

INSPECTION REPORT

Ashton Primary School

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119238

Headteacher: Mrs C Woodhall

Lead inspector: Mr J Palk

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th November 2003

Inspection number: 25602

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	193
School address:	Ainsdale Drive Ashton-on-Ribble Preston
Postcode:	PR2 1TU
Telephone & FAX number:	01772 728052
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Dr John Lea
Date of previous inspection:	26 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This an average sized primary school in an area that is socially and economically disadvantaged. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The school is part of an Education in Cities (EiC) initiative and also serves as a centre for family learning projects. Since the last inspection, numbers in the school have fallen by over 100. A new school opened nearby in 2001 that resulted in pupils moving away from the school. Numbers have now stabilised. There have been considerable staff movements in and out. Seven of the eleven teachers have joined the school in the last two years and two are newly qualified. Short-term illness and other disruptions have contributed to instability in the leadership and management until this September.

There are eight classes including a speech and language class. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes in years 1 and 2 and in years 3 and 4. Other pupils are in single year classes. The number of teachers to pupils is better than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is high and most have moderate and specific learning difficulties. The language class currently supports 15 pupils with language difficulty, aged 4 to 7. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and most of these are fluent in English. Children join the reception class in September from a variety of settings and their attainment on entry is below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23630	J Palk	Lead inspector	Foundation stage, science, art and design, and design and technology.
8943	M Manning	Lay inspector	
23412	A Jeffs	Team inspector	Special educational needs, mathematics and information, communication technology, music and physical education
30144	E Hastings	Team inspector	English as an additional language, English, geography, history and religious education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is providing a **sound** education for its pupils. Good leadership and management by a new team are leading to rapid improvements. Children in the reception class and year 1 and 2 are achieving well and reaching average standards. Older pupils are still making up lost ground caused by disruptions to staffing; as a result, standards in year 6 are below average. Teaching is satisfactory overall ensuring most pupils make progress in their learning. Consequently the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching and learning in reception and years 1 and 2 is good.
- Too many lessons in the junior classes are not demanding enough of more able pupils.
- The teaching and provision in the language class is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they achieve well.
- The school is very well led by the headteacher.
- The curriculum is enriched through links with other schools and agencies.
- Pupils are well cared for and there is a good partnership with parents.
- Attendance rates are too low.

The school was last inspected in April 1999. Standards have not been maintained at the same level as was found in the last inspection. In terms of the weaknesses there has been satisfactory improvement. Weaknesses in provision have been firmly tackled. The school is now able to track pupils' progress, and the information is used to provide additional support. Teaching is more effective in reception and years 1 and 2 but there are still weaker features in teachers' lesson planning in years 3 to 6. Leadership and management are now strong features of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 , compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	E	E	E
mathematics	D	E	E	E
science	B	E	E	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Results are affected by the above average numbers of pupils that have special educational needs, and in recent years by the high level of staff turnover. Pupils in the 2002-03 year 6 were underachieving previously. The majority made good progress in their last year, but this was not enough to secure an improvement in test results. The inspection found that children achieve well in literacy and mathematics and social skills in the reception class. By year 2 all pupils are achieving well and most reach average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In years 3 to 6 average and less able pupils achieve as well as they should because their needs are being catered for. More able pupils are not reaching the standards expected because the teaching is not sufficiently demanding of them. There is still a residue of low expectations that affects how evenly pupils are learning in years 3 to 6. There is good support for those with special educational needs and they achieve well, particularly in reading and writing. The small numbers of pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **satisfactory**. In the reception and years 1 and 2 behaviour and attitudes are always good and pupils develop well as independent learners. In years 3 to 6 there are still a number of pupils who behave immaturely and this disrupts others. Attendance levels are well below average; too many pupils have holidays during term time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**.

Teaching is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in the reception class and years 1 and 2 because lessons are well matched to children's needs and the work is challenging. Teachers' expectations in years 3 to 6 are not sharp enough. They do not plan their lessons precisely enough, making use of information about what pupils have already learnt. Teaching assistants are well informed about what they have to teach and this gives them the confidence to support pupils effectively.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is good in the reception class and years 1 and 2, where it is well planned and stimulating. It is broad and balanced with considerable enrichment that is helping raise pupils' enthusiasm for learning. There are enough computers to ensure pupils gain regular experience and learn new skills.

