of Year 2, pupils listen with enjoyment and interest to songs and rhymes and try to participate. They do not have the level of interest and skill to take part in singing or performing in other ways as a group. Pupils have considerable difficulty with the physical co-ordination required to clap their hands together to a simple beat but attempt what they can, such as tapping out the beat with hands on their thighs. The teacher's attempts at involving pupils are tentative and do not stimulate a high level of interest to get pupils to make their best efforts.
134. By the end of Year 6, pupils have moved ahead considerably. They give very good attention to co-ordination when performing as a group. Together they beat out a rhythm using a selection of percussion instruments and explore expressive sound qualities made by these instruments, for example, the sound of the sea, linking this to accompanying the story of *Jack the Pirate*. They apply what they know about rhythm to reciting a poem and keeping to a steady beat. Pupils identify different percussion instruments by their sounds and know the difference between tuned and untuned instruments.
135. By the end of Year 9, pupils confidently sing together and with increased enjoyment. They listen to different forms of music and identify the sorts of images music projects, for example, that it is expressive of outer space. In response to the music they hear, pupils select the appropriate percussion instruments that can reproduce the different sounds in the composition. By the end of Year 11, pupils read simple musical notation, following their scores in practising short phrases on the electronic keyboard. They programme the electronic keyboard to the required style, tempo and voice for their music. In Years 10 and 11, pupils gain accreditation for performance on keyboards and tuned percussion instruments, which counts towards a certificate of achievement.
136. Teaching and learning are satisfactory up to the end of Year 2 and thereafter, up to the end of Year 11, they are very good. Where teaching is very good or better it is very effectively planned. This means lessons get off to a quick and positive start and a very good pace is maintained. Learning objectives are clearly identified and these are fully shared with pupils. At the start of each lesson pupils are helped to recall their previous work and are shown how the work they are about to do builds on this. High expectations are well established in this process. Pupils begin with a very good knowledge of what they are about to do and how this contributes to their progress. As a consequence, they develop considerable interest and maintain a high level of

attention and effort throughout music lessons. They arrive poised for a busy and enjoyable lesson and give full co-operation from the outset. Teachers have good expertise in music and approach the subject with confidence. Activities are varied and lively and the positive encouragement teachers give leads pupils into very good involvement with rehearsing and performing. Good instrumental demonstrations are given, which impress pupils and help to urge them on. In Year 11, for example, pupils have adopted a very serious attitude and persevere with refining their skills on the keyboard. One girl, who experienced difficulties in keying, stopped and asked a series of questions on her technique and with further practice resolved the problem. Where teaching and learning are not as effective, the teacher has less music expertise and does not plan lessons in such good detail. Pupils are much less involved.

137. The leadership and management of music are good. Music contributes considerably to the social and cultural development of pupils and the music co-ordinator has a leading role in this. There are many opportunities for public performances in school and outside at various music festivals. Musicians visit school: for example, most recently a harpist performed and demonstrated how the instrument worked. The resources for music are very good. Where music is taught in general classrooms, each has its own wide collection of percussion instruments. There is a further supply in the music room along with a sufficient number of good electronic keyboards. Pupils have the table space and power supplies to set these up for individual practice. The assessment of pupils' progress is good and this is used well in curricular planning. The co-ordinator does not monitor the other teachers when they teach music, which is a hindrance to evaluating provision and giving support to teachers where it is required. The improvement since the last inspection is good. The standards pupils achieve are higher and teaching is more consistently very good. The school has done well to maintain the positive profile of music in the school and in the involvement through music with its wider community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the provision for physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- There is a good scheme of work and very good support for teachers' planning
- The curriculum is well matched to the pupils' needs
- The subject is enthusiastically led by a specialist teacher
- All the pupils participate very well in lessons
- The quality of teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of pupils
- The subject has good resources and equipment

Areas for improvement

- Pupils could be given more opportunities to evaluate their own performances
- The monitoring of teaching and standards in practical lessons by the subject co-ordinator

