

INSPECTION REPORT

HUNCOAT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Huncoat, Accrington

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119182

Headteacher: Mr D Price

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Murphy
16173

Dates of inspection: 20th January – 23rd January 2003

Inspection number: 251736
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Lynwood Road
Huncoat
Accrington
Lancashire

Postcode: BB5 6LR

Telephone number: 01254 233369

Fax number: 01254 301628

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Hayselden

Date of previous inspection: April 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16173	Mrs L Murphy	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage; English as an additional language; science; geography; and information and communication technology.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19446	Mrs S Wood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29426	Mr D Grimwood	Team inspector	Mathematics; art and design; history; and religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14851	Mr G Laws	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; design and technology; music; physical education; and educational inclusion	

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
BN21 3YB

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33 Kingsway
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This village school serves a socially and economically disadvantaged area near Accrington. The school is average in size with 192 pupils on roll, aged between four and 11. Almost all the pupils are of British heritage; a few are of mixed background. Six per cent of the pupils are Travellers. There are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language and these are at an early stage in acquiring English. The school has identified 33 pupils as having special educational needs, 17 per cent of the total which is below the national average. The range of special educational needs includes moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and sensory impairment. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs – a proportion which is above the national average. At 31 per cent the proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is above average nationally. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time of transfer is very high. The attainment of the children when they start school is well below average and lower than at the time of the last inspection. The school gained an Achievement Award from the DfES in 2000 and 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school that offers a satisfactory level of education for its pupils. Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science but average in all other subjects. Pupils make sound progress overall. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, as is the leadership and management of the school. As a result the school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good from the nursery through to Year 4
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and pupils make good progress
- Pupils behave well and form good relationships because of the good provision for their personal, spiritual and moral development
- Improvements to the learning environment are helping to improve standards
- Standards in music for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are above those typically expected for their age

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and Year 6
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do
- The use of assessment and recording so that work can be matched more precisely to pupils' attainment
- The role of managers to improve self-evaluation, monitoring and the consistency and implementation of procedures across the school
- The rate of attendance

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected in 1998. Improvements have been brought about in the quality of teaching, in the clarity to the roles of senior managers, in the raising of standards in information and communication technology and in addressing a large deficit budget. However, work on assessment has not been sufficiently rigorous. The rate of pupils' attendance has dropped. Standards declined

between inspections but the local education authority has provided extra help to the school and standards are now overall at the level found at the last inspection. Standards in religious education have risen for pupils in Year 2.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	D	C	A	well above average A above average B
mathematics	E	D	C	B	average C below average D
science	E	C	C	B	well below average E

The national tests in 2002 show standards to be average by the end of Year 6 in all tested subjects but better than those achieved in schools with pupils from similar socio-economic backgrounds.

In the same year, in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 standards were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. In writing and science in 2002 the school was placed in the bottom five per cent nationally of pupils attaining the expected level or above. When compared to similar schools Huncoat was well below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics.

The school's trend in standards is above the national trend. It met its targets in 2002 and is set to meet those for 2003. The targets provide an appropriate level of challenge.

The inspection judgement is that standards in the present Year 2 and Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science, though in reading they are at an average level. In all other subjects standards are at an average level across the school other than in music by the end of Year 2 where they are above average. No judgement was made on music, design and technology or physical education by the end of Year 6.

Children in the reception class are on course to reach standards that are below those typically expected in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Pupils' achievement is good by the end of the reception class and satisfactory in the rest of the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils particularly enjoy practical activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: pupils behave well in class and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them.
Personal development and relationships	Good: relationships between pupils and their teachers are good and impact well on the pupils' learning.
Attendance	Poor: the school's attendance figures are very low in comparison with those of other schools. The rate of unauthorised absence is above that found nationally. Furthermore, not all pupils are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery Reception	and	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good		Good	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is sound overall. It is good for pupils in the nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. It is sound overall for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 with notable strengths in Year 3 to 4.

The teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is sound overall though good for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. Teaching is also good for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in religious education, art, geography, history, music and physical education. The teaching of information and communication technology is good across the school. On the few occasions when teaching was unsatisfactory it was linked to weak planning and lack of subject knowledge.

Relationships are good and pupils are managed well, which means that teachers can get on with imparting knowledge and developing pupils' skills. Pupils who learn English as an additional language are well taught. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and the pupils make good progress towards their individual targets. The teaching of Travellers is of the same quality as that of other pupils. During lessons Travellers make sound progress. The school meets the needs of all pupils satisfactorily though the challenge for the higher attainers is not well enough planned. Not enough is expected of them and as a result they often mark time.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: it is broad and balanced and fully meets statutory requirements though it is not enriched through a great number of visits or visitors. The school has a strong programme for pupils' personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils get extra help from teaching assistants and, as a result, they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: the school makes sure that pupils have the extra help they need.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: the school provides well for pupils' spiritual and moral development though opportunities to study the rich cultural diversity of British society are limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well: it provides an environment in which pupils of all attainments can learn. There are systematic procedures to support pupils with individual needs. However, the school's procedures for assessing pupils' progress are unsatisfactory and do not clearly inform future planning to build on the knowledge and understanding of all pupils.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory: parents hold good views of the school and are supportive. They are well informed about routines and events in the school but receive little information on the curriculum and how they can support their children in their learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: the headteacher and key staff fulfil their roles soundly. Strengths are in the pastoral care the school provides. The roles of those with managerial responsibility are developing but need a clearer focus on the standards pupils achieve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily: governors have a clear view of the strengths and areas to develop although they have only recently been able to help in shaping the direction of the school because of constraints in the available funding. The governing body is well led.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory: though in the early stages. The quality of teaching and pupils' work is checked but monitoring lacks a sharp focus.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory: the school makes sure it gets the best value from its budget. It takes account of parental views and compares itself with other schools but is over-reliant on the local education authority to provide a

	good level of challenge.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory: the school has developed the accommodation well to make the best use of the space available. The school has an adequate number of teaching staff and a good number of support staff. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The school has high expectations of the children • The school is well led and managed • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information given about their children's progress

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents though judge the quality of management and expectations to be satisfactory rather than good. The inspection team agrees that more information could be given to parents to help them to support their children's learning, including more information on the progress they make.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Over several years the school has had a very large deficit budget and as a result has not made fast headway in its work being limited in resources for teaching and learning including limitations in the number of teaching assistants. The deficit has since been overcome and the local education authority stepped in to provide support, to which the school has responded well.

2. The outcome of this extra help is that the curriculum now offered to the Foundation Stage pupils is broad and balanced and there are the resources available to support the children's achievement across each of the early learning goals. Because staff have taken on board the extra help and advice the teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and pupils make good progress. From the well below average standards on entering the school pupils are on course to move up a notch to attain a standard below that typically expected for their age. Children learning English as additional language do well because sufficient time is given to ensuring that their understanding of oral and written language develops hand in hand and that a good range of experiences is provided to extend their vocabulary.

3. The support from the local education authority has also helped to improve the provision in Year 1 and Year 2 in which pupils achieve satisfactorily. The good teaching and learning have not had sufficient time to really push up standards, however, they are well set to do so. Nonetheless the concentration on English has raised standards in reading and writing from well below average in 2002 to standards below average this year. In mathematics standards are set to be at a similar level to last year's standards. Across English, mathematics and science the number of pupils attaining at a high level for their age is too low. There is some variance in teacher assessment for Year 2 pupils; staff are erring on the side of caution and are not expecting enough of the higher attainers. This is reflected in the teacher assessments of 2002.

4. Across Year 1 to Year 6 the school now places a greater emphasis on practical work in science though the match of work to pupils' level of attainment is not gauged well enough. The higher attainers complete work at a similar level to the middle band of pupils and too little is expected of them. In addition, in Year 2, pupils spend too much time filling in work sheets.

5. Though pupils make good headway in Year 3 to Year 4 the pace of acquiring new skills and knowledge slows in Year 5 and Year 6. Nonetheless, pupils achieve soundly overall and standards are rising. This was acknowledged externally when the school received an Achievement Award from the DfES in 2000 and 2001. In part standards are rising because the school spends some time boosting the attainment of Year 6 pupils prior to the national tests. Higher attainers are not well catered for and do not always make the fast progress that they should. Importantly, the school has introduced a system for checking pupils' progress and this is beginning to be used soundly to keep a track of individuals and groups of pupils to make sure they are achieving as much as they can. Individual targets are set for pupils but are used inconsistently across the school. Overall pupils are not fully aware of the targets and what they need to do to improve.

6. Standards in Year 6 are lower than they were in 2002 mainly because of variations in the groups and the number of pupils with special educational needs. Good provision is made to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, though opportunities for extended writing are minimal overall and reflect more general weaknesses in pupils' writing. In mathematics

pupils generally have yet to gain a clear understanding of number bonds. The methods they use to tackle mathematical problems are at times narrow. Literacy and numeracy are used soundly in other subjects.

7. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology and have quickly made up the gaps in their knowledge of the subject. This has been brought about in particular through good teaching of pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 by teaching assistants deployed to work in the computer suite. Because the subject is well led and managed the improvements since the last inspection are being embedded well.

8. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time of transfer is very high. For example, of the present Year 6 pupils almost 30 per cent have transferred from other schools. Of the present Year 2 pupils 43 per cent have not spent all their school life at this school. This adversely affects the standards attained by each year group. About one in five pupils has special educational needs and educational plans to meet their individual needs. Over the past year these plans have improved substantially. They set challenging and realistic targets. Most of these pupils make good progress, particularly in reading. Teaching assistants listen to them read very regularly. The quality of their handwriting is variable and spelling remains a problem for many. Those pupils who have targets in mathematics need constant practice. Almost all gain in confidence term by term and this helps them to improve their standards.

9. Over time the school has won the respect and understanding of Travellers, the number of whom fluctuates often quite dramatically throughout the year. For example, last year 20 Wayside Travellers joined the school for a number of weeks and then left to travel again. The influx of pupils new to the school changed the balance of classes considerably; for example, in Year 1 one third of the class joined mid-term. Support is promptly provided and the children make sound progress in lessons. Over time, however, their achievement is often less than satisfactory. Their lifestyle offers them the opportunities to travel and as a result their attendance rates vary quite considerably.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They like to come to school to learn. They are particularly interested in the practical activities that they are given and become enthusiastic about their work. An example of this was seen in an art lesson where pupils were making picture plates out of clay. Pupils were excited but listened carefully to the class teacher's instructions and responded well to her questions. When the teaching is focused and catches pupils' imagination they know what is expected of them and they often try to please the class teacher by taking time to present their work in an acceptable manner. They work quietly and sensibly, often sustaining concentration whether they are working as individuals, in pairs or in a group. When teaching is less focused and pupils are unclear of what is expected of them they become restless. For example, during a religious education lesson, pupils lost interest and became noisy. They were slow to settle to written tasks and did not produce a sufficient quantity of work in the given time as they were chattering to each other rather than concentrating on their work.

11. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms is good. The school is generally an orderly environment in which pupils move around in a quiet, polite and sensible manner. Most pupils behave well throughout the school day, although at times some find it difficult to sit still and concentrate on their work for any length of time. This is the result of the less inspiring teaching that does not always capture the interest of the pupils. When this is the case, time is spent settling pupils down to work and this can detract from the focus of the lesson. The school's ethos promotes good behaviour and the pupils respect each other and the buildings

and clearly understand the impact of their actions. A minority of pupils do not realise, however, that playing about with resources, calling out answers or talking is adversely affecting their own and their classmates' learning. Behaviour in the playground is satisfactory. At lunchtimes, the dinner hall is an orderly place although at times the noise levels are high. There have been three fixed term exclusions for unacceptable behaviour in the last academic year; on this the school rightly took a firm stance.

12. The personal development of pupils and relationships between pupils and their teachers are good. Pupils know the daily routines of the school and respond to teachers' requests. Adults who work in the classrooms act as good role models for the pupils and pupils respond by being polite to staff and visitors. Pupils show respect for the feelings of others by acting sensibly if they give inappropriate or wrong answers to questions. A few pupils are provided with a range of responsibilities, such as acting as library monitors and preparing the hall for assemblies. The school often misses opportunities for pupils to show initiative. However, pupils are given opportunities to make choices in their learning through the selection of resources in art for example. The attendance of Travellers at the school adds much to the quality of pupils' personal development and understanding of others. All pupils are accepted by each other and quickly settle into the school. After extended absences the Travellers are quickly welcomed back into the life of the school.

13. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work. They join in well with whole class activities and discussions. This helps to improve their speaking and listening skills. They know that their teachers want the best for them and that they are valued.

14. The school's attendance figures are poor and well below the national average and have fallen since the last inspection. The poor attendance is due in part to the movements of the community of Travellers and in part to the poor attendance of a small number of pupils. Pupils' absence adversely affects the continuity of their learning and their achievements and parents are made aware of this through regular reminders in letters home. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time, although a significant number arrives after registration and they may miss introductions to lessons, which impacts adversely on their learning. Registers are taken quickly at the start of each session.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and is an improved picture on that found at the time of the last inspection as now just over half of the teaching is good. The high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching found at the last inspection has mostly been remedied though it is not yet completely eradicated.

16. The quality of teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes and is marked by growing teamwork between teachers and support staff so as to promote all pupils' learning. Relationships are good; there is a sense of purpose and clear expectations of pupils' independence. Assessment is used well to match work to the children's needs. Relative weaknesses are in the teaching of reading in the reception class and the development of pupils' imaginative and physical responses when they play outside. The underlying planning for outside activities is not detailed enough or well enough linked to the rest of the week's work. Too little use is made of working with small groups to guide progress in reading and so pupils miss out on discussion. Expectations in terms of language development and the development of physical skills have not been sufficiently well thought through or monitored.

17. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good in the Foundation Stage. Staff have good knowledge of how to teach basic

skills and set interesting activities which promote enquiry. The adults are deployed well to encourage participation in group work and make effective use of resources to engage pupils' interest.

18. The good teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 has come about through intervention from the local education authority that has led to a greater degree of confidence, organisation and planning across a range of subjects.

19. The quality of teaching is good in information and communication technology. Pupils work in small groups with well-informed teaching assistants who are clear about the basic skills to be taught and how best to teach them. This works because of the subject expertise of the adults and because the subject co-ordinator has organised the system well. The good quality of discrete teaching in this subject is not so strongly reflected in the classroom where the teaching is sound, however. This is in part because the curriculum does not yet make clear links between subjects for staff to build upon.

20. Classroom assistants are all well informed of their roles and the quality of their work makes a positive contribution to children's learning and, in particular, helps those who have special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are usually taught with children of their own age. They often work together in Years 1 to 5 where the seating arrangements allow this to happen. In Year 6 they often work on their own or with a support assistant. The hard working team of assistants helps pupils significantly since they know their targets in their individual plans. Sometimes, assistants are spectators as the teacher talks to the whole class. When they are fully involved, as in a Year 2 music lesson, they contribute significantly to the organisation of the lesson. They also listen to pupils read almost every day, although precise evaluations of progress are not recorded. Teachers plan their lessons to ensure that the work for these pupils matches their levels of attainment. This is achieved most successfully in Years 1 to 4.

21. The very best teaching motivates and stimulates pupils' thirst for learning. This was the case in an excellent lesson for Year 3 pupils in dance and drama. It was characterised by a very high level of attentiveness and controlled emotion on the part of pupils. The lesson encouraged a very imaginative response to music and because it was well planned and relationships were strong the pupils gave of their very best. The lesson was exceedingly well led with very high expectations by the teacher of what it was possible for the pupils to achieve.

22. Where the teaching is good, pupils are well managed. Teachers mostly have high expectations of behaviour and expect pupils to apply themselves to their work. Well-established routines mean that no time is wasted and that pupils are confident in what is expected of them. Relationships are good and pupils work well together. Lessons are well planned and their purpose made clear. The pace of teaching is generally brisk, though the appropriateness of tasks for the higher attainers is not always sufficient to really challenge and speed their learning.

23. In some lessons, teachers' questioning is not as open or wide ranging as in the good teaching, with the result that, at times, pupils contribute too little to the lessons. It is often at these times that a minority of mainly older pupils become restless and the strategies to deal with this are insufficiently robust. Time for teaching and learning is thus wasted and, at its extreme, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Insecure subject knowledge and unsatisfactory planning are weaknesses not yet addressed by the school in Year 5 and Year 6 where expectations are not high enough.

24. The school implements the national strategies for literacy and numeracy soundly to suit the needs of its pupils in Year 1 to Year 4 and this means that teachers set work that interests pupils and staff and pupils are enthusiastic. For example, in Year 1 pupils re-told the story of Cinderella and made good gains in ordering events and in independent writing because lessons were structured well and built on the previous work. Day-to-day assessment informed the teacher where pupils were having difficulty and where their strengths lay and the work was adjusted as necessary. Such teaching is enthusiastic and pupils respond well in terms of enjoyment and endeavour. Both English and mathematics benefit from some additional incidental teaching through other subjects, though the links are not well planned. In Year 5 and Year 6 the teaching of literacy and numeracy is not as well planned and, as a result, the learning lacks the clarity seen in other classes. For example, in a Year 6 lesson in literacy the teacher mistakenly taught two weeks worth of work in one week and the pupils' learning lacked clarity and time for consolidation.

25. The teaching and learning of Travellers is sound and teachers adjust the tasks to take into account identified gaps in the Travellers' learning. The teaching is good at encouraging the Travellers to settle well into class routines and to quickly form good relationships with other pupils.