Pupils are very well cared for. Provision for those with special educational needs is good. The support for those learning English as an additional language is well organised. The school has a good relationship with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher has a very clear vision of what the school is about. Management runs well and is ensuring that the school improves quickly. The school is well guided by a clear and well-structured improvement plan. There is now a sharp focus on raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching and learning by regularly checking on how good it is. The work of the governing body is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied. They feel their children are well looked after and encouraged to learn. They approve of the recent improvements to the premises and consider this is beneficial for teachers and children. Pupils like their school. They like the teachers and the way they are involved in helping the teachers make the school even better.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Improve standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve attendance and reduce unauthorised absence.
- Make better use of assessment information in years 3 to 6 to meet the needs of more able pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are **satisfactory** overall. They achieve well and attain average standards by the end of the reception and year 2. Standards are below average in year 6, although achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in this year group have not achieved as well as they should but are now making up lost ground.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils in the reception class and years 1 and 2 are good.
- Less able pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well in literacy.
- Pupils are achieving well in information and communication technology (ICT), although standards are below average by year 6.
- More able pupils are not achieving well enough in years 3 to 6.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.9 (13.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	11.8 (13.9)	14.6 (14.8)
mathematics	14.6 (14.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The 2003 results for year 2 were well below average overall. Teacher assessments in science were in the bottom five per cent of all schools. When the results and teacher assessments are compared to schools with a similar number of free school meals, they are well below average. Over time girls do better than boys in mathematics. The proportions of pupils reaching higher levels in the tests have improved and are now above average in reading and writing. There are significant proportions of pupils not reaching average levels; many of these have specific language needs. Current standards in year 2 are average overall. All pupils are achieving well, including boys and the more able. This good achievement reflects the good teaching seen during the inspection for years 1 and 2; a good improvement since the last inspection.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.6 (23.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.9 (24.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.0 (26.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Compared with similar schools pupils' attainment was well below average in the national tests at eleven in 2003. The pupils in year 6 did not meet challenging targets for performance in the tests despite some good gains by many in the last year. Disruptions caused by staff absence and a backlog of weaknesses in vocabulary, reading, writing, mathematics and scientific knowledge affected the pupils' achievements. National test results have declined in English and

mathematics whilst performance in science tests has been erratic since the last inspection. Overall boys have consistently achieved less well than girls. There have been significant changes in the abilities of cohorts and a high turnover of staff. These factors, combined with inadequate systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and the attitudes of boys towards learning, have contributed to this decline in overall standards. Since the appointment of new staff, in particular the headteacher and deputy, there has been a determined drive to raise standards that is beginning to have some success.

Inspection findings

3. Children are achieving well in the reception class because of the good teaching, well managed activities and very good help from support staff. Achievement for all pupils is good in years 1 and 2 and very good for those pupils in the language class. This is because of the thoughtful use of a range of strategies for tackling weaknesses in pupils' skills and the demanding work for the more able. The few pupils learning English as an additional language are well provided for and achieve satisfactorily overall. Effective programmes for teaching sounds, spelling, and grammar for writing are used well through the school. The teachers and teaching assistants adapt much of the material to match the needs of the less able and those with special educational needs and this is ensuring their good achievement.
4. Standards in English, mathematics and science in years 3 to 6 are below average. They are better than the points scores of last year show and reflect some good improvement in provision and teaching in a short time. The determined efforts of literacy and numeracy co-ordinators and the action being taken by the school to raise pupils' self-esteem is having a positive impact on attainment. Achievement overall is satisfactory; but varies between subjects and groups of pupils. Overall boys are achieving as well as girls because of an improvement in their attitudes towards school. Sound progress is being made to tackle weaknesses in pupils' language skills but standards are below average through years 3 to 6. Weak vocabulary affects pupils' ability to express their ideas and this affects their achievement in science and writing. More able pupils still have weaknesses in their writing that are not being tackled rigorously enough, and the work set in mathematics is not challenging them sufficiently. Consequently, they are not achieving as well as they should. Standards in science are better than last year and the weaknesses in pupils' knowledge are being tackled systematically. There is not enough independent investigative work for pupils to consolidate their ideas and this limits achievement.
5. Standards in art and design, music, religious education and history are broadly average. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement about standards in geography, design and technology and physical education. Pupils are achieving well in ICT because the school has improved the resources and trained staff in the use of software and this is helping pupils catch up lost ground, but year 6 pupils are still nearly two years behind what is expected.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is **unsatisfactory** though their punctuality is good. Their attitudes and behaviour are **satisfactory** and their personal development is also **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance levels are too low but the school is working hard to improve these.
- Pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils in the years 1 and 2 and children in the reception class are responding well to the good guidance given by their teachers.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility and enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.7	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

6. The school is taking good action to improve attendance, for example, by providing rewards for the best class and pupil attendance each week and by following-up any unexplained absences swiftly. During the week of the inspection, most classes were nearly complete but too many parents take their children away from school in term time, which means that they get less education.