138. The pupils make good progress in learning in physical education and achieve well in relation to their past performances. Boys and girls and pupils of all ages participate equally well and there are no significant differences in the relative standards they achieve.
139. All physical education lessons are taught in the same mixed age classes that pupils have for their other lessons, although many of the lessons are taught by the physical education co-ordinator, who is a specialist. The curriculum gives all pupils access to a broad range of activities, including games, athletics, swimming, dance, gymnastics and outdoor adventurous activities.
140. Achievement and progress are satisfactory for pupils up to the end of Year 2 and good for all other pupils. There are wide variations in attainment but by Year 6 many pupils demonstrate some control in simple short tennis exercises, for example in controlling the bounce of the ball on the racquet or against a wall. They perform one-footed and two-footed jumps over a distance, following instructions to improve their performance. They respond to a stimulus in dance, in order to interpret characters, for example on a *'Mister Men'* theme. In swimming lessons they have made good progress by the end of Year 6 and they are generally confident in the water and respond well to the teacher's instructions. Many have gained distance awards for swimming up to 25 metres.
141. By the end of Year 9 the pupils are learning techniques for the changeover in relay races and they follow instructions well in order to try to improve their performance. In dance they follow the teacher's instructions to perform a folk dance, co-operating well with each other and memorising the sequence of movements. They also interpret a theme such as *'Miami Vice'* by playing out a role through dance movements suggesting the character of the actors.
142. By the end of Year 11 pupils have further improved their running skills and they volley or half volley a short tennis ball and some maintain a rally for several shots. Some also perform a reasonably accurate half-volleyed serve, although many find this more difficult.
143. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in some lessons. The teachers plan their lessons well and they have a clear idea of what they expect the pupils to learn. They are assisted in this by having a good scheme of work and very good support for lesson planning, in the form of printed materials made available by the subject co-ordinator. The teachers give clear instructions and demonstrate techniques well. They have good control of the pupils and generally make good use of the time available. Although the lessons are quite short, changing is carried out quickly and the teachers and classroom assistants also change into appropriate kit, setting a good example to pupils. All these factors help the pupils to make progress and achieve well. Pupils are sometimes asked to evaluate their own performances or suggest ways of improving other people's performances. For example, in dance lessons they have used a video camera to record and improve their techniques. However, this does not happen in many lessons and is an aspect of teaching that could be improved. The learning support assistants play an important part in helping the pupils to get the most from each lesson. They are fully involved in planning with the teacher and have clear roles in all lessons. A qualified swimming teacher at the local pool teaches

swimming. The lessons are well organised and the teaching is effective, helping the pupils to make good progress. Assessment records are kept up to date and are used to monitor progress.

144. The pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They all wear appropriate kit, participate fully in lessons and usually work with obvious enjoyment, trying hard to succeed. A few pupils present more challenging behaviour but this is effectively dealt with by the teachers and learning support assistants. The pupils co-operate well with each other and are often enthusiastic about the work they are asked to do, persevering well when they find it difficult. These positive attitudes help the pupils to learn well.
145. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and gives good support to the other staff. She has worked hard to change the style of the physical education course, to make it more inclusive for all pupils, with the result that pupils participate well and enjoy all aspects of the subject. Good use is made of outside coaching input from local organisations such as Fleetwood Rugby Club and the pupils are given many opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities such as dance presentations. Dance groups from outside have also performed at the school and a celebration of Indian dance has been planned for next term. A noticeboard is maintained in the school hall and pupils are encouraged to contribute their own items for display. This helps to foster the interest in physical education and good attitudes that are evident in lessons.
146. Although much of physical education is taught by the co-ordinator, the other teachers are also involved. The co-ordinator has had little time to monitor the quality of teaching and provide feedback and advice. The resources are good and the accommodation is satisfactory, although the school hall is too small for teaching larger groups of older pupils. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection is good. Pupils' achievement, as reported in the last inspection, has been maintained and in some aspects it has improved.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils' achievement and responses
- Curriculum planning
- Leadership and management of the subject

