

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHARNOCK HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107097

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Jones

Lead inspector: Mr K Bardon

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 255762

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	486
School address:	Carter Hall Road Sheffield South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S12 3HS
Telephone number:	0114 239 6083
Fax number:	0114 264 4447
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G McDonald
Date of previous inspection:	15 <sup>th</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Charnock Hall is a large primary school to the south of the city of Sheffield. Most of the pupils live close to the school although a significant minority travel from surrounding districts. The housing in the area surrounding the school is a mixture of privately owned and council built properties. Many of the social and economic indicators of the district fall into the average category although the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is relatively low. Fifty-nine pupils have special educational needs, mainly for learning difficulties, and five pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. These figures are below average for a school of this size. Nineteen pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are at an early stage in the learning of English. A very small number of pupils are in public care. There have recently been major changes in senior staff. The headteacher has been in post less than two terms and currently the school has an acting deputy headteacher. During the inspection two classes were taught by temporary teachers covering for the long-term absences of members of staff. Most pupils enter the reception class with the expected range of basic skills and their attainment at this point is broadly as expected for their age

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11807	Keith Bardon	Lead inspector	Science, design and technology, physical education, English as an additional language
9928	Alan Dobson	Lay inspector	
25352	Geraldine Taujanskas	Team inspector	English, French, religious education, special educational needs
34206	Julia Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, music
8839	Michael Egerton	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, art and design, geography, history,

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Charnock Hall provides its pupils with an **acceptable quality of education**. However, it **has serious weaknesses** in achievement, leadership and management and the curriculum and too often the pupils fail to realise their full potential. Although the teaching is generally satisfactory and standards are broadly average, the narrow and dull curriculum limits what pupils can learn. The school is beginning to improve under the determined leadership of the new headteacher but management procedures do not function well and this adversely affects the school's performance. As a result of its weaknesses the school provides **unsatisfactory value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children in the reception class achieve well because the provision made for their learning and the quality of teaching are good
- Pupils do not achieve well enough in Years 1 to 6
- The headteacher leads the school well but management and governance are not effective enough
- The teaching in Years 1 to 6 is inconsistent in quality, adversely affecting the progress pupils make
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal qualities are successfully developed
- Assessment procedures fail to provide the school with the information it needs to make improvements
- Reception children receive a stimulating curriculum but the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is neither broad nor balanced
- The school cares for the pupils well and has good links with parents

Since it was last inspected in 1998 the school has made insufficient progress, although the pace of development has accelerated in the last 12 months. National initiatives have been implemented in line with recommendations, pupils' speaking and listening are better and resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have been improved. However, standards by Year 6 have declined and there has been insufficient improvement in teaching and in the management of the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Overall, the pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.** Children achieve well in the reception classes and almost all meet or exceed the targets for their age in all areas of learning by the end of their reception year. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory. Although standards are broadly average and pupils make steady progress, the good start they make in reception is not built upon well enough.

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

*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.*

Although in Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to progress steadily, in many subjects they could achieve more. This is particularly true for higher attaining pupils who are capable of above average standards. Pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science is unsatisfactory. Standards are around the national average in most aspects of these three subjects but below average in writing, and in problem solving and enquiry in mathematics and science. Although pupils acquire a

range of basic skills in ICT they do not have sufficient understanding of how to apply them to help them learn in other subjects. Pupils' achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory because of flaws in the curriculum.

**Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour is a credit to the school. Levels of attendance are good and the school has worked successfully with parents to bring about improvements in this area.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides its pupils with a quality of education which is broadly satisfactory, but which has weaknesses.** The quality of teaching and learning is **good in the reception classes** and **satisfactory in the rest of the school.** Reception staff work well as a unit to provide interesting and lively learning opportunities for children. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 detract from its overall quality and adversely affect the pupils' learning. Too many lessons are very ordinary in content and delivery and do not spark the high quality of learning needed to drive up standards of achievement. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped and do not generate sufficient good quality information to help the teachers match work to the pupils' needs. Reception children are provided with a good curriculum but in Years 1 to 6 the curriculum is generally poor and does not meet the learning needs of the pupils. The school provides a good quality of care and welfare for all pupils and relationships between staff and the children are relaxed and positive. Links with parents are well established and continuing to develop under the new headteacher.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory.** The new headteacher is providing the school with strong leadership and is beginning to focus the school on the key priority of raising standards of achievement. The leadership and management of other key staff lack a strategic understanding of how to bring about improvement. School finances are managed well and day-to-day financial administration is very good. Governance is unsatisfactory because governors are too reliant on others for their evaluation of how well the school is performing. In addition the school is in breach of its statutory duties.