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

26. The school provides a sound curriculum that is broad and balanced with appropriate study of all the subjects in the National Curriculum and religious education. The provision for information and communication technology and religious education, for which the school has implemented the locally Agreed Syllabus, has improved since the last inspection and statutory requirements are now met. This has resulted in an improvement in pupils' learning in both these subjects and standards are now at expected levels. Information and communication technology is not yet being used to fully support learning in other subjects, with the possible exception of art and design, in which computers are being used to widen the range of experiences offered to the pupils. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and has benefited from the support of the local education authority. It addresses all the recommended areas of learning and is planned effectively to national guidelines.

27. All subjects are allocated an appropriate amount of time with a suitable emphasis on the key areas of literacy and numeracy. However, physical education for older pupils is taught in one fairly long weekly session. Two shorter sessions would give pupils physical exercise more frequently and would allow for a wider range of activities. It would also give Travellers, who are often absent from school at the end of the week, better opportunity to take part in the subject.

28. Since the last inspection the national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy have been implemented. This has been done thoroughly, particularly in numeracy. Although the effect of this is yet to spread throughout the school, it has already led to an improvement in standards in mathematics in the classes of younger pupils. In addition, the school has introduced sound policies and programmes of work in all the subjects of the National Curriculum, which are based on nationally recognised material, augmented by commercial schemes and, in some cases, adapted to make them more relevant to the pupils at the school. These help to ensure the breadth of the curriculum in each subject. They have gone some way to promoting a systematic development of pupils' skills throughout the school, but there is not yet a uniform approach to planning, assessment or teaching styles, with the result that pupils' progress is not always consistent.

29. Each child is treated individually and the school makes sure that the full range of educational opportunity is available to Travellers, additional help being provided as appropriate. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator, in conjunction with teachers and governors, has produced an up-to-date policy, which fully meets all the requirements of the revised Code of Practice. Teachers know the pupils well and those with special educational needs are quickly identified and supported. Individual education plans contain clear and achievable targets for progress. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive the help indicated in their statements. Pupils are withdrawn from lessons for individual help but this seldom occurs during the introductory part of a lesson and the school is careful to ensure that pupils do not miss significant parts of any section of the curriculum. The school, with help from the Parent Teacher Association, subsidises field trips so that pupils do not miss events because of financial reasons but such opportunities are limited and the curriculum is not strongly enriched or pupils' learning stimulated with either exploration of the community or visits from artists, musicians and authors.

30. A minority of parents feels that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside school hours. Although the number of clubs and extra curricular activities offered by the school is limited, and largely exclusive to the older pupils, the opportunities it provides are of very good quality and directly enhance the curriculum. An example is the netball club, run by a teacher with very good subject knowledge and athletic ability, which provides first-rate coaching for pupils, who respond excellently. The attractive library, organised by a combination of teaching staff, pupils and library assistants, is open every lunchtime, and every day after school, and helps to stimulate an interest in reading and research.

31. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education including citizenship is good. The school has a thorough programme of work and it is taught as a discrete subject. The policy of sex and relationships education is strong and the subject is sensitively handled and involves talks from people like the school nurse. There is also a separate scheme of work concerning the use and misuse of drugs for each year group of pupils and this forms part of the school's programme for science.

32. The school has satisfactory links with the community. It makes some use of local museums and places of interest. So for example, Year 1 pupils develop their knowledge of environmental studies with a visit to Wycollar and Year 6 pupils gain practical scientific experience in their visit to the Science Museum in Manchester. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also undertake outdoor and adventurous activities on a residential trip to an outdoor education centre in Shropshire. An exciting development is the environmental garden, designed by pupils at the school, which is to be built and financed by Huncoat Forum at a substantial cost.

33. The school has effective links with other schools. School sports teams, particularly football teams, play several matches against other schools, allowing pupils to develop their skills in a competitive situation. The school accommodates a number of students from neighbouring colleges and schools to provide experience of the work place. This increases the number of adults in the classrooms and offers greater opportunities for individual help for pupils. Some are able to offer specific help, for example, a student who is a Muslim is able to speak to pupils in Year 3, giving them a good insight into some aspects of Islam. Year 6 pupils visit the secondary school, to which they are to transfer, for an induction day. Pupils visit secondary schools for lessons, using the facilities and expertise available, although these opportunities are limited. Pupils in Year 6 also undertake bridging units in numeracy when, for the last three weeks of the school year, they use books supplied by the secondary school and start a unit of work which they are to complete in their first weeks at their new

school. Such arrangements help to make the transfer of pupils to secondary school as seamless as possible.

34. The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. It has improved the standards noted at the time of the last inspection. The school is a caring and happy community. The majority of parents are convinced that the school is helping their children to develop in a mature and responsible manner.

35. The provision for spiritual development is good. Acts of collective worship of good quality offer periods for reflection and prayer. Assemblies are carefully planned and suitable music is chosen to create a tranquil atmosphere in which the children enter the hall. Pupils respond to this with quiet and respectful behaviour throughout the session. Pupils are given other opportunities for prayer throughout the day, for example before lunch, and, in some classes, before they go home in the afternoon. Other occasions afford opportunities for spiritual development, for example when, as part of their study of Remembrance Day, pupils observe a two-minute silence. Pupils are given opportunities to consider the nature of God. In a Year 4 class lesson on aspects of Hinduism, pupils reflected on the idea of a boy sharing the same soul as a mango tree. Pupils consider the symbolism of light, sitting first in a darkened room. They then, in a circle, look at a single candle considering the contrast of light and dark. Pupils in Year 3, in an excellent dance/drama lesson, were almost entranced as they interpreted elements of the story.

36. The school's efforts to promote pupils' moral development are good. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong. Stories in school assemblies have a strong moral theme and care is taken to ensure that pupils understand the moral issues involved. The pupils are involved in creating a clear set of school rules which are reviewed annually. These rules are posted in each classroom to remind everyone of what is expected. Lessons in personal, social and health education provide opportunities for moral debate; in Year 6, for example, pupils are able to consider if there are any circumstances under which theft is justified. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are well maintained. Adults in school, led by the headteacher, provide good role models.

37. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' social development. Pupils, particularly those in Year 6, assist the smooth running of the school by undertaking duties like being door monitors and helping in the library. There are many opportunities to work together in groups in lessons. Year 1 pupils solve problems in pairs in numeracy lessons. Year 4 pupils work together on research projects in history lessons, offering and accepting advice. Year 6 pupils discuss problems of litter and more sensitive issues involving racism. Pupils do not, however, have a direct opportunity to affect the running of the school through organisations like a school council. Although opportunities are limited, educational visits do provide useful occasions for pupils to mix together in the wider community and pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity of a residential trip. The infrequency of whole-school productions means that pupils have little opportunity to work together on joint ventures. Pupils are encouraged to think of those less fortunate than themselves through their good support for several charities.

38. Cultural provision at the school is satisfactory. Pupils make a satisfactory study of the work of artists and musicians through their work in lessons. There are occasions when interesting opportunities arise; for example, pupils are able to submit designs for waymarkers for a conservation area. The small number of visits from authors, artists or musicians limits cultural opportunities. Pupils are able to gain an understanding of their cultural heritage through their work in history and the visits they make to local museums and historical buildings. They make a good study of the beliefs of other faiths, particularly Hinduism, Islam

and Judaism but occasions when they are able to discover aspects of cultures other than European are limited as is the provision of opportunities for studying the cultural diversity of British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school provides a caring environment in which children can learn. There are good procedures in place for ensuring pupils' welfare and care, and the school employs appropriate agencies to meet the needs of individual pupils. A teacher is the named person responsible for child protection and has attended relevant training. The school has very good recording systems and the co-ordinator is very clear about the needs of all the pupils in the school. The school's child protection policy is supported by guidelines from the local education authority. All pupils are well known to the staff, and pupils feel confident enough to share worries and concerns, knowing that they will be dealt with sensitively. The school provides an environment in which pupils and staff can work together well.

40. There are good systems in place for monitoring behaviour, and rewards and sanctions are in line with the school's behaviour policy. Not enough is done, however, to counter a certain amount of inattentiveness on the part of some pupils in a small minority of classes. The school does not tolerate anti-social behaviour, such as bullying or racism. The personal development of all pupils is monitored well, although often informally. The school has developed a personal, social and health education (including citizenship) programme that is beginning to help the pupils in their learning and development. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance are inconsistent. Some teachers keep clear records of reasons for absence and lateness in the registers of pupils who have poor attendance levels or are regularly late, but this is not consistent across the school. The school recognises in assemblies pupils' academic achievements, personal development, attendance and their out-of-school successes.