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	187	3	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

7. Three boys were excluded for a fixed period last year because of violent behaviour towards other pupils. Since then the school has developed some effective strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. The energy and effectiveness of learning mentors¹ has been influential in improving behaviour and attitudes.
8. In the playground at lunchtime older pupils behave in immature ways and supervisors do not have the skills to manage this well. These pupils are noisy in the dining hall and run through the corridors, although they know they should not. As a result they do not settle down well to lessons afterwards and this wastes teachers' time. This silly behaviour prevents them achieving better results in their work. Pupils are not unpleasant towards each other and many do behave well and have good relationships. They are happy to take on responsibilities such as preparing toast at morning break. They show how very well they can behave in their clubs and in whole school assemblies, where they respect the sense of occasion.
9. Younger pupils benefit from having a good start to the day with their teachers. The teachers expect the pupils to behave well and set them very good examples. Even the youngest children behave well when not directly supervised because they have very firm, but kindly, discipline.

¹ Learning mentors; teaching assistants who are trained to provide emotional and learning support for pupils identified as having difficulties at school. These are sometimes related to poor attendance or weak social skills.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides all pupils with a **satisfactory** education. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and well enriched through clubs and other activities. Pupils are well cared for and there are good links with other schools, the community and parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. The most effective teaching is in the reception class, language class and years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in the reception class and years 1 and 2 have high expectations of pupils and lessons are well planned.
- Pupils receive very good teaching in the language class and their progress is often very rapid.
- Teachers do not make enough use of assessment information to plan lessons that challenge more able pupils in years 3 to 6.
- Teaching assistants and other adults provide good support in lessons.
- Some teachers in years 3 to 6 do not manage silly behaviour effectively.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5 (12%)	16 (36%)	23 (52%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

10. In the reception and year 1 and 2 classes the pace of lessons is good because the work is well matched to the abilities of pupils. Teachers make good use of information about what pupils have already learnt and follow this up with good marking. Rewards are regular and pupils know how they are improving. The good range of questions are accurately pitched at individuals to give encouragement and challenge. Consequently pupils learn well in nearly all lessons. Teachers manage the children well and there is a positive sense of purpose.
11. The teaching in the language class is of the highest quality, characterised by very good adult-pupil relationships, careful attention to individual needs and a varied and exciting curriculum. The management of the language class is excellent. Both teachers show the highest commitment and this is reflected in their planning and the detailed daily correspondence that takes place between home and school. Consequently all pupils enjoy their work, progress well and visibly grow in confidence and independence.
12. Teaching and learning are variable in years 3 to 6. Some is good, particularly where there are clear objectives and the support from other adults is well linked to the lesson objectives. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, there is not enough pace in the lessons. Too much time is spent on introducing the lesson and not enough on extending pupils' thinking. There are times when pupils do not settle to their work and this goes unchecked. Conversely those pupils that are quick to settle and give their full attention are not rewarded explicitly and they too do not work as hard as they should.
13. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They offer sensitive support, coax children and have good idea of their personal and social needs. Pupils' academic needs are clearly stated in their individual education plans and assistants work towards these targets as

they support. Their initiative in encouraging those with poor attitudes to work is helping them to learn well.

14. The teachers now have all the information to identify pupils who are underachieving and the means to measure their progress. The school is using this information very well to target extra support. Teachers' planning for English through the school has improved because it shows what is expected of pupils of different abilities in the lessons. However, teachers in years 3 to 6 do not identify clearly the main learning objectives for different groups of pupils in lessons in other subjects or back this up in their marking of work. Overall the planning is satisfactory, but too often the objectives are only suitable for a small proportion of the class and, in practice, the teachers tend to lower their expectations to meet the needs of the less able pupils. Consequently, more able pupils are not challenged. Teachers have adequate guidance for planning for different subjects but in years 3 to 6 there is insufficient adaptation of this to meet the needs of pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements with very many opportunities for enrichment within and beyond the school day.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is strongly inclusive and values and celebrates all pupils equally.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school; provision for pupils in the language class is very good.
- A very good extra-curricular programme gives pupils of all ages good opportunities for enrichment.
- The number of teaching assistants is good; this contributes well to work with pupils who have special educational needs.

