

INSPECTION REPORT

**SACRED HEART ROMAN CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Accrington

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119658

Headteacher: Mrs J R Williams

Reporting inspector: Dr B Blundell
23868

Dates of inspection: 25th - 28th November 2002

Inspection number: 252287

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bradshaw Row Church Accrington
Postcode:	BB5 4HG
Telephone number:	(01254) 233382
Fax number:	(01254) 390944
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L Warren
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23868	Dr B Blundell	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Design and technology Educational inclusion	What sort of a school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19430	Mr T Hall	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?
21910	Mr G Longton	Team inspector	English Art and design Geography History Music	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language Science Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary and Nursery School is a school for boys and girls, aged 3 to 11, situated in Accrington, Lancashire. It is about the same size as other primary schools and largely serves its immediate, somewhat deprived, area. There are 196 pupils on roll, including 23 children in the nursery. The ethnic background of the pupils is largely white with United Kingdom heritage, with 13 per cent of pupils being of Traveller heritage and eight per cent having Pakistani heritage. Twenty-four pupils have English as an additional language, but none are at an early stage in the acquisition of English. The major language spoken by these pupils is Urdu. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, amounting to 27 per cent of pupils on roll. Whilst the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average, the proportion with a statement of special needs is below average. The nature of pupils' special needs includes moderate learning difficulties and emotional, behavioural and speech difficulties. Pupil turnover is high, with a substantial number of Traveller children. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average overall and well below average in language skills. There are currently no pupils identified as being gifted or talented.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

After a period of considerable staff changes, the school is now running well. Standards for pupils at the end of Year 6 meet national expectations in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching is good and leadership and management are very good. The school is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards for pupils in Year 6 now meet national expectations in all subject areas.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those having English as an additional language make good progress.
- The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school and this is reflected in pupils' learning.
- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good.
- Pupils like school, behave well and relationships are very good; they show a high level of initiative and personal responsibility.
- Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

What could be improved

- Opportunities for speaking across the school.
- Checking pupils' learning in English, mathematics and science and using the information to help individuals make better progress.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1998 and has made good progress, completing nearly all of the issues raised. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is as expected. Standards in information and communication technology have risen; curriculum guidance is good. The overall quality of teaching has improved, with pupils, overall, making good progress. Schemes of work have been developed appropriately. Assessment procedures are still not as effective as they could be. The role of the subject coordinators has been developed appropriately. There is now a whole school approach to the maintenance of records. The governing body now discharges its responsibilities effectively. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	E*	E
mathematics	E	E	E	D
science	E	E	E	D

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

Until quite recently, there has been a lack of continuity and stability in leadership and staffing. Whilst this situation has now been resolved appropriately, there are additional factors that have a detrimental effect on results. Sacred Heart School has a high turnover of pupils, with 69 pupils joining or leaving the school in the last academic year at a time other than the usual time of admission or transfer. Pupil turnover was about 50 per cent in the group of pupils who sat their end of Year 6 national tests in 2002. The school has a substantial number of Traveller children. This needs to be borne in mind when reading about the school's overall results.

In the national tests in 2002 for eleven year olds, pupils' attainment was very low compared with national averages in English, being in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. Pupils' performance in mathematics and science was well below average. In the teacher assessments in science, results were well below average. Compared with schools of a similar type, pupils' results were well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Over the three years from 2000 to 2002 taken together, pupils have left the school over one year behind pupils nationally in English and nearly one year behind in mathematics and science.

Standards at the end of the infant phase in 2002 were well below average in reading and writing and very low in mathematics. Compared to schools of a similar type, pupils' attainment was well below average in reading and writing and very low in mathematics. Over the three years from 2000 to 2002 taken together, pupils have left the infant phase just over two terms behind pupils nationally in reading, over one term behind in writing and nearly one year behind in mathematics. The results at the end of the junior phase, up to 2002, rose at a similar rate as results nationally. The school's targets are appropriately ambitious.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards for pupils aged eleven matched national expectations in English, mathematics and science; ***this improvement from previous test results, reflects the consistently high quality of teaching that pupils are now receiving.*** Standards for pupils aged seven were in line with national expectations in reading and mathematics, and below national expectations in writing and science. For pupils aged seven and eleven, in design and technology, information and communication technology, music and art and design, standards met national expectations. Standards in geography and history are below national expectations for pupils aged seven but in line with national expectations at the age of eleven. Whilst standards in physical education meet national expectations overall, standards in swimming are below expectation. The majority of children aged five will not meet the majority of the Early Learning Goals, despite making good progress. (The Early Learning Goals are the nationally expected standards for children at the end of the Foundation Stage.)

Whilst pupils' achievement is now good overall, many pupils have been under-achieving. Standards are not yet sufficiently high, but are on course to rise substantially.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. They are enthusiastic about school and are interested and involved in the wide variety of activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of the classrooms, is good. There is a general absence of bullying, sexism and racism. Pupils of different ethnic backgrounds play well together.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is excellent; relationships are very good, both between pupils and with adults. Older pupils act as mediators and there is a thriving "Buddies" system, with older pupils organising games for younger ones, reading to them and hearing them read. There is a vibrant school council.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is well below average, with levels of unauthorised absence well above average. Traveller pupils leave school for lengthy periods and this accounts for the school's poor attendance figures. There have been a number of fixed period exclusions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good; literacy and numeracy are well taught. Particular strengths in teaching include the overall very good quality of teaching in both the nursery and reception classes and teachers' management and high expectations in most classes, particularly in the lower infants and juniors. Learning support assistants work well with teachers and make a really positive contribution to pupils' learning. In literacy and numeracy lessons, in particular, teachers are adept at making sure their pupils understand the precise purpose of lessons. The school meets the needs of all pupils, with Traveller pupils making good progress when present. Particular strengths in pupils' learning include their very keen interest and good awareness of their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The youngest children are very well provided for; the curriculum in and beyond the classroom is good in the infants and juniors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and they make good progress. Pupils' individual educational plans have sharply focused targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. The Traveller education service is effective. No pupils are at an early stage in the acquisition of English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Provision for their spiritual, social and cultural development is very good and for their moral development is good. The school has a family atmosphere.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of pupils but does not always check their learning well enough to help them to improve.
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The school works well in partnership with parents; the "parents as educators" course is much appreciated. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good and includes the learning of German. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. Particular strengths in the way the school cares for its pupils include its very good procedures for the monitoring and promoting of good attendance and good behaviour and the elimination of oppressive behaviour. A weakness is in the assessment and tracking of pupils' academic progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher, who was appointed two years ago and the very able deputy, appointed last year, are steering the school in the right direction. They are well supported by staff and governors.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are fully involved in helping the school to improve. The chair of governors and the headteacher work well together.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is good. Results of national tests are rigorously analysed and fed back to teachers.
The strategic use of resources	The school's strategic use of resources is good.

After a period of instability in staffing, the school now has a full complement of teachers and learning support assistants. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although many of the classrooms are used as thoroughfares. There is no ICT suite and no dedicated outdoor play area for the reception class. The school is very well maintained by the caretaker and cleaner and is an oasis in a somewhat neglected area. The secretary is most efficient and helps to ensure the smooth running of the school. Learning resources are satisfactory in both quality and quantity. A particular strength in leadership and management is the calm stability that the headteacher and her deputy have created, following a period of turbulence in the leadership of the school. The school applies the principles of best value well.