41. The school accepts all pupils and helps pupils come to a better understanding, appreciation and acceptance of a range of values and beliefs. The Traveller service supports the school by visiting newly arrived Travellers on site to find out information relevant to the children's education. Teacher assessment is used to assess new arrivals and, if a more detailed assessment is required, the Traveller Service completes this.

42. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. This is important, since a substantial proportion of pupils need extra help in most year groups. The new planning format is helping teachers to move towards a more consistent approach to assessment. The half-termly progress reviews ensure that individual plans are constantly updated. However, the records maintained by some support assistants concentrate on the task and pupils' attitudes rather than an evaluation of progress.

43. There are weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' work. This is unsatisfactory as it prevents teachers from planning work that builds on pupils' knowledge, understanding and acquisition of skills. There is some good practice in English and information and communication technology but not in the other subjects. The school is in the early stages of developing assessment and has no consistent approach to recording the areas pupils have studied and whether they have understood concepts and acquired skills. There are very few detailed assessments and samples of pupils' moderated work to guide teachers and enable them to plan more challenging work for individual pupils.

44. The school uses a range of commercial and national tests to identify the achievement of all pupils. It has analysed test data and has records that clearly track pupils' academic progress from year to year. Individual targets are set for pupils but pupils are unclear about

them and they are used inconsistently between subjects and classes. Written annual reports contain very few areas for development. Assessment was a key issue in the previous report and still needs to be addressed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The parents have positive views of the school. They say that their children like school and that they themselves feel comfortable about approaching the school with suggestions or concerns. They believe the school is well led and managed and that the teachers have high expectations of their children. Some parents do not feel that they are sufficiently well informed about how their children are achieving. The inspection team agrees that pupils like school and that the school is approachable, but more information could be provided to help parents to support their children in their learning and to indicate the progress they make. The inspection team judges that the school is satisfactorily led and managed but that teachers' expectations could be higher.

46. The school informs parents of routines and events through letters home, but provides little information about topics to be studied. This prevents parents from becoming sufficiently involved in their children's learning to be able provide artefacts or share their first-hand knowledge. There are few opportunities for parents to visit the school to see pupils' work through, for example, class assemblies or small productions. A small number of adult volunteers regularly help in classrooms, and the school values this. The annual written reports give clear information on the curriculum that the pupils have studied. They include attainment levels to help parents to understand the progress that their children have made. They do not contain areas for future development that would help parents support their children. Parent consultation evenings are held throughout the year and these also provide opportunities to inform parents of the progress that their children make.

47. The school is supported by the Friends of Huncoat School, who provide a range of fund-raising and social events that include a summer fair and discos. They have entered the local carnival and added funds by winning the carnival's "Best Dressed Float Award". Money raised from these provides additional resources for the school such as playground equipment and subsidies to enable all pupils to go on the school trips and visits. The whole school community appreciates the hard work and dedication of this group.

48. Parents are kept fully informed if their children have special educational needs, are invited to reviews and are involved in their children's learning. Reading records show that some parents help with reading at home. These pupils generally make the best progress. Individual plans include the contribution that parents can make. This is a very positive feature. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational need are fully involved.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The headteacher continues to provide sustained support for the teachers and pupils in the school and is widely respected. The shared vision of the headteacher, staff, governors and parents ensures that the ethos of the school, based on care and mutual respect, is apparent in everything it does. The way that teachers approach the personal and social development of pupils is one of the school's most significant strengths.

50. Staff with leadership and managerial responsibilities are fully committed to the school's values. Leadership in information technology and physical education is strong. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has overhauled systems to introduce effectively the new Code of Practice. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs is underpinned by the commitment of all teachers and support staff. These co-ordinators have

developed rigour in fulfilling their responsibilities. In many areas, particularly assessment, procedures are inconsistently applied and monitoring lacks a sharp focus. As a consequence, the strategies for improving standards are not always securely embedded in the working practices in all areas of the school. Decision making is mostly democratic and, at times, lacks the leadership to ensure consistency of procedures across the school.

51. The chair of the governing body is fully committed to the school and under her leadership the governing body is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities well. There is a suitable committee structure to support the work of the governing body and some of the committees have delegated powers. The governors have experienced difficulties in being able to develop their role fully because of the budget deficit, which has limited the decisions they have been able to make in helping to shape the direction of the school. The governors' knowledge of the school comes through information from the headteacher and the occasional visit with a particular focus. They know the strengths of the school and the areas in need of further development. The teaching staff collate educational priorities in the school improvement plan, and then the document is presented to the governors in draft form to enable them to make amendments. Governors are enthusiastic and willing to support the school in all aspects of its work but they are not currently fully involved in decision-making and shaping the direction of the school. The school has relied on the local education authority to provide the challenge to raise standards but, because of the success of this intervention, the school is now better placed to monitor and evaluate its work sharply.

52. The school's arrangements for financial management are satisfactory. The school has appointed a finance officer to manage the school budget, to help the headteacher and to construct and monitor the budget. This has had a positive effect on financial management and has helped the school out of its deficit position. Regular reports are prepared and presented to the governors' finance committee to inform them of the position. Effective use is made of additional funding for pupils with special educational needs. The school has not received funding from any other sources during this financial year. It has worked very carefully and successfully to eradicate the deficit budget from before the last inspection.

53. The school has adequate procedures in place for new staff in the school. They are given relevant documentation to help them in their work and are provided with a mentor, though there is no written policy for the induction of new staff.

54. The school has made wise decisions to provide more teaching assistants to work alongside its teaching staff and to help raise standards and has had help from the local education authority in this. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. Book resources are improving since the addition of the new library, although the school recognises that more are needed. The reading scheme for pupils with special needs enhances their learning. History resources are improved by the use of the local loans service that provides a good range of artefacts. The school has outdated resources in geography and shortage of resources for music and design and technology. This is caused by the aftermath of the stringent course the school had to take to bring the budget into balance. The new computer suite, though small in size, is used well to teach basic computing skills. The school has not yet built up sufficient software for each subject. The Foundation Stage has improved its learning resources and learning environment for the younger children since the previous inspection.

55. The school enjoys large grassed areas and good hard-surface playgrounds. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory without being generous. Some classrooms have limited space around the tables for free movement by staff and pupils. The addition of the library is proving a valuable resource. It is bright and inviting to pupils and should help them to appreciate literature and books. The site manager works hard to ensure that the school is kept clean and in good repair.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. With the help of the local education authority the headteacher, other staff and governors should take the following action.

- (1) Raise standards in English, mathematics and science for pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do; and
 - using assessment and recording so that work can be matched more precisely to pupils' attainment.(paragraphs 3,4,5,43 and 44)
- (2) Improve the role of managers in self-evaluation, monitoring and the consistency and implementation of procedures across the school.
(paragraphs 50, 51 and 94)
- (3) Improve the rate of attendance by.
 - implementing consistent monitoring of pupils' attendance.(paragraphs 14 and 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

55

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	3	26	23	2	0	0
Percentage	2	5	47	42	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	15	177
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	33

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	41

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	8.4
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	15	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	11	14
	Total	17	17	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (59)	63 (59)	89 (78)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	13	*
	Total	16	21	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (63)	78 (81)	52 (78)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	13	12	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	20	20	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (58)	80 (54)	88 (77)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	16	14	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (50)	56 (50)	68 (46)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Numbers omitted where the number of boys and girls is below 10.*

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	150	3	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	39

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	516622
Total expenditure	500225
Expenditure per pupil	2476
Balance brought forward from previous year	26625
Balance carried forward to next year	43022

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	200
Number of questionnaires returned	78

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	24	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	61	32	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	33	4	1	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	38	8	1	5
The teaching is good.	65	30	1	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	27	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	18	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	24	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	60	31	6	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	71	26	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	33	1	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	36	4	0	17

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

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

57. Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes because the teaching is good. The keynote to the successful teaching is the way in which teachers and support staff have responded to help from the local education authority to provide a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to the children's ages and interests. This is having a beneficial effect on children's learning. Children become engrossed in the activities and learn at a good rate.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. The very good teaching in personal development has a clear sense of purpose and provides interesting activities. Adults have realistic expectations of children of this age and manage children very well so that their learning is productive and at the same time enjoyable. When they start the nursery, many children lack the confidence that is typical of young children but the children achieve very well and are on course to reach the standards normally expected by the end of the reception year. Very good relationships and high expectations set the context for the teaching and learning. Pupils become far more independent, for example, in changing for physical education lessons because, although adults are at hand to help, they do not complete tasks for children. Time is used well so that pupils' independence can develop. This is seen across a range of activities; for example, pupils by the end of the reception year use a range of resources very sensibly, take turns and acquire increasing command of the world about them. Higher attainers are very helpful to others and willingly offer a helping hand. Pupils respond to the clear rules and behave well. They develop a good sense of fairness because they see that adults make sure that all have an equal turn at the tasks and an equal say in discussion.