Commentary

15. The school has a very positive approach to inclusion. This is apparent in the way that those pupils with special educational needs, in particular those with difficulties in literacy, language and behaviour, are taught and supported. It is also clear from teachers' attitudes within class where every pupil is encouraged to participate. The work provided for pupils experiencing learning difficulties is good, providing pupils with relevant and enjoyable activities. Skilled teaching assistants undertake work of a high quality with pupils requiring early literacy and language development. This contributes to the good progress made by these pupils. This is also the case with work recently started for the 'more able and talented' pupils when they are withdrawn for small group work, but this is not reflected in the tasks these pupils are asked to carry out in class.
16. The language class is a very rich and stimulating learning environment. There is a good programme to increase the inclusion of pupils regularly within reception and infant classes. As a class, the pupils take part in assemblies, visits and events and this makes an important contribution to the personal and social development of others in the school.
17. The very good programme of activities available outside of school hours enriches the curriculum and is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school. There is an impressive choice of clubs at lunchtimes and after school. These range from drama to handicrafts and from football to Spanish. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of sporting and artistic activities within the community.
18. Staffing levels of both teachers and assistants are sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum. This allows the school to provide additional group teaching in English and mathematics that is beginning to contribute to the improvement in standards.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **good** provision for pupils' welfare and their health and safety. They are given good support, advice and guidance. The school involves pupils well in its work through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made improvements by listening to what pupils have to say.
- There are very good procedures for supporting pupils in school and they feel well cared for.
- Lunchtime supervisors have not had sufficient training to manage pupils.

Commentary

19. The school actively seeks the views of the pupils and takes notice of what they say. This has resulted in a large range of interesting clubs and activities being provided for them, including some for younger pupils. The school council is well established and pupils are confident to make democratic decisions for the benefit of all. The school is beginning to involve pupils with special educational needs more in setting and reviewing their own targets, but this is not yet fully implemented.
20. Pupils are happy to be at school and the very large majority feels that there is someone they could talk to if they need help. Learning mentors have been working well in the last few months to support pupils who have difficulty settling in class or the playground. Their very good records show success in reducing the amount of unacceptable behaviour in school.
21. In spite of this good attention to welfare, supervisors have not been trained in ways to manage pupils and support them at lunchtime. This does not help with encouraging pupils to be calm and sociable.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents, the community and with other schools and colleges. Those being developed in partnership with the Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is making very good efforts to inform and involve parents.
- There is a strong commitment to developing community links.

Commentary

22. Parents are very happy with all aspects of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. They are given understandable information in their children's reports with clear indication of how they can help them to improve. The home/school notebooks² have been recently introduced and these are good and help explain what pupils have achieved. Pupils' homework books in the infant classes, for example, show clearly what they have to do and parents can see the results of teachers' marking as they are regularly returned. The school is very welcoming to parents and its policies are openly on display for them to look at.

² Home/school notebooks; these notebooks have been provided to all pupils to help organise homework and remind them of events and commitments they may have at school. They serve as a useful dialogue between the school and home as most teachers or teaching assistants use them to report on pupils' progress.

23. The school sends questionnaires to parents each year to find out what they feel about relevant aspects. It has responded, for example, by giving more information about homework and including the homework policy in the prospectus.
24. While the school is developing strong links with the community, it is too early to give a clear evaluation of the effectiveness of what is provided. Local community groups are strongly involved in managing the family learning³ initiative along with parents and the school. They are working hard to publicise the facility to local parents. The school's main aim is to improve standards through these measures but this has not had time to happen. It is clear that the school has a good capacity to succeed. Useful initiatives, such as having before and after-school clubs and learning mentors, are very well managed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good**. There is good leadership from other key staff who provide positive support for the headteacher in her drive for school improvement. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and provides strong leadership.
- Good use is made of the analysis of performance data in identifying how well pupils are achieving.
- Extremely effective strategic planning indicates the school's determination to improve the quality of education for all its pupils.
- There are very good procedures for the induction of staff new to the school.
- The financial resources have been used well to improve curriculum provision.

Commentary

25. The headteacher has taken very positive steps to overcome the barriers that stand in the way of pupils achieving well. She has forged good relationships with parents and secured the commitment of all staff and governors to implement some necessary changes. Good links with the beacon school⁴ and use of the local authority's advisory and consultancy team has supported this well. The school makes good use of a number of local initiatives and sources of funding that supports school development effectively. Strategic planning is very thorough and supported by some good curriculum action plans that address weaknesses.
26. Raising the level of attainment has been central to the headteacher's work. Along with senior staff she has established good systems to keep track of individual pupils' achievements and openly shares her expectations of progress with staff. There is a programme for checking on teaching quality and this has also helped improve provision and is beginning to raise standards. Staff absence and changes in personnel have limited the impact of this on pupils' learning and standards in the juniors.
27. The headteacher leads by example and is a good role model for teachers and pupils. As an experienced practitioner, she leads in-service training for staff and gives demonstration lessons to extend good practice amongst teaching staff. Good appointments of teachers are contributing towards the building of an effective team that is raising standards. There is plenty of support for newly appointed staff and they have clear responsibilities for improving the school. Good opportunities for continuing professional development have been established through a comprehensive programme of in-service training for all staff.

³ Sure start; a family learning initiative. Through workshops parents are encouraged to help their children learn skills that will help them when they start school in the reception class.

⁴ Beacon school; a school that has demonstrated ability to significantly raise the attainment of pupils through changes in the quality of the curriculum, management and teaching.