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 is well led and managed. • School helps their children to become mature. • Teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like to see a greater range of extra-curricular activities. • Some parents would like more information about pupils' progress. • Some parents would like the school to work more closely with them.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views; it finds the range of extra-curricular activities to be good. Both the information about pupils' progress and the way in which the school works with parents are appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1. Results in national tests at the school have been adversely affected by a number of factors and pupils have been under-achieving.** Until quite recently, there has been a lack of continuity and stability in leadership and staffing. Whilst this situation has now been resolved appropriately, there are additional factors that have a detrimental effect on results. Sacred Heart School has a high turnover of pupils, with 69 pupils joining or leaving the school in the last academic year at a time other than the usual time of admission or transfer. Pupil turnover was about 50 per cent in the group of pupils who sat their end of Year 6 national tests in 2002. The school has a substantial number of Traveller children. This needs to be borne in mind when reading about the school's overall results.
- 2. Most children enter the foundation stage in the Nursery.** They make good progress here. **Shortly after children enter the reception class,** they are assessed to see what they know, understand and can do; social and physical skills are also noted. This is known as the baseline test. The intake in 2002 was judged to be below average overall and well below average in their language skills. An analysis of previous intakes shows that the intake in 2002 was broadly typical. No differences were found between the performances of different groups of children.
- 3. By the age of five, near to the end of their time in reception,** children are again assessed against national standards known as the Early Learning Goals. Despite making good progress, the majority of the children currently in Reception are not on course to attain the majority of these goals.
- 4. At the start of compulsory education in Year 1,** a number of Traveller children join the school each year. They are from three main groupings, comprising of Irish travellers, English travellers and Romas. These children tend to stay with the school for lengthy periods of time, interspersed by prolonged absences when they are away travelling with their families. Overall, these pupils are included very well in the school, but their standards of attainment on entry are often especially low.
- 5. At the age of seven, close to the end of their time in Year 2,** pupils take the end of infant phase national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils who sat these tests in 2002 obtained levels that were well below national averages in reading and writing and very low in mathematics, being in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. Standards in the teacher assessments in science were well below average. Pupils' attainment when compared to schools having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals was well below average in reading and writing and, again, very low in mathematics. Those who took the tests in 2001 attained standards that were well below average in reading, below average in writing and very low in mathematics. Taking the results over the last three years from 2000 to 2002, averaged together, pupils' performance has been over two terms below the national average in reading, over one term behind in writing and nearly one year below average in mathematics. In reading boys have performed less well than girls, with the reverse being true in writing; in mathematics there has been little difference. No differences were found in the performance of different groups, except in those Traveller pupils who had spent very limited periods at the school.
- 6. Inspectors find that pupils currently in Year 2, who will take their national tests in May, 2003, are reaching standards matching national expectations in reading and mathematics and below average expectations in writing, science, history and geography.** Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, physical education, music and design and technology meet national expectations.

7. **By the age of eleven, near to the end of Year 6**, pupils take the end of junior phase national tests in English, science and mathematics. Pupils' performance in the 2002 tests in terms of National Curriculum points scores was very low in English compared with schools nationally (*Note: very low means that these results were in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally*) and well below the national averages in science and mathematics. It was well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science when compared with the performance of pupils in schools of a similar type. Taking the three years from 2000 to 2002 together, pupils have left the junior phase just over one year behind pupils nationally in English and over two terms below in mathematics and in science. This does not necessarily mean that pupils' performance has gone backwards during the junior phase. To see if this is the case, we need to look at how the same group of pupils has performed in each phase. For example, if we consider those pupils who took their end of Year 2 tests in 1998 and then went on to sit the end of Year 6 tests in 2002, the results show that pupils have made satisfactory progress overall in mathematics and science, but unsatisfactory progress in English. These judgements are arrived at by looking at the performance of those pupils who stayed with the school throughout the four years of junior phase education. National test results are calculated using National Curriculum points scores. Nationally, pupils are expected to gain three points per year in each subject, which amounts to 12 points over the four-year period in each subject. Pupils at Sacred Heart raised their points score from 15 to 23 in reading, 13 to 21 in writing, 14 to 25 in mathematics and 14 to 26 in science. A more detailed analysis of progress in reading and writing showed this to be good in their time in Year 6. The only difference found in the performance of groups of pupils was that Traveller pupils tended to perform poorly due to their limited attendance at the school.
8. **Inspectors find that pupils currently in Year 6** are working at average standards in English, mathematics and science. Optional national tests in the three years (i.e. points rise expected nationally) up to the end of Year 5 show an improvement in reading from 13 points to 22, in writing from 12 to 21 and in mathematics from 13 to 23. The quality and quantity of work in their Year 6 books show that they are making good progress in all three subjects. Standards in information and communication technology, physical education, art and design, history, music, design and technology and geography meet national expectations.
9. **Since the last inspection**, standards have risen at the end of the junior phase in English, mathematics and science, with the current cohort of pupils now meeting national expectations. Standards have also risen by the end of Year 6 in history, design and technology and information and communication technology. In other subjects, standards at the end of Year 6 have been maintained.
10. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress towards the clear targets in their individual education plans. Higher attainers make good progress; no pupils are identified as being gifted or talented. The small amount of bilingual support allocated to two Nursery children who are in the early stages of learning English is used well and is helping those children to make good progress. There are no pupils in Years 1 to 6 who are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are fully included in all lessons. They make good progress alongside their peers. Travellers' children make good progress when they are in school, but frequent and sudden absences often impede their progress over time. As a result, some Traveller children do not achieve as well as they could.
11. **Overall, pupils are now achieving well**, considering their prior attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are good. Parents firmly believe their children enjoy school and make good progress. They settle down quickly and are interested in their lessons. This is particularly evident where teachers provide challenging work. Pupils asked are willing to talk about what they are doing, happily correct their mistakes and readily explain how they arrived at their answers. They collaborate well in pairs or in groups when encouraged to do so. They share resources well. For example, in a Year 4/5 lesson on information and

communication technology, the pupils worked hard in pairs. They constantly changed from their handwritten projections to sitting at the only two class computers available, undeterred by this critical shortage of equipment. The great majority of older pupils display maturing qualities of independent learning. In discussions, they allow space for one another's comments, making responsible suggestions and entering into fruitful short dialogues.

13. Behaviour is good, largely due to the dedication of staff in implementing consistent strategies of behaviour management. This is strongly supported by parents. The conduct of the great majority of pupils is very good. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy and very polite. They are keen to talk about what interests them and many will add, "Thank you for asking me". Pupils are generally orderly when moving around the school and have an increasing respect for their environment, resulting in markedly less vandalism than previously. There is lively conversation over lunch. Pupils co-operate well with midday supervisors. These are very interesting lunchtimes. Pupils are free to take part in a splendid choice of well-run clubs, as well as join in a very wide range of outdoor activities. Play is good-natured with a broad mix of small and large groups. However, the self-discipline of a few pupils is unreliable and it is felt necessary to ensure there is a high staff ratio, together with lunchtime supervisors, to heighten the overall authority for all breaks. Pupils, even those who offend, appreciate the systems of rewards and acknowledge that sanctions, when required, are fair. They know and apply their class rules well. Where there are rare instances of aggression, tendency towards bullying or name calling, all know how very seriously they are viewed. These very good attitudes of the great majority of pupils are undermined by a significant small core of pupils who have severe personal and emotional problems. As a result, there were 29 fixed exclusions in the last recording year. The school regrets there have been a significant number of fixed exclusions in this first term of the present year. The school does its very best to minimize these, but when it has to act, it is not afraid to do so, and there is an improving and more stable situation overall. The number of pupils involved is slowly reducing.
14. The pupils' personal development is excellent overall, with some first class features evident in the pupils' attitudes to initiative and personal responsibility. This shows a progressive improvement since the last inspection.
15. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. This is even apparent for some of those pupils who regularly cause problems for others. It is particularly evident when talking to the older pupils, who exhibit a very responsible understanding of sharing and caring and of what school is about. There is a strong moral code. All pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong and share in the making of their own class rules.
16. The pupils' respect for others' differences, particularly their feelings, values and beliefs, is very strong. They have a very good understanding of the guiding principles of the school's mission statement. They confidently respect the Catholic ethos of the school. Their enquiring minds are purposefully enlarged by a growing realisation of the world of resources and relationships around them. This strengthens their spiritual awareness with positive respect for others' feelings and beliefs, their faiths and cultures, especially the different patterns of life within the school. Pupils enter well into the opportunities for reflection and discussion during circle time and through acts of prayer and worship. They contribute positively to the atmosphere of assemblies, in songs and prayers, and listen very respectfully to staff and the visitors who lead them. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the opportunities to take part. They can promote the themes of assemblies very well in impromptu role-play. For example, Year 6 pupils acted out a modern day parable based on 'The Weakest Link', to the delight and very good understanding of the whole school. The simple prayers that followed were inclusive of the whole gathering.
17. The manner in which the pupils show initiative and take personal responsibility is excellent. This is supported by a very good sense of social responsibility. They celebrate each other's achievements in class and at assemblies with enthusiasm. All enjoy the daily routines, such as preparing for lessons or sharing resources. The new School Council is already having a positive effect for the good of the school. Older pupils thrive on responsibility. For example, they run the House Points system very efficiently. They readily take initiative in acting as mediators and

buddies with the infant pupils, organising games and reading to them. Lesson objectives are seriously discussed with assessment at the end on how well they have been achieved. Pointers for development in the next lessons are mutually agreed as a result. These pupils have mature expectations of their progression to secondary education.

18. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Happy companionship is very evident. Pupils are eager to help and support each other. They treat each other and adults with respect. Pupils are seen to talk happily to staff during breaks, for example, about what they have been doing or to share any small concerns. Consequently, a good rapport is evident between pupils and between pupils and adults in school.
19. Attendance at 91.1 per cent in the last reporting year is poor. This level is consistently well below the national average and shows a deterioration since the last inspection. The very high levels of both authorised and unauthorised absence are almost entirely due to the core of Traveller children taking time away, due to the cultural pattern of their life. Nevertheless, the great majority of pupils enjoy school and attend well. Pupils are constantly made aware that regular attendance and punctuality are good habits to be fostered for the future. Of particular note is the keen competition for the Weekly Class Attendance prizes, which include punctuality. The Breakfast Club is enjoyed by a small number of pupils and has successfully reduced some lateness. However, this remains an issue for a good number of Traveller pupils and a very few local families. Registration is prompt and effective.
20. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the extra attention they receive in class. They respond positively and with help concentrate to complete tasks. The achievement of a minority of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is sometimes hampered by their behaviour. Currently, three pupils attend the Pupil Referral Unit. Pupils who speak English as an additional language integrate without difficulty in every aspect of school life.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. Standards of teaching have improved considerably since the last inspection. At that time, one in ten lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory; only one lesson was in that category in this inspection. The proportion of very good or better teaching has nearly tripled.
22. The overall quality of teaching is good; this school now has a talented team of teachers on permanent contracts. This is a major factor accounting for the improvements in standards. Overall, teaching in the lessons seen was very good in the foundation stage, good in the infants and good in the juniors. In all except one of the lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory. Overall, it was excellent in three, very good in 11, good in 22, satisfactory in nine and unsatisfactory in one lesson.
23. Whilst overall standards of teaching were nearly always at least satisfactory, examples of very good lessons were seen in each of the three sections of the school.
24. The biggest strengths in teaching include the helpful manner in which teachers often share the learning objectives for lessons with their pupils, the way in which they manage their pupils, which is very good, and their high expectations.
25. Teachers work very hard and know their pupils well. Pupils are aware of what is expected from them in terms of behaviour and respond well. They are generally extremely courteous and work hard. In an excellent numeracy lesson for pupils in Year 5 / 6 in which the teacher showed excellent class management, the pupils' response was also excellent and they showed great enjoyment for solving real-life problems about money; these pupils made excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of strategies for coping sensibly with "wordy" problems. In a very good personal and social education lesson for children in the Nursery, the children responded well to the calm and supportive class management. Classroom support assistants throughout the school make a most valuable contribution to pupils' learning, nearly always appropriately, supporting pupils in class rather than withdrawing them.

26. The pace of lessons is generally very good through the school. In the best lessons, pupils are reminded of the time limits on an exercise, for example, in an excellent Year 1 numeracy lesson. When pupils are given relatively short time spans to complete a piece of work and reminded of this, it ensures that they focus on the work they have to complete. In an isolated example of a slowly paced lesson, the teacher gave pupils too much time to do very little and their learning was unsatisfactory.
27. Literacy and numeracy are taught well, with teachers constantly trying to extend pupils' writing into other areas of the curriculum. Lessons generally start with effective question and answer sessions, to revise previous work and set pupils thinking. For example, in an excellent literacy lesson for pupils in Year 5 / 6, the teacher posed questions that thoroughly assessed pupils' level of understanding of connectives. Pupils were appropriately challenged to write an account of a bank robbery from a transcript of a police interview with a witness. Literacy and numeracy are taught well through other subjects in nearly all classes. However, the quality and quantity of written work on literacy, numeracy, history and geography in the books of Year 2 pupils was not always commensurate with work in some of the other classes. The standard of work in Year 5 / 6 books was exemplary in literacy and numeracy. Additionally, an analysis of work in these subjects for the cohort of pupils who left the school in summer 2002 showed that they had made particularly good progress in Year 6, but from a very low base, especially in English.
28. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are generally at least good in all subject areas. In the infants and the juniors, day-to-day marking of pupils' work is good, with appropriate comments to praise pupils' efforts and comments to stretch pupils where appropriate.
29. Lessons generally have clear learning objectives and these are generally looked at again at the end of lessons to see how far they have been achieved. Many lessons end with a worthwhile oral question and answer session, as in the majority of literacy and numeracy lessons. The use of homework is satisfactory overall.
30. All teachers plan suitable work for pupils with special educational needs in line with their individual education plans. Group tasks are appropriately modified to meet particular needs so that all can access a suitable curriculum. Teaching assistants are well informed and work skilfully with groups of pupils. They liaise closely with teachers and outside agencies. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils having English as an additional language and provide appropriate challenge for their wide range of attainment. A high level of support is provided for Traveller children, both individually and in small groups in class. The Travellers' Education Service provides high quality teaching support in withdrawal groups, especially in promoting literacy skills. This is further supplemented in lunchtime activities such as the Reading Club or Talking Partners. The school provides a learning support assistant to give specific help to pupils with English as an additional language.
31. Pupils are now learning well as a result of the good standard of teaching. They are interested and concentrate well, except when, very infrequently, the lesson lacks challenge.

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

32. The curriculum in the Nursery and reception classes is very well planned and enables the children to make good progress towards the nationally agreed goals in the six areas of learning. A wide range of exciting practical experiences is well organised to build on the children's natural curiosity. Priority is suitably given to personal, social and emotional development, to communication, language and literacy and to mathematical development.
33. The school provides a good level of well-directed support to ensure that all pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn and to succeed. Pupils from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Asian pupils, are supported effectively in class alongside their peers. High quality

support from the Traveller Education Service is directed sensitively to meet individual needs. The two children in the Nursery who are at an early stage in learning English receive additional support and make good progress. Lower attaining pupils are well supported in literacy and numeracy through additional small group work and through booster classes. Higher attaining pupils are well provided for. The school has not identified any gifted or talented pupils.

34. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans for these pupils set clear and relevant targets and support the teachers and their assistants in their day-to-day work with individuals and groups. Access and facilities for disabled pupils have recently been improved in the Nursery and now meet the school's current needs.
35. The school has good systems for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. National strategies are thoroughly implemented in all classes. As a result, standards in reading are beginning to rise. In mathematics, there is significant improvement in the pupils' understanding and use of key vocabulary. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are appropriately developed across the curriculum. Occasionally in mathematics and science, the school places too heavy a reliance on commercial worksheets.
36. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. There are regular and frequent opportunities for pupils to take part in clubs after school and during the lunch break. Clubs in seasonal sports, musical activities, art, information and communication technology and German enhance the curriculum considerably. Lunchtime Reading Club and Talking Partners are well directed to provide appropriate help for selected pupils. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day. This year there are firm plans for a residential visit for Year 6 pupils.
37. The good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship reflects the importance the school gives to the all-round development of the children. Teachers are consistent in giving positive feedback and promoting the pupils' self-esteem at every appropriate opportunity in the school day. Sex and drugs education are sensitively taught mainly through religious education and science. Healthy lifestyles are promoted, for example, through the provision of fruit for playtime snacks. Children are encouraged to consider relationships in Circle Time lessons (particularly in the infants) and in assemblies. They are expected to work co-operatively in class. As a result of the school's provision, pupils are developing positive attitudes to each other and to learning.
38. The school has developed satisfactory links with the community, which make a sound contribution to pupils' learning. Close links with the church support pupils in their spiritual development and include the sacramental programme for junior pupils. Local professional football clubs provide coaching sessions for boys and girls to improve skills.
39. There are good links with other educational establishments. Staff join with clusters of local education authority and Catholic schools to discuss and develop areas of the curriculum. Particularly close links with the receiving secondary school promote social and academic liaison which smoothes the transfer of pupils from Year 6 to Year 7. Good links with teacher and nursery nursing training establishments enable the school to work closely with students, who provide an extra dimension to the pupils' learning.
40. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Pupils in the infant phase study a variety of different faiths. Older pupils study Buddhism, Islam and Judaism appropriately. There are prayer areas in all classrooms. Time is provided for prayer and reflection every day. Class Masses are held in the school hall every two weeks, with weekly masses in Lent. There is an effective programme of circle time in each class every week.
41. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school has a caring catholic ethos. The school code and mission statement reflect strong moral values. The Monday assembly of each week has an appropriate theme linked to Sunday gospel readings, and generates a theme for the week. For example, there has been a recent focus on "listening". All adults have then rewarded pupils who have been particularly good listeners with house points. This extends to

pupils' listening outside classrooms, for example in the dining hall where midday assistants are able to reward deserving pupils.

42. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Adults treat pupils with respect, which is reciprocated. Year 5 pupils are trained as mediators, so that in Year 6 they can be Buddies. They organise games for younger pupils, read to them and hear them read. The School Council provides great opportunities for pupils to extend their social skills. There are two representatives from each class, together with an Asian pupil and a Traveller pupil. They have been involved in organising an Eid party, pricing new goalposts and choosing the colours for class toilets.
43. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. It is an integral part of geography and history throughout the school and provides worthwhile opportunities to learn about the pupils' own culture. There are links with the Accrington Pals, a local organisation connected with the First World War. There are strong links with the church that has been here for 150 years. There are opportunities for Islamic children to talk about their own faiths in class and appropriate bilingual books. There has recently been a demonstration of vibrant Asian dancing from a visiting troupe of performers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. This is a caring school and the safety and welfare of pupils is paramount. Parents feel their children are welcome in a secure, warm and clean environment. Staff provide a happy working atmosphere in which the pupils can grow into rounded individuals. All adults in school are aware of the strict criteria to be observed in child protection. The school has good access to educational, medical and social agencies when required. Care for those who are unwell is sensitively structured.
45. The school works very hard to promote attendance and punctuality and has been successful in establishing improved consistency of attendance for the great majority of pupils. The value of regular attendance is promoted at every opportunity. Monitoring is very thorough and any unexplained absences are chased up immediately. Detailed statistics of authorised and unauthorised absence are constantly checked to monitor current trends and to target individuals. The Travellers' Education Welfare Officer works well with school. Overall, the majority of parents are familiar with the criteria for authorised and unauthorised absence and co-operate well with the school.
46. Procedures for monitoring and promoting self-discipline are very good. There is a comprehensive behaviour policy, which has been shared with the parents. Individual pupils who have personal and social problems are very closely monitored by all staff, with constant care and concern. A wide range of strategies is applied consistently, generally resulting in improving overall standards of self-discipline. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Very occasional instances of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively, with the full co-operation of parents. There have been a significant number of justifiable fixed period exclusions, mainly relating to a very small number of pupils.
47. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The staff work very hard to build up pupils' self-esteem, fully reflecting the school's mission statement. Parents are happy that these attitudes and values have a positive effect on their children and help them mature. Staff know the pupils very well individually. They have the pupils' confidence and co-operation, but in some cases have to work very hard to maintain their persistence, application and concentration. Notwithstanding, parents are pleased that teachers expect their children to work hard and do their best. Staff take every opportunity to promote the systems of rewards for good work, endeavour and behaviour. Sanctions, where necessary, are fairly applied. Pupils can share their thoughts confidently with several members of staff. The school has an open door policy.

48. The assessment of pupils' work and its use to plan future work is unsatisfactory overall. Whilst progress in this area has been made since the last inspection, and some tracking is now taking place, assessment is not consistently implemented through the school. The school has just decided to implement a system of setting challenging targets in the core subjects. The school is targeting a gain of four National Curriculum points each year in each core subject, as against a national expectation to gain three points per year. Whilst this is a commendable system, the school has yet to develop assessment systems that will measure whether this is taking place so that it can tailor additional support at the earliest stage to those groups failing to reach their targets. It intends to implement an assessment on a half-yearly basis, to check whether the requisite two-point gain has been made and to provide appropriate support in those classes where this has not been attained. This is set to have a major impact on raising standards further.
49. Statements and individual education plans show that progress of pupils with special educational needs is regularly reviewed and carefully monitored. Annual reviews for pupils with statements involve careful up-to-date analysis of the pupils' needs. Provision outlined in the statements is fully in place. Pupils with English as an additional language are subject to the same assessment and review as the rest of the pupils. The progress of Traveller children is regularly reviewed through close liaison with the Travellers' Education Service.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The majority of parents view the school highly. This is evident from encouraging comments at the parents' meeting, the very positive views expressed in the, albeit low, return of questionnaires and parents spoken to during the inspection. All speak warmly of the school and have increasing confidence in what the new headteacher and staff provide and achieve for their children. This has resulted in a markedly improved whole school family atmosphere since the last inspection. There is a comprehensive school prospectus, with a clear Mission Statement, covering aspects of school life. The weekly School Newsletter keeps parents continuously up to date on current matters. The governors' annual report conforms to requirements, but some statements are vague and often lack any detail. There is little to inform parents of matters discussed by the governors in the past year, or how any decisions taken impact on the school.
51. Parents know the headteacher and staff are always available at the end of the day to discuss any immediate parental concerns. Appointments may readily be made for more formal matters. Parents feel their views are listened to and valued.
52. Information to parents on their children's progress is satisfactory. Written reports are individual to the pupils and conform to requirements. However, they lack clear evaluation or reference to National Curriculum levels, nor do they suggest areas for further improvement. Parents are invited to comment, but few take up the opportunity. Discussion on current achievement, further progress and target setting is shared with parents at consultation evenings in Autumn and Spring. This range of meetings is quite well attended overall, but Traveller parents rarely take up these opportunities. In addition, special meetings for the parents of pupils in the standard attainment test years are attended very well.
53. The parents' contribution to school life and their children's learning is good. The school warmly and strongly invites their co-operation. The Home School Agreement has had a good response and has consciously helped to clarify the roles of parent, child and the school. A good number of parents are perceived to encourage and help their children at home, particularly in the foundation stage and in Key Stage 1. A small number of parents loyally come into school to help in lessons. Their service is valued. Several parents have joined a good variety of courses provided in school, such as 'Parents as Educators', making 'Story Sacks' and 'Keeping up with Children'. Those attending feel these courses are a practical benefit, and some have gone on to become teaching assistants. Parents are always welcome in school. They turn up in good numbers and especially enjoy the class and celebration assemblies, masses and special events for the major festivals at Harvest and Christmas. The school's bi-lingual assistant liaises well with those parents who have difficulty in understanding English.

54. The Parent Teacher Association makes a valuable contribution to the family atmosphere of the school. All parents are automatically members. The working party is small, but active. Regular events, such as family discos, Bingo sessions and Christmas Fairs are well attended by extended family and friends in the community. Funds raised are donated for additional school resources.
55. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed of the school's concern at a very early stage. They are fully consulted in the drawing up of individual education plans and advised on how they can help. Parents are invited to review meetings and usually attend.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The leadership and management by the headteacher, appointed two years ago, are very good, in both academic and pastoral spheres. The able headteacher is committed to inclusive education and knows how she wants the school to develop. Her leadership ensures that the school now has a very clear educational direction. The headteacher wants the best for all of her pupils. The school's aims and values are easily seen in the daily routines of the school. The deputy headteacher, who is a recently appointed and very competent Year 6 teacher, has responsibility for assessment through the school and is the numeracy coordinator. The senior management team, which includes the coordinators for literacy, for the foundation stage and the Year 4/5 teacher, is extremely competent. The subject coordinators manage their subjects appropriately, monitoring planning, marking and learning by classroom observations. The headteacher has monitored and evaluated teaching and learning in all classes; this has been instrumental in raising the standards of teaching.
57. The governing body's fulfilment of its statutory responsibilities is good. The governors are determined that the school should succeed, following a period of great instability, in which they have done their best to ensure as much continuity as possible. Their role in helping to shape the educational direction of the school is good. Governors visit the school regularly, but have not yet monitored the implementation of the curriculum. The chair of governors liaises with the headteacher on a weekly basis at the school. The governing body has a good understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. Between them, the governors bring a wide range of expertise to the running of this school. There is a rolling programme of governor education, which is raising governors' awareness of the issues facing schools.
58. The school's targets are appropriate and sufficiently ambitious. Pupil turnover has had an adverse effect on recent results, but inspection evidence and 2002 Year 5 optional test results suggest that the targets for 2003 in English, mathematics and science will be exceeded. The headteacher has raised the school's targets for 2004; these also look on course to be met. The school has a very good capacity to succeed.
59. Procedures for the induction of new staff are very good. The recently appointed teacher in Year 1 has been appropriately mentored by the headteacher. Appropriate policies and plans are in place for performance management. All teachers have as one of their performance management targets the raising of pupils' attainment by four National Curriculum points per year in each of the core subjects.
60. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has overseen the full implementation of the new Code of Practice and ensured that statutory requirements are met. She manages the provision efficiently so that support is appropriately directed to meet needs. Teaching assistants are deployed to support pupils as outlined in their statements. Specific funding is used effectively to provide learning support and equipment. There is a nominated governor for special educational needs who is kept well informed of the school's arrangements. There is good liaison between

school and outside agencies such as the Lancashire Education Inclusion Service and the Travellers' Education Service, which enhances the school's provision.

61. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is currently good. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and is very well maintained. The interior of the school is an oasis. It has a most stimulating environment with high quality displays of pupils' work throughout. However, there is no dedicated ICT room, many of the classrooms have to be used as thoroughfares and there is no outdoor play area reserved for the reception children. Resources are generally satisfactory in quality and quantity.
62. The effectiveness of the school's use of new technology is good. The school's competent administrative officer and her assistant work hard for the school and are effective in helping the smooth running of the school. Finances are handled well and the school applies the principles of best value well. Specific grants are used appropriately. The large surplus in the current budget is to be used for the creation of an information and communication technology suite. The school development plan is a most useful working document, which clearly prioritises the school's needs. It is drawn up by the headteacher and governors, with significant input from members of staff. A major target in the school development plan is to raise standards in reading and writing.
63. The key issues to develop the roles of the subject coordinators, improve the awareness of the governing body and to improve monitoring have all been well addressed. Leadership and management is now the force behind the school's turn-round and the commitment of the management team has the respect of the staff and the backing of an informed governing body. There has been very good improvement since the time of the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further improve the school, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- provide more opportunities for speaking across the school; and
(paragraph 83)
- check pupils' learning in English, mathematics and science and use the information to help individuals make better progress.
(paragraphs 48, 88, 94, 101)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	11	22	9	1	0	0
Percentage	6	24	48	20	2	0	0

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

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)	23	173
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	46

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	24

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	39

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.1

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	16	12	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	15
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	19	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (70)	68 (74)	79 (61)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	14
	Girls	8	7	9
	Total	21	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (70)	79 (70)	82 (74)
	National	85 (95)	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)

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

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	6	8
	Girls	9	8	9
	Total	13	14	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (60)	56 (40)	68 (68)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	6	8
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	12	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (60)	60 (48)	68 (68)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	131	21	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	15	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
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

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	28.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	183

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.1
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	490,262
Total expenditure	470,466
Expenditure per pupil	2,364
Balance brought forward from previous year	57,014
Balance carried forward to next year	76,809

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	139
Number of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	29	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	33	7	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	46	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	38	4	0	10
The teaching is good.	54	38	4	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	42	10	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	42	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	40	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	46	42	10	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	61	27	8	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	31	8	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	35	10	0	13

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

64. Children are admitted to the nursery in the September after their third birthday. In the September before they are five, children move into the reception class. A significant minority of children transfer to primary schools other than Sacred Heart. Currently there are 44 part-time children on roll in the nursery and 19 full-time pupils in the reception class.
65. Nursery staff promote particularly good initial links with families so that children settle quickly into school. Pre-school taster visits encourage children to look forward to starting nursery. Parents are encouraged to find out about school through introductory meetings with staff. Useful informative booklets enable parents to prepare their children for school life. The bi-lingual assistant liaises well with Asian families.
66. The reception and nursery classes follow the early learning goals, the nationally recommended curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. This consists of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or *Stepping-Stones* from which progress and standards can be measured.
67. Whilst standards of attainment on entry vary from year to year, there has been an overall downward trend over recent years. This is confirmed by the results of assessment made of children soon after they start nursery, and again at the beginning and end of reception. Standards of attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage are now lower than they were at the time of the last inspection; they are well below those of children in this age group nationally, with very low standards in language skills. Children in the nursery are currently working towards the first *Stepping-Stone* and many reception children are working on the second *Stepping-Stone*, with a small number of higher attaining children working towards the third *Stepping-Stone* in each area of learning. Overall, children achieve well and often very well over the Foundation Stage as a result of very good teaching. Nevertheless, a high proportion of children do not reach the early learning goals in each area of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils make particularly good progress in personal, social and emotional development and generally reach the early learning goals in this area. Traveller children, who tend not to join the nursery but start in the reception class when they are five, are supported very well. They do not always achieve as highly as they could, owing to their late start and frequent absences. Children with special educational needs are supported well and make very good progress. The teacher and teaching assistant in the nursery make sure that the two children who are at an early stage of acquiring English are fully included in all activities and make very good progress alongside their peers.
68. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. All staff use their secure knowledge and understanding of the way young children learn to plan a rich curriculum, full of interesting practical experiences, which meets children's needs. A particular strength is the high quality of teamwork between adults, which enables the individual skills of teachers and nursery nurses to be used to best advantage. The very good relationships between staff and between staff and children promote a calm and secure environment where children enjoy learning. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well, with elements of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy incorporated into the curriculum for reception children. Staff use the clear learning objectives effectively to focus learning and to measure progress.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

69. Almost all children enjoy coming to school and leave their carers happily. They settle into the carefully established routines and are keen to join in class activities. Many have not yet learnt the rules. They frequently interrupt whilst the teacher is speaking. They are learning to wait their turn at snack time and respond to the adult reminders to say please and thank-you. Most children are becoming increasingly confident in selecting an activity. In the reception class, many are beginning to concentrate successfully and persevere to complete their work. The vast majority are confident in carrying out set tasks, but several show little initiative in making choices of their own. Most reception children are interested and curious and are developing positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to take responsibility for minor administrative tasks, or for demonstrating to others in class. Almost all are developing positive attitudes to learning. Teaching and learning are very good. Consequently, children achieve very well in this area. All staff take every opportunity to set high standards of behaviour and promote caring co-operative attitudes in all aspects of school life. They show respect for children's ideas and give reassuring feedback to increase confidence.

Communication, language and literacy

70. Many nursery children are reluctant to communicate verbally. They respond to their teachers' questions with very limited vocabulary and use gestures, words or phrases rather than sentences. Whilst they appear to listen, they often show by their response that they do not understand what is said. They are interested in books and enjoy stories. A few higher attaining children are beginning to recognise their names as they self-register each day. Pupils in the Reception Class enjoy looking at books. They are developing the confidence to talk in front of the class, but the speech of many is still indistinct and their vocabulary poor. They listen carefully to identify rhyming sounds in a favourite poem. Most, but not all, children are beginning to recognise a few letters by sound. Children explore the shape of letters in sand. Higher attaining children copy their own sentence under the teacher's writing. They form some letter shapes indiscriminately in their independent writing. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Adults constantly model good speaking and listening skills and encourage children to interact verbally. Staff plan work with clear objectives to build up skills, step-by-step over time. Short, whole class plenary sessions are used very well to consolidate learning and to assess what children know.

Mathematical Development

71. Children in the nursery and in the reception class join enthusiastically in a wide range of practical counting, sorting, and matching activities. For instance, nursery children catch plastic fish in the water tray. They use some number names and language in their play, whilst the adult helps them to count and compare. They are learning to recognise two-dimensional shapes as they print with circles and triangles. Most reception children count objects one-to-one up to six but many are not confident in this. Higher attaining children count up to 10 pennies accurately at the 'garage'. Almost all name several two-dimensional shapes accurately and are beginning to use mathematical language when sorting shapes to make symmetrical patterns. Teaching and learning are very good. Staff make imaginative use of resources to plan appropriate practical tasks, which involve children actively in learning. These tasks are carefully matched to the different levels of attainment in the class. On-going assessments made by observing the children at work are used effectively to plan the next steps in learning. All staff provide positive feedback to children. This promotes confidence and encourages children to think for themselves.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

72. All of the children use their senses to investigate the world around them. In the nursery, children squeeze and shake parcels to guess the contents. In the reception class, children look closely to observe how a torch works and show particular delight and excitement when using chromatography to investigate different coloured inks. The majority use technology such as the computer and language master confidently to support their learning. Most children are learning to observe carefully but many have very poor language skills to describe what they see. Only a

few children show initiative or contribute their own ideas independently. Whilst they are interested, they are not adept at asking questions of their own. Teaching is very good. Staff plan imaginatively to catch the children's interest in a lively hands-on approach. Resources are very well prepared and accessible so that children can explore with some independence. Other cultures contribute appropriately to the children's learning. All tasks are clearly focused and adults lead children towards the specific outcomes expected. Staff use questions very skilfully to make children think in order to extend their own ideas.

Physical Development

73. Very few children in the nursery are independent in dressing for their daily outdoor play session. They are confident but largely unaware of others when steering large wheeled toys around the track. With much help, they follow instructions to build wheeled vehicles with construction kits. Their ability to control small tools like pencils and pasters is not well developed. The reception children enjoy physical education lessons in the school hall. Despite the fact that access to a secure and suitable outdoor play area is limited, nearly all children are on target to reach the early learning goals in gross motor skills. They use space in the hall with good awareness of others. When throwing and aiming balls and beanbags, they show good control and co-ordination. They are beginning to consider and practise different styles of throwing. Most children in the reception class use pencils and scissors with reasonable control and manipulate construction toys for their own particular purpose. Teaching and learning are good. Nursery staff make the best use of the resources available. The outside area is well organised as a learning resource for the nursery class. In physical education lessons, teachers give clear instructions and make effective use of children as exemplars of good practice to demonstrate to others. All staff manage children very well with praise and encouragement to build up confidence and independence. Occasionally, hall lessons proceed at too slow a pace, and many children have to wait whilst the teacher painstakingly explains the tasks to individuals who have not understood.