Communication, language and literacy

59. Pupils come into the nursery with a level of language that is well below average. Even though children achieve well, standards for many are likely to be below those normally expected by the end of the reception year. The good gains come about because the good quality of the teaching ensures that pupils move on in their oral and written language. Assessment is used well to make sure that pupils are learning at the right level and it is used to group pupils for writing, which makes good use of the teaching time. The provision of activities in both classes encourages dialogue and discussion. These are often initiated by an adult and then later copied to varying degrees by the children in role-play and writing for a particular purpose. This natural way of learning, based on adult patterns of speech, especially helps those learning English as an additional language. Pupils enjoy their tasks, behave well and are keen to tackle new challenges.

60. Pupils develop an understanding of rhythm in language, as when the reception pupils embarked on their literacy work reciting a well known story about a bear, modulating their voices and copying the intonation of the adult. By way of follow-up, and after discussion, the pupils could then choose to read the story themselves or write their own version independently in prepared booklets. Higher attainers are beginning to apply their knowledge of letter sounds to write independently. They can tell a story from a sequence of pictures and recognise a few key words. Middle attainers need a good degree of adult guidance when writing, but they are beginning to form their letters correctly and have made good gains from

their early beginnings when their marks on paper were hardly recognizable. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and can recite by heart simple well known rhymes.

61. The daily work on literacy builds up towards an hour of related activities towards the end of the school year. The pupils are now ready to be guided in their reading in small groups to encourage discussion and ideas.

Mathematical development

62. In mathematical development pupils enter school at a below average level, but they achieve well and are on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of their reception year. A mark of the good teaching is the deployment of adults to work with small groups of pupils on tasks well matched to the children's attainment. For example, through well devised play with coins and shopping an adult helped children come to a better understanding of counting, as pennies were matched to numbers to purchase toys. Firm yet friendly questioning focused children's attention and made sure that all benefited from the experience and learnt from one another's mistakes. Average-attaining children need some help in sequencing while higher attainers can independently order a series of pictures and they can almost correctly order the days of the week. The higher attainers can write numerals to 20 and know that for example, 20 comes after 19.

63. Children get real enjoyment from their practically based curriculum and will concentrate on particular tasks for a good length of time. When playing with sand and water pupils learn about filling and emptying containers and, when adults join the play, children's vocabulary is extended so that the next time they choose the activity they can bring their new found vocabulary into their play. This way of learning is supported soundly through the way in which tasks are planned. However, the development of skills from the nursery through to the reception class is not always as clearly planned. For example, when facilities for water play are available in both classes the school does not always make sure that the provision builds on children's experience from one age group to another.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. When children start in the nursery, many have very limited experience and knowledge of the world about them. A range of activities is planned to extend their knowledge and understanding and they make substantial gains and achieve well. Nevertheless their attainment is likely to be below what is typically expected by the end of the reception year. Children come to a better understanding of the school because staff make sure that they begin to know their way around. The children enjoy playtimes with pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 and take it in turns to deliver the register to the office each day. Nursery children made headway in understanding that batteries can power torches when they first of all watched the light beam across the room and then used them in their 'dark, dark play house', which had been cleverly blacked out so that pupils could experience the contrast of light and dark. The curricular planning supports children's development soundly as activities are closely linked; for example, painting using dark and light colours followed the same theme. A 'travel agency' in the reception class provided opportunities for speaking and listening, using the telephone to book holidays and finding out about places and locations further afield. One child excitedly told an adult 'the world is your oyster – you could go to Majorca – but you have to fill in a booking form!'. The quality of teaching is good and supports children's development through helping them explore simple scientific aspects through play and through the use of computers to aid their learning in other subjects.

Physical development

65. Children enter the nursery at a level of physical competence below that typical for their ages. Although they make satisfactory progress they are still likely to be below the level typically expected for their age by the end of the reception class. The teaching is sound but the provision is not as strong as in other areas of the curriculum. In particular the arrangements for outside play are limited because they are not well enough planned to make sure that children get better at jumping and running and climbing or that their imagination is fully challenged in their outside play. The outcome is that children consolidate their skills but do not quickly increase them. Even in the hall, when children have a more formal lesson, the gains that children make are not as substantial as in other aspects of their work.

66. Children of reception age moved in the hall in time to taped music but the lesson was not well enough matched to their level of understanding. As they endeavoured to move like rusty metal there was nothing other than the teacher's explanation of how corroded machinery might work to help them understand the concept of rusty metal and how oil might improve movement of a machine. When children tensed their muscles to imitate the metal they copied their teacher but were at a loss to be inventive because the taped programme was not at a suitable level for them. Higher attainers can move their legs and arms in time to the music but the middle attainers find it difficult to keep the rhythm. Very few children can skip – the average attainers gallop. Children handle glue sticks, scissors, pencils and paintbrushes with increasing control because they are taught how to grip the tools correctly and have appropriate opportunities to explore their use.

Creative development

67. Creative activities are planned well so that children get a good mix of activities to explore independently, as well as direct teaching of skills and techniques. Children make good headway and achieve well, though they are still likely to attain levels that are below those typically expected for their age by the end of the reception year. The quality of teaching is good. A strength in the teaching is the way in which individual help is given to enable skills to develop well, for example, when an adult sits with individuals in the nursery and helps children to hold scissors correctly so that they get better at snipping paper, or when the nursery teacher shows children how to mould malleable material and roll it out. A relative weakness is that, at times, the tasks set out in each class do not build on skills already taught so, for example, when painting at an easel children in both classes are presented with ready mixed paint and brushes of the same size.

ENGLISH

68. Although the results in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 show standards to be well below average, attainment in the current Year 2 is better than that. The school has placed considerable emphasis on improving standards in Years 1 and 2. The local education authority has also provided significant levels of support. This is proving successful as standards begin to rise thanks to more focused teaching. In particular reading levels are improving significantly because many pupils receive extra help with their reading.

69. The school's results in the national tests in 2002 for pupils at the end of Year 6 were significantly better than those in previous years. Standards were average when compared with those in schools nationally, but well above average when compared with those in schools that admit pupils from similar backgrounds. However, the quality of work in the current Year 6 class is not as high as this. Although reading levels are satisfactory, the quality of pupils' writing – extended writing in particular – is below average.

70. Nevertheless, there are clear indications that standards throughout the school are set to rise. The teaching in the first four year groups is good. Meticulous planning is at the heart of this improvement. Teachers are ensuring that the work they set is matched to the different levels of ability in their classes. As a result all pupils regularly experience success. Pupils with special educational needs work towards their precise targets. They build up their understanding of letter sounds in particular and many of them are beginning to read fluently. Higher attainers are given extension work, particularly to improve their writing.

71. During the pupils' last two years in school, planning is not as sharp. Although there is a clear commitment to improve standards, many of the writing assignments are routine and insufficiently stimulate imaginative writing. In lessons, learning objectives are not pursued rigorously. Consequently, pupils remain busy and obedient, but are not focusing sufficiently on the quality of their work.

72. Throughout the school, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss issues with a partner or in groups. For example, Year 5 pupils worked in groups to plan a fable with a moral, based on their study of Aesop. Most teachers use a range of questioning skills to probe and extend pupils' thinking. Pupils respond well to this, using their imagination and knowledge to enhance class discussions. For instance, pupils in Year 4 willingly share their ideas and read to the rest of the class. In less successful lessons, the teacher dominates discussions leaving too little time for pupils to contribute.

73. The greatest challenge ahead is in the sphere of writing. Many pupils spell inaccurately. This is being tackled vigorously. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher focused on 'er' and 'ur' sounds in a very coherent way. Too often pupils spell a word correctly in one section of a piece of work, and incorrectly in another. Handwriting is also of variable quality. Higher attainers write clearly – and occasionally stylishly, but too many pupils do not master joined writing soon enough. Although letters are correctly formed in handwriting practice books, much of the handwriting in free writing is a mixture of print and cursive, often with incorrect orientation.

74. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress with their creative writing. They begin to form letters properly and to use capital letters and full stops. Most can sequence sentences logically. However, when writing on their own, they do not often use words beyond the ordinary. Indeed, the use of descriptive vocabulary is severely limited throughout the school, although there are indications of more adventurous use of language in Years 3 and 4. In these classes explanations are clear and questioning is very precise. The best attempts to explore words occur in poetry. A Year 3 pupil wrote about winter: "Frosty fingers, running noses, Frozen water, tingling toes." Another describes snow "looking like sugar sprinkled on chocolate cake."

75. In a very challenging Year 3 lesson, the higher attaining pupils were able to produce meaningful sentences using comparatives and superlatives. The very good teaching in Year 4 is also creating an awareness of the power of language. Pupils explore a range of styles in, for example, letters, newspaper reports and playscripts. A lower attaining pupil has written an engaging dialogue between a naughty girl and her mother, and higher attainers tackle topics such as 'The Visitor' with some imagination.