28. The governors are involved well in helping to steer the school towards future developments. Many are relatively inexperienced in governance but are very well led by the chair, and are supported and encouraged by the headteacher who keeps them well informed. They use the budget wisely. The school building has been much improved recently and is now a colourful and stimulating place in which to play and work. Funds have been used to effectively improve staff skills and to provide more individual support for pupils by increasing the number of support staff.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	705,140	Balance from previous year	12,345
Total expenditure	626,200	Balance carried forward to the next	78, 940
Expenditure per pupil	3,244		

29. The expenditure per pupil is high. This is due to funding the school receives for pupils taught in the language class and additional funds from the EiC. The school is carrying a large surplus. Monies for worthwhile improvements to the school building that have had some considerable impact on pupils' attitudes to school and improved its accessibility were not deducted in the last financial year and were carried over.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the reception class is good. From below average starting points most children achieve expected levels in personal development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding and creative development because the teaching is good. Many of the children do not reach the expectations in language development despite good provision in this area. Overall, the activities are well matched to the different abilities and their experiences are well managed. Firm, but fair, discipline provides an atmosphere that is purposeful and conducive to good learning. Planning is good, but there is not enough time for children to select for themselves what it is they want to do. The use of assessment is satisfactory. Records are kept up to date, but there is no explicit tracking and recording of children's learning during the activities and so, in the short-term, the teacher is not always fully aware of what they have learnt. The teacher has made a good start in contacting the many nursery and pre-school settings to share expectations and practice. The links with a small nursery that shares the school site are good. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good and benefits from the contact with experienced teachers from the language class.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationship between children and adults encourages children's independence and good social behaviour.
- There are clear expectations of how children should behave towards each other.

Commentary

30. The teacher and other staff provide a secure environment where classroom routines are quickly and securely established. All children enter the room quietly and sit politely, listening carefully when the register is taken. They co-operate well with each other in group activities and already work well independently without an adult when necessary. There is a lovely atmosphere in which children learn to respect each other and adults. They are polite. The adults manage behaviour well, giving children clear messages about how to take turns and how to talk to the others in the class.
31. Very positive relationships have formed between the adults and children and the children themselves, which is leading to effective teaching and learning. The use of techniques, such as co-operative games, and the inclusion of adults and children from the language class, make a vital contribution in the rapid and highly successful development of children's personal and social skills. There is a carefully established routine which includes '*Star of the Day* and the *Special Chair*, in which all children participate. Children are given a reason for their choice as *Star of the Day*, sit in the chair, and undertake special responsibilities such as leading lines or taking the register to the office. The children are regularly encouraged to take responsibility for example, in choosing a friend they may want to help them or asking questions of the class. Children are listened to and perceive that their efforts are valued. Routines are well established and children are encouraged to take a part in, for example, designing and equipping the play area.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good; activities are well organised and there is good challenge.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to those with special educational needs.
- There are not sufficient areas to encourage children to use their developing literacy skills independently.

Commentary

32. Children learn well. The teacher maintained a good level of challenge for different abilities during the first part of the literacy lessons when children were together. She encouraged the children to follow the text closely and invited children to say what they thought would happen next. She quietly insisted that children explained accurately what was happening in the pictures and was effective in extending their limited spoken vocabulary. The activities that followed were well organised and ensured that basic skills were taught in an exciting manner. For example, through role-play children learned how to sequence the events of the story correctly. The story sacks that have been introduced provide a good medium for learning to read whilst the library area is well stocked with books.
33. Teaching assistants work alongside those with special needs prompting them with challenging questions that encourage them to develop their vocabulary. They think of exciting activities that will engage the children such as a hunt for 'missing animals' that are needed to act out a story. This provided a tremendous incentive for children to 'read' clues and to ask adults questions.
34. Areas of the classroom, such as the café, are not sufficiently equipped with printed language to encourage children to develop reading and writing skills independently. The teacher and teaching assistants have high expectations of learning and tend to overly direct activities rather than let children explore for themselves.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good attention given to teaching mathematical vocabulary.

Commentary

35. Teaching and learning are good and achievement is good. Many opportunities are used for counting activities such as the morning register and singing counting rhymes. In one session children counted forwards and backwards with great enthusiasm and rose to the challenge of picking the numbers from the washing line that were 'one more' than the number given. The teacher placed very good emphasis on the language and rephrased questions to extend the more able. The language of number and shape is clearly displayed in the classroom and regularly used by teachers and other adults. Many activities encourage children to use mathematical vocabulary. During number activities, the teacher and teaching assistant encouraged children to describe the patterns and explain the relationships between numbers. Activities are purposeful, but the adults are not regularly checking on the progress individuals are making during the small group work. Consequently, when some children have secured an idea, the activity is continued beyond the time needed.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very well planned activities help children to learn about the world around them.