### **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Most parents are satisfied with the education their children receive although there is some unease that certain features are not as good as they could be and that school development has been slow. Pupils are happy to attend because they regard their teachers as friendly and helpful but they find some lessons far less interesting than others.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important thing the school should do now is to raise standards of achievement in Years 1 to 6. In order to do this the school should:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance
- Raise the quality of teaching and provide a higher consistency of learning
- Construct and implement a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils
- Devise and initiate thorough assessment procedures which provide the school and its teachers with the information they need to make strategic decisions

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Prepare and maintain a fully effective race equality policy
- Ensure that the curriculum for religious education complies with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good in the reception classes but unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6. By Year 6 standards are around the national average but a significant proportion of pupils are capable of higher achievement.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the reception classes and almost all reach or exceed the targets for their age by the time they move into Year 1
- In comparison with their attainment at the end of the reception year, pupils' achievements in Years 1 to 6 are unsatisfactory
- Although by Year 2 and Year 6 standards in reading, speaking and listening reach the national average, standards in writing are below average and pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not achieve well enough in English
- There is underachievement in mathematics which is particularly apparent in the pupils' ability to use and apply the calculation methods they have learned
- Pupils acquire an acceptable understanding of scientific ideas but their enquiry skills are underdeveloped

#### Commentary

1. In the 2003 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics, the results attained by Year 2 pupils matched the national average. In comparison with schools in a similar context to Charnock Hall, results were broadly average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. Results from this year's tests have still to be verified but early indications suggest that pupils have performed at a very similar level to 2003 in all three subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (15.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.4 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.4 (16.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 74 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Year 2 pupils' performance in the 2003 tests continued a five-year trend in which the school's results have closely matched the national picture. In the early part of this period, girls did significantly better in the reading and writing tests than boys, but in 2002 and 2003 the gap narrowed considerably and was far less marked. No gender difference in attainment was identified during the inspection.
3. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are attaining standards in English and mathematics that are broadly average overall. Attainment in speaking and listening is better than at the time of the last inspection but attainment in writing is not as good. Children leave the reception year with a good range of communication, language and literacy skills, but these are not extended well enough in Years 1 and 2 and what is often a good profile of attainment at the beginning of Year 1 drops to a very ordinary one by the end of Year 2. The picture is very similar in mathematics with pupils' ability to use and apply what they have learned the weakest aspect of their attainment. For a variety of reasons, which are discussed in other sections of this



report, teaching and learning are not sharply enough focused on what pupils need to do to attain high standards and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not achieving all that they could in English, mathematics and across the curriculum in general.

- In 2003, the results attained by Year 6 pupils in the national tests matched the national average in mathematics and science but were below average in English because only a small proportion of pupils attained the higher level. When compared with schools in a similar social context, Charnock Hall's results were below average in English and broadly average in mathematics and science. Overall, the trend in the school's results over recent years has mirrored the national trend. Although girls tend to perform better than boys in the English tests and boys better than girls in mathematics this varies year on year and there are no consistent patterns of difference in attainment by gender and none was detected during the inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.2 (27.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.1 (27.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.0 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 62 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- At the time of the last inspection in 1998 standards by Year 6 were above average in English, mathematics and science, but slipped back soon after and have remained around the lower level ever since. There has been no significant change in the composition of pupils who attend the school and this fall is due to a large extent to the school standing still and not ensuring that high standards are maintained. Consequently, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are underachieving and their potential is not fully realised, particularly in the case of the pupils who are capable of higher attainment. The patterns of attainment described for Year 2 pupils are mirrored at Year 6. Writing is the weakest element of pupils' English and problem solving and enquiry the least effective aspect of their mathematics and science. This is attributable to inconsistencies in the teaching, weaknesses in subject management and flaws in the curriculum.

**Other aspects of standards and achievement**

- In 2003, the test results of Year 6 pupils failed to meet the targets the school had set in English and mathematics. These were ambitious targets and the shortfall, particularly in the proportion of pupils who were expected to attain at the higher level in the tests, suggests that they did not take full account of the ability of the pupils. This is indicative of the weaknesses in the school's assessment procedures which make accurate target setting extremely difficult. The 2004 targets have been set at similar levels in English and mathematics to reflect a cohort of pupils which the school feels are generally higher attaining than last year's group of Year 6 pupils. However, because of a lack of accurate assessment information, it is unclear whether pupils are likely to have met these targets.
- When they first enter reception, the profile of attainment of the children is similar to that seen in many schools. During their time in the reception classes, children's achievement is very good in the personal and social area of learning and good in all other areas. Consequently, almost all children attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception before they move into Year 1 and a significant minority have already moved onto work in the National Curriculum. This puts pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 above average for their age.
- Although there have been some improvements in ICT since the last inspection, standards of achievement are too low. Pupils acquire a satisfactory range of basic skills during class lessons in the computer suite but their understanding of how to use ICT to help them learn

and improve their work in other subjects is limited. Because of the lack of a cohesive teaching and learning programme for religious education pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards in art and design meet national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6 and, throughout the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. It is not possible from the small number of lessons seen in geography, history, music and physical education to make judgements of the standards pupils attain. However, in music there was sufficient information to conclude that the positive views that parents hold of good achievement in this subject are justified.