76. The momentum that has been achieved begins to slow down in the last two years at school. A Year 5 pupil wrote about "Sea waves thrashing the soaking rocks" in one of his poems. However, in this class, there is a heavy concentration on mechanical exercises, such as the ordering of complex sentences. In Year 6 the unambitious use of vocabulary rarely considers shades of meaning. Overall, creative writing is mundane. Pupils are not

being shown how to engage the reader. In a lesson where the teacher's intention was to show pupils how to structure an argument, the teacher was easily sidetracked into discussions that blurred the focus of the lesson.

77. The range of opportunities for creative writing was an issue in the last inspection report, and remains so. Drafting and redrafting are not yet embedded in strategies for improving extended pieces of writing. However, much has been done to address other deficiencies. A library has been opened, and a good start has been made in the provision of reference books. More remains to be done. The same applies to stocks of fiction that are stored in or near classrooms. There are now more planned opportunities for speaking and listening. Assessment remains a key issue. Each class teacher develops a personal system, leading to a lack of coherence across the school. Marking in the first four years is often diagnostic and very detailed.

78. Literacy skills are built into other subject plans and the National Literacy Strategy and other national initiatives have been soundly implemented. Resources have improved in a period of severe financial constraints. Support assistants are now used extensively to improve reading levels. The issues that are inhibiting progress in all aspects of writing, particularly in Years 5 and 6, remain the most pressing challenge for the school.

MATHEMATICS

79. The results of national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 show that standards have been consistently well below average. There was an improvement in 2002 but results were still below the national average although they were in line with standards achieved at schools of a similar background to Huncoat Primary. This improvement was brought about by an improvement in the results of the girls, although there has been no significant difference between the scores of boys and girls over an extended period. Inspection findings are that this trend of improvement is likely to continue this year and that results will be below, but approaching, the national level.

80. The results of national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 in recent years have shown that standards in mathematics have been below average but that there was a considerable improvement in 2002, when standards were average, although the number of pupils working at higher levels was still below average. The results of the school in 2002 were better than those gained by schools of a similar context. The improvement in results was brought about, to a certain extent, by an improvement in the results of girls, although, taken over the period of the last few years, there has been no significant difference between the results of boys and girls. The present group of Year 6 pupils is not likely to maintain this improvement and standards are likely to be below average this year. This is a result anticipated by the school, in that the targets for mathematics in 2003 are lower than those for 2002.

81. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, although this progress is not necessarily consistent and is better in the classes of pupils up to Year 4. This is a result of good teaching in these classes, in which work is planned for pupils of different levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs also benefit from this good teaching and as a result of individual help from the good level of support staff they make similar progress to that of other pupils.

82. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. The main change since then has been the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has been especially thoroughly implemented in Year 1 – Year 2. The school has received help in the form of advice and additional resources from the local education authority to assist them in this process. The additional resources have been used to increase the number of teaching assistants, who have been deployed to help pupils in their independent group work.

This had led to greater concentration and productivity by pupils and therefore improved learning. The extra help has been concentrated more on the classes of younger pupils, with the result that progress is better in these classes. The time of teaching assistants is not yet being fully maximised at the beginning and end of lessons. A recent system of setting learning targets for individuals and groups of pupils has yet to impact on learning. It is being followed more rigorously in the classes of younger pupils but lacks a unified approach throughout the school. Target setting should help to maximise pupils' time for learning so that time is not spent repeating work already known. For example, higher attaining Year 6 pupils inappropriately spend time completing simple addition and subtraction sums at the beginning of the school year.

83. Some areas for development noted at the time of the last inspection persist. The school collects a range of assessment data but does not use the information sufficiently to diagnose individual areas for development in the pupils' learning. Other assessments are used to predict scores in national tests rather than diagnosing weaknesses in learning.

84. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although the teaching in the classes of younger pupils is good. In the good lessons teachers, using the national strategy as their basis, set clear learning objectives and plan activities for pupils at three different stages of learning, thus helping most pupils to make good gains. They support this with thorough preparation so that time for learning is maximised. For example, in Year 1 questions are written in the pupils' books and number lines added prior to the lesson so that pupils can concentrate on finding solutions without have to spend time copying out sums. Sometimes objectives and planning are not clear and teaching lacks a focus. For example, in a Year 5 class the teacher sets out to experiment with different approaches to multiplication but does not make a written record of these methods and the tasks make little reference to what has gone before. In some lessons involving older pupils, the whole class attempts the same activity with the result that some pupils are not sure of how to tackle it and make little progress, while others find it relatively simple and are not challenged.

85. Most lessons start with lively mental and oral sessions and make good use of a range of resources. Year 6 pupils play a multiplication game, which involves each child in a follow my leader game of questions and answers. This activity engages the close attention of all the pupils in the class. Despite such activities, younger pupils do not have a firm grasp of number bonds and Year 3 pupils solve addition sums, with answers in the hundreds, by the counting on method.

86. Year 6 pupils' grasp of multiplication tables is incomplete; nevertheless higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have a sufficient grasp of place value to be able to multiply figures involving more than one decimal place by 10 and 100 quickly and successfully. In good lessons teachers question well, encouraging pupils to explain the strategies they have used in solving questions, thus getting pupils to clarify their own thinking and give others ideas. There is a tendency for teachers to dismiss strategies which do not coincide with their own rather than discussing the merits of those suggested.

87. The quality of the marking of pupils' work is variable. At best it is encouraging and offers help and suggestions but in some cases it does not extend or correct pupils' ideas. For example, a graph, drawn by a Year 6 pupil, had neither title nor labels on the axes but went unchallenged. In less successful lessons teachers place an over-reliance on commercially produced worksheets. These do not always cover the learning objectives needed by a pupil and make it difficult for a record of an individual's progress to be maintained. Insecure subject knowledge occasionally hampers teachers, particularly when extending pupils' thinking. So, for example, looking for other sums that could be deduced from the statement $12 \times 3 = 36$ led one teacher to suggest $1.2 \times 0.3 = 3.6$.

88. Computers are not yet fully used to support learning in mathematics, particularly in situations involving shape and space and data handling. Overall, numeracy is used soundly in other subjects.

SCIENCE

89. The very low standards attained by the end of Year 2 in the teacher assessments of 2002 have been addressed through a greater concentration on practical work and discussion, which has raised standards, though they remain below average. Weaknesses remain in the challenge for the higher attainers; for example, in 2002 no pupils attained a level in the teacher assessments that was higher than that typically expected for their age, and overall standards were much lower than in 2001.

90. Standards in the present Year 6 are below average as they were at the time of the last inspection. They are not as good as the school's national test results in 2002. In part this is because there is a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the group than last year. It is also in part because the satisfactory teaching, though consolidating pupils' knowledge and understanding is not pulling up standards sufficiently well by Year 6. Moreover, the curriculum is not sufficiently well planned to make sure that pupils are well enough challenged by the work they are given.

91. The local education authority has provided support to the teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 and this has brought about improvement and confidence in the work of the team. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and, overall, pupils learn at a sound rate. There is, however, an over-reliance on worksheets and these are not well matched to pupils' levels of attainment; for example, all pupils in the class often fill in identical worksheets. Support is often provided to the lower attainers, enabling them to understand their work, but the expectations of what higher attainers can achieve is too low and as a result they do not work to their full potential.

92. There is marked difference between the teaching and learning of pupils in Year 3 to Year 6. In the best teaching tasks pose a real challenge and move pupils' learning on well. Marks of this teaching are the good use of resources and the well managed practical activities, so that pupils become fully engaged in their tasks. Not only this, but they also begin to draw their own conclusions, anticipating the teacher's questions and taking learning on a step. They are good at working collaboratively in small groups and with partners to make the most of their time in lessons. The quality of marking in Year 3 and Year 4 is good and sets a clear agenda for improvement. In contrast the teaching in Year 6 is not well organised, planning is unclear and the teaching is too heavily reliant on the use of text books. The use of marking is unsatisfactory and as a result pupils have very little written direction as to how they can improve.

93. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a basic knowledge of scientific facts but their skills are at a lower level. Even though pupils' attitudes are good, they are inquisitive and really enjoy scientific investigations and much of the work is centred on practical activities it is not well enough planned for pupils to make fast gains in applying their knowledge. Higher attainers quickly draw conclusions based on facts, but middle and lower attainers need much help to understand the underlying principles of their work.

94. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The whole school view of standards is underdeveloped and the use of assessment inconsistent across classes. This means that tasks are not always set at the correct level of challenge of individuals. Moreover, the curriculum does not provide a wide enough range of tasks for

pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. For example, experiments used in earlier years are used again with the older pupils with little extra challenge or explanation.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 reach the expected levels and generally achieve soundly. This includes pupils with special educational needs, who are often helped with individual attention, made possible by good levels of adult help in the classrooms. For example, Year 2 pupils are given close individual help with sewing skills as they make Mothers' Day cards. Pupils undertake a suitable range of activities, using a range of media.