Commentary

36. Activities such as comparing and contrasting different fruit emphasised for children how to use all their senses. The choice of fruits based on the story of 'Handa's Surprise' served to strengthen their vocabulary. The chance to touch, feel and smell the fruits at different stages in the process of cutting, peeling, squeezing and extracting the juices made a very good contribution to learning. Children are learning well and the teaching good. The classroom provides children with a good range of images, and play with the model zoo further supports their appreciation of the world in which they live. The focus on vocabulary is strong and is helping children develop the idea of sentence structure.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is not possible to make a judgement about provision in physical development. The outside area is spacious and secure. It is used well to provide the space for a number games and large artwork. There is adequate opportunity to use the hall, but the outside area is not covered and cannot be used in all weathers.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of experiences, but not enough time for children to use the areas independently.

Commentary

37. Children are achieving satisfactorily. Resources have been well chosen to support this area of learning inside and outside the classroom. Well organised planning ensures children have regular painting, modelling, music and computer experiences during the week. The activities are, however, largely adult led and there is not enough emphasis given to organising the classroom so that children can choose where they want to play and develop their creativity. This limits their learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in years 1 and 2 are achieving well in speaking and listening, reading and writing because of consistently good teaching.
- There are good strategies in place to improve writing skills but teaching is not challenging enough of the more able.
- Some marking of pupils' work does not show how they can improve.
- The teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- There is good leadership of the subject.

Commentary

38. Pupils in years 1 and 2 are now reaching standards in line with the national average. However, standards are below average by year 6 because of weaknesses in spoken language and writing skills. Standards are higher than last year's test results because less able and those pupils with special educational needs now achieve well. There is a good level of support for these pupils, through carefully targeted work throughout the school. Over time, the school has focused upon the underachievement of boys and, through the provision of trained additional support, has been successful in improving their achievement. More able pupils are not being challenged enough to improve the quality of their written work higher up the school and this is a barrier to them making further progress.
39. Standards in speaking and listening are below average through the school. Pupils have limited vocabulary and this limits their ability to express themselves accurately. They are now being given good opportunities to speak in many lessons and they do this with some confidence. For example, in some lessons pupils have speaking partners to discuss ideas for their writing. This useful strategy is not used consistently in year 6. Across the school an emphasis is placed upon the development of specific vocabulary and effective use of questions is seen in most lessons where teachers expect pupils to reply using whole sentences. Teachers are active in encouraging pupils to develop their answers and use correct grammatical structure. This is helping to raise standards in pupils' written work. Pupils experience a good range of visitors such as poets, storytellers and authors and this encourages them to use a greater variety of words in their own work.
40. By year 2 pupils achieve well in reading because of the good quality of teaching and a systematic approach to teaching skills. There are effective literacy programmes in place for teaching sounds and teaching assistants are making good use of these when working with individuals and small groups through the school. A good stock of books is readily available in the classrooms and library and home school reading logs are well used to encourage parents to support their children's reading. By year 6 most pupils enjoy reading, read confidently, discuss characters and plots, and make predictions about how the book will develop. Achievement is satisfactory and reading standards are average. Teachers make good use of the comprehensive reading records when planning lessons. However, library skills are not well developed higher up the school. Pupils have limited knowledge to help them locate a non-fiction book and are not aware of what to look for when selecting a work of fiction. This is because of gaps in their previous experiences that are now being addressed.
41. Pupils' achievements in writing are satisfactory overall. A good range of strategies have been introduced through the school. The organisation of pupils into small groups to teach writing skills is helping tackle the weaknesses in grammar and structure. Pupils are taught how to plan and organise their written work and how to find words that will make it more interesting. Teachers

provide opportunities to write for a range of purposes and to use writing in a range of ways. These strategies are proving more effective in raising standards for all pupils in year 1 and 2 because they are taught effectively. Teaching in years 3 to 6 is beginning to address weaknesses in the writing of the more able, but with insufficient rigour. A number of lessons seen during the inspection were good but some lacked pace, challenge and expectation, and resulted in low levels of productivity and quality of writing. Some key strategies, such as, encouraging pupils to draft, edit and improve their work, are missing and this leads to variable rates of learning.

42. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The work of teaching assistants is effective and supports learning well. The recently introduced marking policy is inconsistently applied to written work. Marking is good in English in years 1 to 3 and pupils are shown how to improve their work. It is satisfactory in years 4, 5 and 6. Comments are supportive, but do not provide sufficient detail on how to address the gaps in pupils' knowledge.
43. There is good leadership in the subject. Teaching is being observed regularly and weaknesses addressed through training. Staff are given clear guidance on how to raise standards further and pupils' progress is being tracked well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. There is satisfactory development of pupils' literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. Speaking and listening skills are promoted well through personal, social and health education lessons and opportunities for writing are planned into subjects other than English. The impact of this positive step is reduced because some teachers do not give enough attention to improving the quality of this work.