Creative Development

74. Children explore a range of media. They enjoy playing in attractive and stimulating areas such as the home corner, the 'garage' or the 'toy shop'. Whilst they show some imagination in their role-play, they generally act-out familiar activities like making a cup of tea. Children in the nursery play alongside rather than with each other. They enjoy the experience of working with paint or dough but only a few play purposefully with specific outcomes in mind. Reception children are enthusiastic in creating effects with paint. They flick, dab and splash to make firework effects and work together to use sponges, rollers and brushes when creating different textures. Through carefully choosing from a range of materials and through mixing paint, they are aware that there are many shades of red. Teaching and learning are good. Resources are well chosen to interest and motivate children successfully. Particular attention is given to the preparation and development of attractive role-play areas. Staff intervene in role-play to extend children's ideas and promote a more imaginative use of materials.

ENGLISH

75. At the last inspection, standards were judged to be below national expectations at the end of Year 6. Standards now meet national expectations by the end of Year 6.
76. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds, pupils' attainment was well below the national average. Compared to those of schools of a similar type, pupils' results were well below average. A high proportion of pupils enter the school with very low-level language skills. Many pupils make good progress in Year 1, including those with special educational needs and Traveller children, although good progress is not sustained in Year 2 where insufficient opportunities are being provided to develop the pupils' written work on a regular basis, and there is often a lack of challenge in the work set for the higher attaining pupils.

77. In the 2002 national tests for eleven year olds, pupils' attainment was very low compared with the national average, being in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. Compared with those of schools of a similar type, pupils' results were well below average. However, these results did not reflect the improvement made by a significant number of Year 6 pupils over the year, due to the very good teaching by the newly appointed deputy headteacher. This group of pupils contained an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs and a significant number of Traveller children. There had also been a high turnover of pupils between the ages of seven and 11.
78. Until the appointment of the present headteacher two years ago, the teaching of English was not always effectively linked to the National Literacy Strategy, owing to constant changes of staff and the difficulty in appointing supply staff. Pupils were entering the school with very low levels of communication and there were a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. The special needs of Traveller children were not being met. Resources for English were unsatisfactory.
79. A key issue from the previous inspection was to improve standards in English. The school was also required to improve the assessment systems and to improve teaching.
80. Inspection evidence indicates that, over the past year, rapid improvement has been made in the teaching of English. The National Literacy Strategy has been firmly embedded throughout the school and is now providing all pupils with the opportunity to enjoy a well balanced and stimulating curriculum.
81. Work seen during the inspection shows that attainment is improving throughout the school in all aspects of literacy, although the improvements were too late to affect the 2002 standard attainment test results. In many lessons, because of the additional support for pupils and the constant encouragement provided by teachers and all support staff, pupils attained levels of work that matched the expected level for all pupils nationally. This was particularly true in Year 6. Pupils are now aware of their individual targets in literacy and are keen to achieve them. These initiatives are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' academic progress. A major target in the school development plan is to raise the standard of pupils' work in reading and writing.
82. The standard of listening throughout the school is now good. All pupils listen very well in assemblies. In lessons, the majority of pupils listen closely to teachers' instructions and try to respond to questions, showing that they have followed what has been said. Most pupils concentrate and follow explanations of their tasks, retaining what they have been told and then translating this into action. However, there are a number of pupils who find it hard to sustain their concentration for any length of time.
83. Speaking skills are not yet as well developed; although teachers try to give pupils many opportunities to practise, these are currently insufficient. In one assembly, Year 6 pupils read short passages from the Bible and led the whole school in prayer. In a Year 5/6 geography lesson, pupils prepared a debate on the pros and cons of building a dam to supply water to a large community. Towards the end of most lessons, pupils enjoyed reading their work or reporting back to the whole class on what they had achieved. On these occasions, all pupils listened with interest and, in several classes, pupils applauded, which helped to boost the pupils' self-esteem and showed the very good relationships pupils have with each other. On other occasions, however, opportunities for speaking were not given sufficient emphasis and given children's particularly poor attainment on entry to the school in this area, this is impeding pupils' further progress.
84. In the last year the school has worked hard on raising attainment in reading. A new reading scheme has been purchased for the infants and this will be continued in the juniors early in 2003 when it becomes available. Daily reading practice is now a feature in all classes and pupils are beginning to make better progress. Many pupils now say they like reading and several pupils have joined Accrington public library. The majority of pupils now take books home regularly for

practice and teachers actively encourage this. The school has spent a considerable sum of money creating a new library. This area is developing well as a resource, which the pupils are beginning to use for independent learning. As a result, pupils' individual research skills are beginning to improve.

85. There are clear signs of improvement in the pupils' writing over the past year. This is particularly noticeable in Year 5/6 and in Year 1. All staff are working hard to effect further improvement in the Literacy Hour. The emphasis is on different forms of writing, often related to texts read, or tasks set. In some lessons observed, pupils reached the levels expected nationally but in the test conditions, where they do not have the constant help of teachers and support staff, pupils do not perform as well and do not have time to complete the tasks set. Teachers are constantly trying to extend the writing to other areas of the curriculum, such as writing accounts in history. This could be further extended to other subjects.
86. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, the teaching in all lessons was good and in the Year 5/6 class it was excellent. Teachers show good subject knowledge and understanding. They plan effectively, setting clear targets that pupils understand. Good use is made of support staff and resources though, because of their persistent lateness, a significant number of pupils regularly miss the beginning of literacy lessons first thing in the morning. Teachers and support staff now assess pupils' work and use assessment to help and encourage pupils to overcome difficulties. The teaching methods used are good and enable all pupils to learn effectively. Information and communication technology is just beginning to be used effectively. The management of pupils is now very good. Pupils who were disruptive in the past are now managed well by their teachers and support workers, using the new strategies introduced by the headteacher.
87. As a result of the good teaching, most pupils acquire new knowledge and skills, develop their ideas and increase their understanding. Pupils show interest in lessons. They understand what they have to do, how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. Their improved attitudes are a significant factor in pupils' achievement and learning. This was particularly noticeable in the Year 5/6 class, where the rapport between the class teacher and all the pupils was excellent.
88. The leadership and management of English by the new subject manager are now good. Some procedures for regular assessment and evaluation are now in place. The information gathered provides information on pupils' progress, which is used in English to identify pupils who will benefit from additional support or certain areas of the English curriculum that need special attention in the future. Nonetheless, it does not yet provide assessments that show whether the school is on track to meet targets set. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. There is a shared commitment to further improvement in the subject. The school is in a good position to improve further.

MATHEMATICS

89. Standards in mathematics are currently higher than those at the time of the last inspection for pupils at the end of the junior phase and match those found at the end of the infant phase.
90. On the basis of 2002 national test results based on average National Curriculum points scores, attainment was very low at the end of Year 2, being in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. The percentage of pupils obtaining level 2, the expected level, was average; the proportion obtaining the higher level 3 was well below the national average. Pupils' performance in this mathematics test was also very low in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The average attainment of pupils in the three years 2000 to 2002 was nearly one year behind pupils nationally. The performance of girls was similar to that of boys.
91. In the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in terms of points scores was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining level 4, the expected level nationally, was average but the proportion reaching the higher level five was below average.

When compared with pupils from schools of a similar type, standards were below average. The performance of boys has been higher than that of girls over the last three years.

92. For the current groups of pupils, evidence from the lessons observed, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. The reasons for the difference at the end of Year 6 between previous test results and inspection findings are that pupil turnover has not been as great for the current cohort, there is a smaller proportion of pupils having special educational needs and the teaching has been better and more consistent. In the range of work seen during the inspection, many pupils demonstrated a good level of attainment related to investigative mathematics and number. Pupils in the juniors sometimes do not have sufficiently good knowledge of their multiplication tables, because they are not practised in every class with sufficient regularity. This hinders attainment in problem solving and other areas of mathematics. Pupils aged eleven can work out the complement of given numbers rapidly in their heads; for example, the complement to ten of 6.9 or the complement to 1000 of 821 $\frac{1}{2}$. They record their written work to a very high standard indeed. Pupils use correct mathematical vocabulary throughout the school and this greatly helps their learning. They develop their own strategies when solving problems in their heads, can interpret charts appropriately and are familiar with different ways of presenting data. Pupils aged seven appreciate that multiplication is repeated addition. There was no discernible difference in the performance of girls and boys in the lessons seen. Pupils with Asian backgrounds performed at similar levels to other pupils. Pupils with Traveller backgrounds tended to perform less well, largely due to their frequent absence from school.
93. Overall, learning of pupils in mathematics is good in both the infant and junior phases; this includes those pupils having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Factors aiding progress include the extremely positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils and the overall good standard of teaching. The teaching observed was excellent in two of the seven lessons seen, very good in one lesson, good in two lessons, satisfactory in one and unsatisfactory in one. The features that made the best lessons excellent and contributed to a very high rate of learning were the highest possible challenge by the teachers, coupled with a brisk and purposeful pace in which the teachers set time targets for pupils. Such lessons made the learning objectives explicit at the outset and re-visited these at the end of the session to see how far they had been achieved. Teachers in most numeracy lessons begin with effective question and answer sessions, to revise previous work and set pupils thinking. In numeracy lessons, the likeliest time for pupils to lessen their rate of working is in the "independent learning" sessions. In the best lessons, however, teachers are aware of this and set appropriate time targets, as in, for example, an excellent Year 1 lesson on the vocabulary associated with time. Factors militating against further learning are a lack of pupils' instant recall of multiplication tables, an over-reliance occasionally on commercial worksheets in the infants and inappropriately arranged classroom furniture in Year 4 / 5, with pupils not always facing the teacher. Pupils' achievements have been unsatisfactory but pupils are currently achieving well.
94. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Whilst challenging targets have been set, amounting to an improvement of four National Curriculum points per year, there are not reliable summative assessment procedures in place to ensure that they are achieved. Summative means a test of all previous work, as opposed to tests on individual topics. The level of resources is good and ICT is used well. The mathematics coordinator, who is the deputy headteacher, is extremely competent. He has monitored and evaluated both teaching and learning throughout the school, providing appropriate guidance for whole school improvements. His input has had a major impact on raising standards of numeracy teaching through the school. He is an excellent teacher in his own right.