96. The design element of the subject is satisfactorily taught. For example, Year 5 pupils consider features of a range of containers, deciding whether they are functional or decorative. They consider quite sophisticated features, such as how the weight of the filled container will dictate the size of the handles. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the work and style of a number of artists. This is assisted by a range of prints of good quality displayed around the school and by their studies of these artists and attempts to imitate their styles in art lessons. For example, Year 5 pupils produce wallpaper designs in the style of William Morris. Pupils are beginning to use computers to help and extend their work in art. For example, Year 2 pupils produce pastiches of the work of Piet Mondrian, both on the computer and by painting them. Year 4 pupils, taking the work of Seurat as a focus for their study of Pointillism, produce a series of pictures using a computer program, felt tip pens and finally paint, applied with a sponge. There are relatively few visits from practising artists or sculptors or occasions when pupils visit art galleries and this limits their knowledge overall knowledge of other artists. Those studied are predominantly European and there are few examples of art from other cultures.

97. Teachers encourage the development of pupils' skills in art by using these to support work in other subjects, particularly history. Year 2 pupils use collage techniques, attempting to recreate Tudor portraits, and Year 4 pupils make replicas of Anglo Saxon masks from card.

98. Since the last inspection the co-ordinator has introduced a nationally recognised programme of work to assist the systematic development of pupils' skills. It has, however, not been in place long enough to have had much impact on standards. The scheme allows for the assessment of pupils' progress but this, as at the time of the last inspection, remains an underdeveloped area. Each pupil has a sketchbook but these are not being used to keep a record of individual pupils' progress. The co-ordinator has started useful portfolios of work but these are not annotated or clearly linked to levels of the National Curriculum to guide teachers as to the quality of work required of pupils of different ages.

99. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but there are examples of good teaching, particularly in the classes of younger pupils. In good lessons, teachers plan thoroughly, setting clear objectives, which they share with the pupils. This means that pupils have a focus for their learning and understand what they are to achieve. Good preparation involves the use of imaginative resources, which stimulate pupils' interest and learning. Pupils in Year 5 are intrigued by the comparison of a 'parsley pig' and a normal plant pot. They are delighted with a delicate container, which the teacher claims might have been woven by the 'snow spider', a reference to a character in a book they have read.

100. Sometimes lessons are over-prepared. For example, younger pupils are shown examples of finished products, which limits their imagination and leads them to attempt to produce copies rather than developing their own ideas. Imagination is also constrained when pupils are shown, and copy, techniques but are then not given sufficient opportunities to develop and use these ideas in their own creations. Older pupils using overlaying paper

techniques produce attractive but rather stereotyped pictures and do not develop these ideas further.

101. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and finished products. They trust pupils to behave well and co-operate. Pupils generally respond well and have good attitudes towards art and design. They concentrate well, listen carefully to the views of others but are not afraid to voice their own. They work together well. For example, Year 2 pupils, working in groups of three, produced highly imaginative pictures based on cog and wheel designs.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Judgements on standards are based on the extensive portfolio maintained by the co-ordinator and one lesson in Year 4. In discussion, pupils talk very positively about their experiences in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

103. Pupils in Year 2 achieve the standards expected for their age. Construction using kits is impressive and pupils talk animatedly about the moving vehicles they made in Year 1. Design sheets show freehand drawings of suitable quality and detail. Some imaginative Christmas Cards involving moving pictures supplement the work on Father Christmas with jointed limbs. Higher attainers pay particular attention to detail and are developing a good understanding of the use of design and technology.

104. Pupils in Year 3 are completing evaluation sheets where they reflect on their designs and how they might have approached their interpretations differently. This good practice is not employed consistently throughout the school. Sandwich making and bread making are recalled vividly by pupils in Years 3 and 5. In Year 4 the teacher's clear explanations and thorough planning ensure that the principles of pneumatics are fully understood. As a result, pupils are able to construct working models. Working in groups, they co-operate well and plan effectively. In a previous project, designs for a purse or wallet show attention to detail especially by the high attainers. Pupils in Year 6 do not study this subject until later in the year, so no judgement can be made on standards at this stage.

105. The commitment and organisational skills of the co-ordinator have ensured the continued development of the subject. Despite severe financial constraints, the curriculum has been sustained with minimal resourcing. The advice of the local education authority is greatly appreciated, particularly in redesigning the schemes of work. Some good cross-curricular links are now firmly established. Since the last inspection, teachers have moderated work in attempts to rationalise assessment procedures and better match work to pupils' level of need. Nevertheless, there are still inconsistencies that have not been ironed out.

GEOGRAPHY

106. The average standards found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained by the ends of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 make good gains because the quality of teaching is good. Between Year 3 and Year 6 pupils make steady progress in developing their skills and knowledge in the subject because the curriculum enables pupils to build up their knowledge in small steps and because the quality of teaching is sound.

107. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have a sound understanding of a map as a view from above and higher attainers can draw good representations of a range of simple 'bird's eye' views. Pupils can follow simple directions on a map of their local area because a

strength in the school's approach to geography is the use of the local area to develop pupils' interest and knowledge and, alongside this, the skills of map reading. The curriculum is well-structured in this respect and the teacher's knowledge and interest come through strongly.

108. By the end of Year 6, though geography is not on the timetable each week the pupils' map reading skills are honed by extra lessons from the subject co-ordinator to keep their interest and learning ticking over well. For example, Year 6 pupils have a sound understanding of grid references and can apply their knowledge to making and reading maps. Middle and higher attainers understand about contour and can give clear explanations of their work.

109. The satisfactory teaching makes effective use of reference books and atlases for research and an enthusiasm for the subject communicates itself to the pupils so that their response is positive. For example, in Year 6 pupils enjoyed finding out about the main rivers of the world and, because practical tasks were set, their understanding of the water cycle increased as they measured puddles throughout the day to check for evaporation. In a good lesson in Year 3 pupils assimilated information quickly and made measured responses to how life in an Indian village differed from life in their own. Resources were used well to engage pupils' interest and raise many questions about similarities and differences in the two villages. In this lesson expectations of pace and learning were high and a sense of wonder rose to the surface as pupils learnt about the lives of children on a different continent to their own. Good subject knowledge and planning underpinned the effective teaching.

110. Information and communication technology is underused in geography because links are not well planned and because the school lacks a broad selection of resources, reflecting its weakened position from overcoming the large deficit budget. There are also deficiencies in up-to-date reference materials such as atlases and globes which limits pupils' research skills.

HISTORY

111. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils make satisfactory progress overall though it is inconsistent, being better in Years 1 to 4, where the quality of teaching is good. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils, helped, in good lessons, by having work specifically designed for them and, in certain lessons, by individual help from teaching assistants. Since the last inspection the school has adopted a new programme of work which has been extended and adapted by the history co-ordinator to make it more relevant to the school. This allows for the systematic development of pupils' skills and is an improvement on the one criticised in the last inspection. It has not been in use long enough to have had any great impact on standards, which remain unchanged. A workable, effective method of assessing and recording pupils' progress has yet to be developed.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall but there is some good teaching. The unsatisfactory teaching, reported at the time of the last inspection, has been eradicated. In the good lessons, teachers plan their work carefully, setting clear learning objectives and planning activities for pupils of different levels of attainment. They prepare well, enabling pupils to give extended answers to questions. They encourage pupils' research skills. Year 4 pupils conducted research into aspects of Anglo Saxon life, although some still had to copy blocks of information rather than putting this information into their own words. Year 6 pupils practised note-taking, while watching a video concerned with life in Ancient Egypt. Finished pieces vary from fairly fluent, free written, accounts to a series of disconnected jottings. Teachers provide opportunities for various types of writing so, for example, Year 6 pupils write an account of their practical attempt to make a shaduf. Teachers, in good lessons, use

questioning well to challenge and extend pupils' learning. Teachers also use resources well to bring excitement to lessons. For example, to Year 4 pupils dressed as Anglo Saxons, carrying implements, including a sword and shield. A consistent feature is the use of sequencing to help develop the pupils' sense of chronology. Year 1 pupils start with a simple sequence of their own lives but are later able to place photographs of vehicles into time slots of 200, 100 or 50 years ago. Year 2 pupils develop their number skills placing various historical characters from Queen Elizabeth 1 to the present queen, in chronological order. Older pupils have more sophisticated versions on which events or characters are placed at intervals throughout the year.

113. Pupils respond well to good teaching and their attitudes to history are generally very good and this helps their learning. Year 4 pupils worked together on research projects, helping each other, and listening to the ideas of others. Year 2 pupils sat entranced as a videotape transported them back in time in order to meet the young Princess Elizabeth in the Tower of London.