MATHEMATICS

The overall provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in all aspects of mathematics have improved, but in year 6 are still below the national average.
- Pupils achieve well in years 1 and 2.
- Some learning opportunities for more able pupils in years 4 to 6 are missed as the result of a lack of pace in teaching.
- Good leadership has implemented better ways of working and higher expectations that are now working their way through the school.

Commentary

45. Inspection evidence found that pupils in years 1 and 2 are achieving well and are on course to meet national expectations. This results from good teaching that is pacy, well matched to individual needs and backed by good staff knowledge and understanding of the subject.
46. Attainment by the end of year 6 is below average. Pupils in years 1 to 3 have a secure grounding in number calculation and use a satisfactory range of strategies to solve simple problems. For example, in year 3 all pupils confidently explained what methods they used for doubling and halving numbers and how they used these to find a mid point between two numbers. The main weakness in pupils' mathematical ability in years 4 to 6 is the inability of many to calculate rapidly. They cannot easily recall their multiplication facts to 10 x 10, or use these quickly to solve problems. This was evident in a year 5 lesson when pupils were working out perimeters.
47. Teaching is satisfactory but generally lacks pace and clear targets for individual pupils and groups. A tendency to dwell too long on lesson introductions means that time is lost and pupils are not adequately focused on the tasks they are asked to carry out. Thus, in one satisfactory

year 6 lesson, the use of a good technique to study the frequency of numbers, lasted too long. Consequently there was no momentum to the lesson and higher achieving pupils found the task too easy. Too little time was left for group work, which also lacked challenge for pupils who had already understood the main objective of the lesson.

48. In contrast, very good lessons were seen in year 2 and the language class, where the teachers had clearly identified the needs of individual pupils from previous lessons. They kept the introduction brief and demanding, following this with tasks that allowed all pupils to succeed but also make errors, thus giving them good opportunities to learn from their mistakes.
49. The subject is well managed. Good assessment procedures have been introduced and there is regular monitoring of teaching. These two developments have raised standards significantly over the past year throughout the school. However, monitoring has not yet effectively addressed the lack of pace and challenge for older pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Unsatisfactory overall because the effectiveness of this varies from teacher to teacher. Some reinforce ideas such as time, number, sequence and space in lessons such as music, PE and history. However, too often opportunities are missed in lessons to strengthen mathematical understanding by using it in practical contexts.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 1 and 2 pupils are achieving well.
- Standards in year 6 are below average and higher attainers are not achieving well enough.
- Practical demonstrations are well organised but there is not sufficient challenge and more could be achieved by pupils working independently or collaboratively.
- Leadership and management have not made sufficient inroads into raising standards.

Commentary

51. Standards in year 2 are average and this represents good achievement and a firm platform for the future. The teaching in years 1 and 2 is good and lessons are lively and exciting. Teachers use experiments well to help pupils to apply and extend their knowledge and these are well supported by resources. When necessary, pupils' receive help in the form of adapted worksheets or support from teaching assistants. High standards of presentation are insisted upon and diagrams charts and tables are neatly presented and well labelled. This has a positive impact on pupils' responses and feedback.
52. Standards achieved through years 3 to 6 are improving and are better than the recent test results would indicate. This is because of improvements in the way teaching is organised and monitored. Teaching is satisfactory in years 3 to 6. Lessons are well planned and some of the gaps in pupils' knowledge are being addressed through practical work. However, too often the lessons seek to ensure every pupil has learnt the same scientific facts without developing thinking skills. For example in a well-resourced year 6 lesson the teacher missed opportunities to challenge pupils' thinking by allowing pupils to carry out the simple experiments for themselves. Consequently lower attaining pupils did not improve their understanding of why the tests were fair and the higher attainers were not challenged to explore what processes were at work.
53. Whilst teachers in years 3 to 6 make every effort to introduce new vocabulary this is not highlighted effectively through regular reminders. Pupils' scientific vocabulary remains insecure and they lack the ability to explain their thinking. Pupils' weak writing skills limit their recording but teachers are beginning to use strategies such charts or diagrams to help children explain their findings. A noticeable feature of the best work seen in year 3 is that the teacher provided

techniques to help pupils explain the result of their experiments into slugs' dietary preferences. These included annotating the bar chart of results and drawings of the slug race with captions explaining why the slugs chose certain foods.

54. The strongest feature of the management has been the use of the budget to provide supporting guidelines for planning and resources to ensure investigative skills can be taught. The subject action plan lacks a clear strategy for addressing weaknesses in teaching, particularly on how to teach investigative skills. An assessment policy has raised awareness of what is to be taught, but in practice this is not followed consistently through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been good improvements in resources and staff skills since the last inspection.
- The teaching of ICT skills is now good.
- ICT is not used consistently to support learning in classrooms.