SCIENCE

95. Standards in Year 6 seen during the inspection broadly match national expectations and are higher than those reported in the previous inspection. In Year 2, standards are below national

expectations and are lower than those observed at the last inspection. However, standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are now currently higher than those reached in statutory tests and teacher assessments in May 2002, when the school's performance was well below the national average and below the average performance of similar schools. These standards were caused in part by considerable instability in both the staffing and the leadership of the school. These serious difficulties have now been resolved and standards are beginning to rise. Other contributory factors were the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the high levels of mobility, with 50 per cent of the Year 6 cohort leaving or arriving during the junior phase.

96. Whilst the school's difficulties in the past have led to some underachievement, scrutiny of the books of pupils in last year's Year 6 shows good quality and quantity of work and good progress, although this was too late to have a significant effect on standards reached in the tests. With the school's increased stability, pupils are currently achieving well overall. The rate of learning in lessons seen during the inspection was always at least satisfactory and, in the junior phase, usually good.
97. Many pupils do not reach the early learning goals and standards on entry to Year 1 are below expectations. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in the infant phase due in part to satisfactory teaching and in part to the organisation of the curriculum. Science is taught in whole afternoon sessions in the infant department. These are too long and are not used as productively as the split sessions in the juniors. In the juniors, achievement is good, with good teaching overall and some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress towards their individual targets. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (none of whom are at an early stage of learning English) are fully included and make good progress alongside their peers. Traveller children receive effective support and make good progress when attending regularly. However, their often lengthy and sudden absences have a detrimental effect and overall they do not achieve as well as they could.
98. In Year 2, pupils have sound knowledge of some life processes. They know that animals produce young and that these grow into adults. They are aware that certain types of food are 'healthier' than others and that exercise is 'good for you'. Their knowledge of basic conditions for plant survival is not well developed. When sorting a range of materials they describe basic similarities and differences between them. Only a few higher attaining pupils reliably describe how some materials can be changed by, for instance, heating or stretching. Almost all pupils are aware of how electricity is used at home and of the dangers involved. With help, pupils build simple circuits to light bulbs, with some understanding of the flow of electricity from the battery around the circuit. Pupils' skills of investigational science are generally below average for their age. Few make their own suggestions, make relevant comparisons, or use simple tables to record their findings.
99. In Year 6, pupils are aware of the requirements for fair testing and appreciate the need to collect evidence carefully as when comparing solids, liquids and gases. They record results in annotated diagrams, draw relevant conclusions and eventually make generalisations about each state. When describing the human body, they use scientific terminology for the major organs and know the function, for instance, of the heart as a pump and of veins and arteries. They identify suitable questions to ask and make reasonable predictions when investigating the effect of exercise on pulse rate. They use block and line graphs to record their results and interpret the trend. By the end of Year 6, work in books shows that most pupils can explain how it is that the sun appears to move through the sky. They investigate the movement and length of shadows to identify trends and make generalisations.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with satisfactory teaching in the infant department and very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. In all classes, teachers share their clear learning objectives so that pupils know what is expected of them and try hard to succeed. Teachers manage pupils very well with praise and encouragement, which builds up the pupils' confidence to explore and investigate for themselves. Group work is efficiently organised and resources carefully prepared, so that no time is wasted and pupils settle quickly to their tasks. Plenary sessions are used effectively to consolidate learning and to assess what pupils have

learnt. In some classes, group tasks are not planned to meet the needs of pupils of different prior attainment. As a result, whilst lower attaining pupils are generally well supported, some potential higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they might. In the junior department, teachers organise practical investigations to develop pupils' understanding of scientific enquiry consistently, as well as to promote knowledge of living things, materials and physical processes. This is not always so in the infants, where there is sometimes an over-reliance on worksheets and pupils are not involved in finding out for themselves. Such activities as completing a word search do not promote learning in science effectively.

101. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory overall. However, the role of the curriculum co-ordinator in monitoring standards and progress is insufficiently developed. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory but being improved. They are not specific enough to provide information with which to set challenging targets for individuals or groups.
102. The subject makes a good contribution to literacy and numeracy, through opportunities to practise skills such as writing reports and handling data. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. Pupils have not had experience of using sensors, for example, to record changes in temperature, as the school has not yet acquired suitable equipment. There are good opportunities to develop social skills through collaborative group work and spiritual development is fostered as pupils learn to wonder at the natural world.

ART AND DESIGN

103. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment was judged to be above expectations in the infants and in line with expectations in the juniors. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons being taught, but from a scrutiny of work on display, in sketchbooks and from photographic evidence, it can be seen that attainment now is broadly in line with standards that would be expected by Years 2 and 6.
104. Years 1 and 2 are given good opportunities to explore colour, pattern, texture, line and tone and to combine and organise them for different purposes. They decorate balloons and kites in a variety of colours, using different media. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils used paint very carefully to produce detailed patterns on models they had constructed earlier. They also combine art and science, painting posters to illustrate the dangers of electricity in the home.
105. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class produce their own patterned wallpaper, using printing techniques learned in previous lessons. They were thrilled with their results based on the work of the famous artist William Morris. By the time pupils reach the Year 5/6 class, their knowledge and skills in art have improved and they produce good examples of still life pictures. On their visit to Quarry Bank Mill, Year 5/6 pupils had experimented with batik printing on a variety of fabrics. Each pupil provided an example of their art and the whole was made into an attractive wall hanging, providing an aid to spirituality in the school.
106. Art is now used well in other subjects, especially in geography and history, when pupils enjoy illustrating their work with colourful drawings. Information and communication technology is now being used increasingly in art lessons. For example, while pupils produced their wallpaper designs in the Year 3/4 class, other pupils produced theirs on the computers and were very pleased with their final results.
107. The good teaching observed was clear, lively and exciting, so that pupils understood what was expected from them. They were eager to work and made good progress in the lessons. The materials available were of good quality and very well organised, so that pupils' time was used well in working to develop skills.
108. The leadership of art is good. Monitoring of planning and an analysis of work on display enables the co-ordinator to have a good overview of the subject throughout the school. All pupils, including those having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional

language, make good progress. Assessment is at an early stage of development. Art and display throughout the school make a significant contribution to the pupils' spirituality.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Since the last inspection, standards have risen and now meet national expectations. Owing to timetable constraints, it was only possible to see two lessons in design and technology, for pupils in Year 2 and Year 3/4. These were both taught well, with pupils making good progress and achieving standards matching national expectations. An analysis of work recently carried out at the school shows that pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of both the infant and junior phases. Learning is good overall for all pupils, including those having English as an additional language and those pupils with special educational needs. Whilst Traveller pupils make similar progress to other pupils in individual lessons, their progress over time is less good due to high absence levels. Pupils are systematically building up the key skills of designing and making as they go through the school. Teachers manage their pupils very well indeed and have high expectations; this helps to ensure that pupils' learning is good. Examples of previous work carried out include a playground shelter building using straw and waterproof fabric in Year 6 and hand puppets with appliqué features in Year 2. Resources are satisfactory.
110. Pupils respond well and show enthusiasm for the subject. They enjoy their work and the Year 3/4 pupils involved in making photo-frames were outstandingly positive in their attitudes. They were keenly interested in their work and persevered very well when meeting minor problems.
111. The co-ordinator, who is also the headteacher, is enthusiastic and has attended relevant in-service training.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