Areas for development

- The use of assessment
- The use of information and communication technology
- The monitoring and development of teaching in religious education by the co-ordinator

147. Achievement is good. Pupils' learning about different religions develops well. Skills in reflection and response also show good progression. Both higher and lower-attaining pupils achieve well in both these areas of learning.
148. Younger pupils learn about stories from the Bible. They put into a sequence the events in the story of the Nativity and make a display of the different animals going aboard Noah's Ark. They learn to make their own responses, for example by illustrating their own gift for baby Jesus. In Years 3 to 6 pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge of Bible stories by illustrating the sequence of events in stories from the Old and New Testaments. They also develop their understanding of other faiths, for example by describing the features of different Hindu gods and by writing their own prayer on a Buddhist prayer banner. Skills in personal reflection and response develop well, with pupils writing prayers for their own families and for people who are hungry.
149. In Years 7 to 9 pupils make good progress in the use of terminology linked to particular faiths, for example in describing the Jewish celebration of Shabbat and the five pillars of Islam. They

compare the Last Supper with modern examples of special meals. They show an awareness of how religious belief can influence opinion, for example in writing about a Christian view of “looking after number one”. They develop further their skills in personal response in writing about feelings and friendship and about the ingredients for a happy marriage. In Years 10 and 11 pupils develop more mature personal responses, for example in giving opinions on abortion, euthanasia, drugs and whether couples should stay together when breakdowns occur. They develop a more detailed understanding of different faiths, for example in explaining why Muslims fast during Ramadan. They show an understanding of symbolism, for example in baptism. They illustrate some of Jesus’ parables and comment on their meaning.

150. Teaching is good with some very good teaching. Pupils respond with very good attitudes and behaviour. In one very good lesson, involving pupils from Years 2 to 5, the use of time and resources is excellent. Each pupil is given a very short time to produce an illustrated figure. All achieve this except two pupils who use information and communication technology to choose a font for the poster title “*people are church*”. Pupils present their characters to the teacher and these are added to the poster inside the outline of a church. The final result is visually very good and is used very effectively to reinforce the idea that a church is more than a building. The very good use of time is a strong feature of the teaching in a thirty minute lesson involving pupils in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. The close questioning of pupils in a circle discussion is very effective and their recall of a recent visit to a local church improves progressively. All pupils then created stained glass window designs.
151. Classroom assistants are very effective in monitoring behaviour and assisting pupils in their use of scissors, glue and tissue paper. In a lesson involving pupils in Years 8 and 9, class management is very effective in sustaining a lively discussion about special meals. The teacher engages the interest of pupils well by drawing on their own experience but ensures that a link is sustained throughout the discussion with the Last Supper. In a lesson involving pupils in Years 9 to 11, discussion is also effective in consolidating pupils’ understanding of why Muslims fast. This discussion has a clear structure, with pupils summarising the purpose of fasting under several different headings. One pupil reads from the Qur’an and this adds interest. In a lesson involving pupils in Years 6 and 7, group work is effective, with resources appropriately varied so that both higher and lower attaining pupils complete an activity on identifying features inside a church. Where lessons were judged to be satisfactory and had a few shortcomings, the teacher’s introductions and the discussion were over-long. In a lesson involving pupils in Years 10 and 11, resources used in an introductory discussion give pupils good illustrations of how factory workers in poor countries are exploited. However, the follow-up information and communication technology activity lacks impact, because there was only one computer available for five pupils.
152. Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed co-ordinator has responded very promptly to incorporate the locally Agreed Syllabus schemes of work, published only last term, into the school’s own planning. Lesson planning is appropriately monitored but whole-school systems do not enable the monitoring of teaching to occur. Assessment procedures are good and record pupils’ progress in relation to relevant attainment targets, although information gained is not used to inform planning. A good range of resources is being developed. The opportunities to use information and communication technology have been identified but have yet to be implemented. Improvement from the last inspection is good.