114. Pupils make some field trips to use first-hand sources of information. Year 2 pupils visit Clitheroe Castle, for example. However, these trips are fairly limited and the school does not make full use of the rich learning opportunities available in the area. Visits from speakers, acting groups depicting historical characters or people with experiences from the local community are infrequent. Little use is being made of computers to support pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Standards are typical for pupils' ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection and has come about because of the school's strategic planning for the subject and the good quality of leadership and management. The subject is well organised and two teaching assistants are deployed well to teach the basic skills to small groups of pupils in a computer suite.

116. Strengths in the teaching are in the way in which lessons are planned and day-to-day assessment is used to keep abreast of pupils' increasing skills. The pupils enjoy their tasks and the very good relationships with adults means that pupils are not afraid to ask for help. Pupils behave very well and are responsible when using the computers. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of vocabulary related to the subject and are very much at home with using the terminology because they have good examples to follow from the adults. When using a branching data base, for example, middle attainers in Year 4 could easily explain their work referring to the program and the icons they were using. Higher attainers are confident to help others, taking them step by step through procedures. Because the teaching is in small groups, the pupils are not generally given written instructions to follow and so have no written reminders to improve their independence and make them less reliant on the adult. This also means that once back in their classroom there are no notes to remind them of how to access particular programs.

117. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They are familiar with a range of programs and uses for information and communication technology. In Year 6 middle attainers for example, know how to build up a multi-media file and can add images and sound to their work. They know how to re-size articles on the screen and arrange their work satisfactorily. Higher attainers tend to be quicker, have a better grasp of the wider uses of the programs they use and are much faster and more accurate on the keyboard. The teaching is well matched to their level of competency and takes pupils on well, making sure that they understand the underlying principles of new programs and how they can best be used.

118. Computers are not used regularly in other subjects partly because of insufficient software and partly because the use is not planned into the other subjects. Moreover, few classes have systems in place to make sure that computers in classrooms are used to the optimum. Nonetheless the subject is well managed and the school has made big strides in establishing the subject across the school. Hand in hand with a considered basic curriculum is a simple yet helpful and well organised system of assessment which means that pupils are set tasks at a reasonable level of challenge.

MUSIC

119. Pupils in Year 2 reach standards that are above nationally expected levels. These good levels match achievements at the time of the last inspection. Singing in unison is tuneful and diction is clear. When they sing songs from memory, performance is particularly striking, with a sound concentration on dynamics and pitch. Teachers in the first two years carefully link together their plans for music with those in art, science and design and technology. In a lesson in which pupils devised compositions about machine sounds, they could draw on their knowledge from these other subjects. Compositions about their 'Marvellous Machine' are fully recorded as pictures to show when different percussion instruments are introduced. Pupils think seriously about their interpretations of the various sounds and performance is rhythmic. Composition is approached systematically. The high quality of organisation during lessons ensures that pupils meet significant challenges with confidence.

120. The constraints of the timetable meant that only a Year 5 lesson could be observed in the Junior classes. These pupils are reaching levels typical for their age. The good teaching shows imagination. For example pupils' names have been carefully chosen to match particular musical patterns. This helps them to combine various rhythms successfully. Singing in hymn practice and in a rendition of 'London's Burning' as a round is suitably melodic but scant attention is paid to phrasing.

121. Three members of staff are able to play musical instruments. This adds a positive dimension to overall provision. There are opportunities for pupils to listen to a variety of composers; for example, Benjamin Britten was a focus in assemblies during the inspection. Regrettably, there is very little back-up for classwork after school. The school choir has met with success, having been broadcast on Radio Lancashire, but only practises for specific celebrations such as Christmas. Not one pupil has instrumental tuition in school, despite the fact that the school has a number of instruments available.

122. Tuned percussion is in short supply and several ageing keyboards do not work. Otherwise resources are adequate. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory although greater use could be made of the expertise of staff. Modern advances in technology are not recognised in the curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy singing and making music, and this enthusiasm could be harnessed more purposefully.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach the expected standards. The quality of teaching is good and pupils respond particularly well in dance lessons. Imagining themselves as cornflakes in a bowl of milk, Year 1 pupils used different body shapes and movement to interpret the theme. They use space well, and benefit from the careful planning of lessons. Pupils in Year 5 are able to devise sequences that show reasonable control and imagination. The imaginative planning and co-ordination of a Year 3 lesson was exceptional. Pupils had to devise a dance drama based on a story. The teacher's enthusiasm and inspirational urgings

developed an atmosphere in which many pupils were totally immersed in the various moods and characters involved. The use of voice and percussion heightened the intensity of performance. Pupils were able to sustain a range of movement and extremes of emotion. The final performance was excellent. Standards in this lesson were well above average. Although no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching or standards at the end of Year 6 the netball club was well attended and standards were high. The session was well supported by two former pupils demonstrating and leading activities.

124. Pupils dress appropriately for their lessons. They look forward to the activities planned for them and talk animatedly about their love of games. Owing to the cost of transport, swimming is now taught only to pupils in Years 3 and 4. By the end of Year 6, only two pupils out of every five are able to swim 25 metres. Safe practice is observed in all lessons. The extra-curricular programme includes a satisfactory range of activities. The school participates in local sporting competitions, and various organisations come into school to support team games. Parents and other adults also help with coaching and refereeing. Every year, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are offered the chance to take part in outdoor pursuits during a residential visit. All teachers have been trained in a national approach to teaching sport.

125. The co-ordinator provides enlightened leadership. The development plan is sensible and the scheme of work has been rewritten to address the deficiencies highlighted in the last inspection. The introduction of a new dance scheme is having a major impact on standards because it is well structured.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. Pupils, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 reach the levels generally expected of them. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, although their progress is not consistent throughout the school and tends to be better in Year 1 to Year 4, where the quality of teaching is generally good. Pupils with special educational needs make a similar rate of progress to other pupils and benefit, in classes where the teaching is good, from having activities specifically prepared for them, and, in most classes, from individual help from classroom support assistants. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when judgements on standards could not be made because the programme for religious education was not fully in place.

127. Since the last inspection the school has introduced the new locally agreed syllabus which serves the school well. To support this scheme the school has improved its resources for teaching and learning through purchases and good use of the museum loan service. Although the subject is not fully resourced, resources owned by the school are of good quality and bring relevance to the subject. Year 2 pupils, for example, are able to handle a Puja tray and high attaining pupils are able to explain the symbolism of the various objects. Explanation of symbolism plays an important part in the religious education programme and Year 4 pupils are able to explain the symbolism of the Christingle and Year 6 pupils that of the Advent Wreath. However, some aspects have not changed since the last inspection. There is still some unsatisfactory teaching in the classes of older pupils. This is largely the result of teachers' insecure knowledge which leads to a slow pace in the lesson resulting in pupils losing concentration, behaving poorly and learning little.

128. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In good lessons teachers set clear learning objectives and plan activities for pupils of different levels of attainment. This helps the learning of most pupils and particularly those with special educational needs. Teaching assistants who work with small groups or individual pupils are deployed well. For example, in a note taking session in Year 6, the assistant checked the pupils' notes. Teachers support their good planning with good preparation. For example, in a Year 4 class, the teacher has

cards listing the main features of a Hindu festival which the pupils place in order, thereby giving the teacher instant feedback on the pupils' understanding and helping to consolidate the pupils' learning. As a result of this, Year 4 pupils generally have a good knowledge of the celebration of Raksha Bandhan. Good subject knowledge means that teachers show suitable respect for faiths other than their own and this encourages the interest and correct attitude of the pupils. For example, a teacher of a Year 3 class washes her hands before touching the Qur'an and says, "Peace be upon him" every time she mentions Muhammad. Pupils respond well to this and remember facts such as that Muhammad was the last prophet of Islam.

129. Not all teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. For example, when speaking about stages of Hindu life, terms were written on the board because the teacher could not pronounce them, limiting the learning of the pupils. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the teacher had to refer to notes at points during the lesson, pupils retained their interest and could recall good detail of, for example, the Rite of the Sacred Thread. Teachers use questioning well to challenge pupils' thinking and learning. For example, a teacher of a Year 2 class stopped a videotape and asked "Why do they put a dab of Kum Kum paste on the portrait of the God?" A Year 4 teacher posed the more open ended moral question "What do you like to feel good about?"

130. Teachers make good use of videotapes to enliven lessons and the school joins in celebrations like the Harvest Festival but there are few visits to places of worship to give pupils first hand experience. Even the local church is an underused resource. The school makes little use of computers to support learning in the subject. A student at the school, who is a Muslim, was able to enrich and extend Year 3 children's learning about Islam, but this is a relatively rare occurrence and there are few visitors to the school to speak about aspects of Christianity or other faiths.

131. The co-ordinator has not been in post very long but has made an enthusiastic start, introducing, adapting and extending the syllabus. She has a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has clear plans to strengthen provision. The school has yet to devise a suitable system for assessing and monitoring the progress of individual pupils.