112. Standards by the end of Year 2 are below national expectations and, by the end of Year 6, they meet national expectations, in both subject areas. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils made a study of the fictitious island of Struay in their geography lesson. They know what it is like to live on an island and contrast life there with their own lives in Accrington. In history, Year 2 pupils had prepared a time line from before Egyptian times to the present day. This helped to give pupils an understanding of the passage of time. They had written about the Great Fire of London and knew why it spread so quickly. Nonetheless, the quantity of work in their files was very limited.
113. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have covered a satisfactory range of work in geography and history. Year 3/4 pupils look at the effect of weather on human activity. They are familiar with atlases and weather maps, being able to discuss the effect of weather in hot and cold countries on the people living there. Year 5/6 pupils effectively linked their geography lesson to their literacy by preparing a debate on the pros and cons of building a huge dam to help supply a great number of people with drinking water. Pupils enjoyed their work and tried hard to make their feelings known in the debate. During their visit to Quarry Bank Mill, pupils in Year 3/4 found out about life for Victorian children by taking part in a detective style investigation contrasting their own lives with those of the Victorians.
114. Year 5/6 pupils study the ancient Greeks. In a lesson observed during the inspection, several pupils reached a high standard as they investigated the ancient and modern Olympic games. Pupils of all attainment levels worked very hard to research the information required using books, maps and the Internet. Appropriate work was provided for lower attaining pupils and all pupils made very good progress in their learning during the exciting and enjoyable lesson.
115. The teaching in both subjects is good, with the teaching by the Year 5/6 teacher being very good. Teachers' planning is good. Evidence from pupils' written work in the juniors shows that the activities planned are appropriate for the age and prior attainment of the pupils to allow them to make good progress. This included pupils with special educational needs, those having

English as an additional language and Traveller children. Teachers present the subjects in interesting ways and make good use of books, the Internet, visits and artefacts to stir the pupils' enthusiasm. The newly-created school library and resource room is now being used effectively to improve the pupils' research skills.

116. The geography and history coordinators have only recently acquired responsibility for the subjects. However, resources have been substantially improved already and more are on order. Assessment in both subjects is at a very early stage of development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Standards have risen since the time of the last inspection and now meet national expectations at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) to design labels related to work in literacy. They are able to generate text and insert appropriate pictures and save and retrieve information. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to interrogate databases appropriately. They can present information in different forms and are aware of their audience and the need for quality in their presentations. Pupils' work on control, monitoring and modelling is at nationally expected levels. Pupils routinely use ICT as a tool to help their work in other areas of the curriculum, but are hampered by the current lack of an ICT suite. The school intends to remedy this in the near future.
118. Learning is satisfactory for all pupils, including those having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Whilst Traveller pupils make similar progress to other pupils in lessons, their progress over time is less good. It was possible to see three lessons in this subject and the overall quality of teaching was good. Learning did not match teaching, owing to the lack of sufficient computer hardware. Assessment is not yet used effectively to monitor pupils' progress in this subject.
119. Pupils' response is good. They show great eagerness for, and interest in, this subject. Pupils work hard in practising their skills and work co-operatively very well. They are not afraid to volunteer their own suggestions; relationships are excellent.
120. The co-ordinator for this subject is knowledgeable and keen to spread her skills through the school. Whilst she has already provided in-service training for colleagues, she has not yet had time to monitor and evaluate the work of colleagues. There are appropriate computers in every classroom, which are all networked together. The school is linked to the Internet and there is an appropriate range of cross-curricular software.

MUSIC

121. The school has maintained the satisfactory standards found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, those having English as an additional language and Traveller children, make sound progress in their learning throughout the school.
122. Whole school singing in assemblies is good. Pupils sing in tune and pay good attention to rhythm and dynamics, taking every opportunity to put actions to the songs, which adds to their enjoyment of the music. Pupils in the juniors have opportunities to refine their singing further when they sing in the school choir, which meets weekly. During the inspection, some 25 pupils, including a reasonable number of boys, were preparing for a Christmas performance. Their singing was confident and had attractive tone. Their two-part singing benefited from the good emphasis on technique and the need to sing the words clearly and with accurate rhythm, sustaining notes to give them their full value. The pupils' experiences in performing for a variety of audiences, from school productions for parents to small concerts for local community homes for the elderly, help pupils to appreciate that music is enjoyable, but that a successful performance requires effort and discipline. The school intends to extend the pupils' opportunities in music by making violin and woodwind tuition available next term.

123. Year 1 pupils experiment with a variety of different drums. They compose a piece of drum music using the pattern structure they have learned in previous lessons and deciding which type of drum sound best fits the mood they wish to create. Year 2 pupils improve their skills in composition by composing simple tunes. Pupils work very well together in small groups, choosing from a wide variety of instruments provided to compose their tunes. Towards the end of the lesson, pupils are given the opportunity to perform their tune. By the time they reach the Year 3/4, class pupils compose tunes based on the pentatonic scale. Pupils are divided into small groups and given the challenge to write the words and music for a two-line stanza on the subject of autumn. All pupils tackle the task with great enthusiasm and produce good compositions, which they perform towards the end of the lesson, receiving well-deserved spontaneous applause from their friends. This made an effective contribution to the pupils' development in speaking and listening.
124. Year 5/6 were observed singing a variety of songs from a taped accompaniment, including The Streets of London, which they sang particularly well in two parts. Pupils have a good understanding of how different types of music evoke different moods and use a good range of adjectives to describe their responses, such as 'happy', 'lively', 'cheerful' and 'peaceful'. Rich musical experiences, both in and out of class, include opportunities for performance, for example, a production of The Rocky Monster Show at the end of last term.
125. Pupils have good attitudes to music. In Years 1 and 2 they participate with enthusiasm. One pupil in Year 2 thought they should make a recording of their musical compositions to play in assembly. Attitudes to singing in assemblies are good and in the choir they are excellent.
126. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' efforts and behaviour and plan lessons that are interesting and enable pupils to build up skills and understanding systematically. Classes are well managed, lessons have a brisk pace and the good variety of resources is used effectively. Music makes a significant contribution to spirituality in the school.
127. The subject coordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. A curriculum plan is in place to ensure the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are fully covered. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development.
128. The headteacher sees the creative arts as a key element in a rich curriculum and has plans to develop this area of the school's work. The school is in a good position to go on to develop music further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Overall standards in physical education in Year 2 and Year 6 have been maintained since the previous inspection and continue to be broadly in line with those found in most schools. Pupils in all year groups achieve satisfactorily in dance, gymnastics and games skills. In swimming, overall attainment and progress are less secure, with one-quarter of pupils leaving Year 6 last year without reaching the expected standard. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress alongside their peers. Appropriate support is provided to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. Sensitivity is shown to the needs of different ethnic groups, for instance, to Moslem pupils during Ramadan, so that all receive the help they need. Whilst the majority make sound progress, the achievement of Traveller children is affected by their often lengthy absences and they do not always do as well as they could.
130. In gymnastics, pupils in Year 1 control their bodies when hopping, jogging and jumping around the hall. They are independent in selecting and holding a narrow or wide shape. In dance in Year 2, pupils show control and co-ordination when 'whirling and twirling, jumping and jiving, skipping and hopping' in time to music. They work closely with a partner. They do not evaluate their own work or consider how exercise affects their bodies. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 display satisfactory control when dribbling a ball through an obstacle course. They practise to improve and use their skills in a race. They are not yet proficient in applying tactics effectively in a

game. In Year 6, pupils use space in the hall well. They create sequences of movement on the floor or on large apparatus. They are developing precise control over their bodies to create a desired effect, for instance, when leading or when mimicking a partner. Whilst some pupils are superficial in their evaluation of their performance, higher attaining pupils are thoughtful in considering one criticism and one positive comment when they observe the sequences of others. This review leads to some improvement to original ideas.

131. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding of the subject to plan appropriate warming up and cooling down activities with safety aspects in mind. Lessons are well planned, to build on earlier work, and concentrate on the gradual build up of skills. Teachers use pupils wisely as exemplars of good practice, to demonstrate to others and so improve the standard reached by the class. In some classes, the time taken to organise groups slows the pace of learning. In Year 6, there are good examples of pupils improving their work through thoughtful criticism. In most classes, however, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own work or that of others. This leads to insufficient focus on specific ways of getting better. Opportunities are also missed to draw pupils' attention to the effect of exercise on their own bodies, for instance, in feeling raised heartbeat, or temperature.
132. Assessment is unsatisfactory and does not inform planning. The curriculum co-ordinator is very recently in post and has just begun to monitor teaching and learning to good effect. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to collaborate in pairs or in groups. In dance lessons, pupils experience music from a range of cultures. For instance, pupils in Year 3 and 4 respond very well to the lively rhythm of Afro-Caribbean beat.