Commentary

55. By the end of year 2 pupils' ICT skills meet national expectations. They are confident and use word processors, clip art and art programs well. The standards represent an improvement on the previous inspection. This has come about partly through the development of a very good ICT suite, in conjunction with Preston College. Leadership and management has been effective. There has been a good investment in quality software and the training of teachers and teaching assistants.
56. However, standards at the end of year 6 do not meet national expectations and this is not surprising. The full ICT curriculum has not been in place long enough to ensure that year 6 pupils have covered all aspects and achieved expected levels. They use word processors with confidence to produce stories and poems and have basic understanding of using data handling programs in mathematics. Their experience of control work is limited. Year 6 pupils demonstrate levels of skills more appropriate to year 4. However, there is satisfactory achievement for all pupils and the school is on course to meet national expectations in the near future.
57. Teaching is good, characterised by the effective use of teaching assistants and the use of highly motivating tasks. However, there is inadequate monitoring of teaching to check that teachers are making use of assessment information to ensure pupils become independent in using computers.

ICT across the curriculum

58. This is unsatisfactory. The school has identified the use of ICT to support learning in other subject areas as a priority. However, this focus is not reflected in pupils' work in a number of subjects, including mathematics and science. Teachers have not yet developed the flexibility in their teaching to plan for this regularly.

HUMANITIES

Religious education is reported in full below. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and in **geography**. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement about geography. The sample of work in history indicates that by the end of years 2 and 6 standards are average. Knowledge elements have been covered adequately but pupils' written work does not reflect what they have learned. The history curriculum is well supported by visits. For example, pupils visit the Lancashire

museum where they learn to examine a range of historical artefacts to speculate on how people lived in the past. Book loans and artefacts from the local museum support learning effectively in the classroom. History workshops visit the school enabling pupils to engage in role-play activities linked to the Romans and the Vikings. These are enjoyable activities and reinforce pupils' learning well.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The study of other faiths contributes well to pupils' learning.

59. It was only possible to observe one lesson. A sample of pupils' work is limited for this term but pupils are covering the areas they should. They have a sound understanding of Christianity and some of the major festivals, as well as some comparative religions including Judaism. In the lesson that was seen pupils were learning appropriately and the teaching was satisfactory. Pupils were provided with opportunities for discussion and role-play activities to develop their learning about other world faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and design and technology, music and physical education were sampled.

The standard of **art and design** around the school is broadly typical, with some good features in the still life drawings of fruit. In a year 6 lesson pupils demonstrated average drawing skills. The teacher's expertise was good but learning was affected by too casual an approach by pupils and adults to the task. The newly appointed co-ordinator has produced supportive guidelines and organised the planning around 'art' weeks to ensure a more consistent approach to developing pupils' and teachers' skills.

No lessons in **design and technology** (DT) were seen. The pupils interviewed enjoy their experiences and the work they produced during a DT week is in line with expectations. The recently appointed co-ordinator evaluated this work thoroughly to establish the relative strengths and weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and has organised appropriate in-service education.

Standards in **music** have been maintained since the previous inspection and are satisfactory. Planning provides a broad and balanced musical experience for all pupils. The strength of the school lies in singing, where all pupils join in tunefully, with a good sense of the beat and dynamics. The leadership is satisfactory but not enough is being done to raise teachers' confidence in teaching.

A good **physical education** curriculum encourages pupils to develop healthily, play competitively, but above all enjoy the experience of exercise and team games. Lunchtime and after-school clubs, allow pupils to participate in a wide range of sports, including netball, football, swimming and dance. Standards in game skills are meeting expectations in year 6. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and involves pupils in sport within the community which boosts their self-esteem.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Development of personal and social skills in the reception, infant and language classes is good.
- A good programme for PSHE is having a positive impact in years 3 to 6 on pupils' self-esteem.

Commentary

60. This area is an effective feature of the school and is successfully addressing the low expectations and self-esteem of pupils. In the reception and infant classes adults show great respect for children's views and encourage them to value and respect each other through good listening and paying careful attention. There are strong features in the provision for PSHE and citizenship in the juniors that helps pupils develop a safe and healthy lifestyle. The programme is well supported by opportunities for pupils to become involved in running the school that help them gain confidence and relate to others.
61. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The good involvement from the learning mentors helps pupils make decisions for themselves and evaluate, and take responsibility for their behaviour in lessons. Older pupils have many opportunities to contribute to school life. However, a lack of maturity on the part of some pupils in some social and class settings means that they do not leave the school as well prepared for the next stage of education as they might.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).