9. Pupils who have special educational needs make steady progress in class because teachers and support staff know the difficulties they have and ensure that they are able to participate in the activities. However, the weaknesses in the curriculum and in the management of provision that adversely affect the attainment of all pupils in Years 1 to 6 also impact adversely on these pupils and, overall, their achievement is unsatisfactory.
10. The weaknesses in assessment procedures outlined earlier in this section means that the school has considerable difficulty identifying and providing for pupils who are may be particularly gifted or talented, unless this is very apparent. It is therefore not possible to make an evaluation of how well these pupils achieve. In the one instance where it was clear that a pupil was mathematically gifted, work of a high level had been provided but there was no evidence that this pupil had been set appropriately challenging targets to aspire to.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

The pupils have a good attitude to learning and behave well. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance has improved and is now above the national average. Punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy school and most are keen to learn
- The pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school, resulting in a friendly community and an atmosphere conducive to learning
- Pupils develop into polite, sensible and responsible individuals due to the school's good provision for personal development
- Pupils who have special educational needs receive sensitive support for their personal development but the targets set for improvement are too broad
- Unsatisfactory dining arrangements do not help pupils' personal development
- Attendance has improved as a result of very effective procedures

### **Commentary**

11. Pupils enjoy school (a point confirmed by the majority of parents) and know that they are there to learn. They settle down quickly and are keen to be involved in lessons. Their general enthusiasm for learning though is dependent on the quality of teaching; good teaching engages them in a subject and they work hard, mundane teaching reduces their enthusiasm significantly. Overall many pupils think that they could work harder at school. Homework is not considered very demanding and the amount is often insufficient to prepare pupils well for the rigours of secondary education. Most pupils have a good opinion of the school and are proud of its reputation, particularly its strong tradition of music.
12. The pupils' behaviour is good. They understand the rules well and think they are applied very fairly. Teachers expect a high standard of behaviour and most use effective techniques to manage the pupils' behaviour well. In the past bullying had been a concern to some pupils and parents. The school has introduced an anti-bullying charter. This is well publicised and has been promoted well in assemblies and class discussions. Playgrounds have a very friendly feel with pupils playing happily together without any signs of oppressive behaviour. In

conversations with pupils during the inspection, no concerns were expressed about bullying. Pupils said they have complete confidence in the teachers' ability to sort out any problems. There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection. Pupils who find it difficult to behave well are helped to overcome their problems through the good role models other pupils provide and the sensitive support they receive from staff. However, the targets in their individual education plans are often too broad to provide a meaningful focus for development.

13. The school is good at developing the pupils' personal qualities. Relationships throughout the school are very good with pupils getting on very well with staff and with each other. Pupils are trusted and allowed to help in the running of the school with jobs ranging from class monitors to older pupils helping younger ones, for instance as playground buddies and in organising a lunchtime sports club for Year 2 pupils. These activities give pupils a good introduction to taking responsibility. Assemblies are used satisfactorily to provide opportunities to consider issues like courage and peace. Positive qualities are effectively boosted by public praise through the recognition of hard effort, good behaviour and being polite. Displaying photos of *pupils of the week* from each year group reinforces this recognition. Displays around the school deal well with moral issues, for instance cheating in tests and what to do if you find money that you know someone has lost. These displays stem from class discussions indicating that pupils are getting a firm grounding on right and wrong. Pupils are given a good introduction to their own and others' culture through, for instance, the high profile music has within the school, the teaching of French to junior pupils and the well-organised Arts week. By the time pupils leave the school, they are polite, sensible and well-rounded individuals.
14. Dining at lunchtime is not a particularly social occasion. Both dining rooms have a strong institutional feel with noise levels that make conversation difficult. The noise is in part due to the dreadful acoustics of both rooms where hard surfaces and a high roof appear to magnify every sound.

## Attendance

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 95.2%**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.6
National data (2002/3)	5.4	National data (2002/3)	0.4

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

15. The school has very effective procedures for promoting and monitoring the rate of attendance. Good attendance is recognised by awards every half term. There are very good weekly monitoring systems for identifying any pupils whose attendance or punctuality are giving cause for concern. Holiday procedures have been tightened up and the school has clear restrictions on when holidays will be authorised. Attendance this year is the best it has been for some time and the number of pupils taking holidays in term time has been reduced.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education the school provides is broadly satisfactory, but has weaknesses.

The teaching is generally sound, and care and welfare and links with parents are good, but a weak curriculum adversely affects pupils' learning,

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good in the reception classes. In Years 1 to 6 the quality of teaching and learning is broadly satisfactory. The quality and use of assessment are good in the reception year but unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the teaching in lessons in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall, inconsistencies affect the overall quality and reduce its impact on the pupils' learning
- The good and on occasions very good teaching in reception gives children a secure start to their later learning.
- Lessons are planned and prepared thoroughly but the lesson content is often very ordinary and lacks stimulus
- Teachers regularly employ questions to make pupils think but do not always make full use of the pupils' responses
- The assessment of learning in Years 1 to 6 does not generate sufficient good quality information

### Commentary

16. There has been insufficient improvement in the teaching and learning since the last inspection. The proportion of good or better lessons in Years 1 to 6 has remained about the same, whereas in most schools it has risen significantly. Variations in the quality of teaching have widened further and the teaching in lessons now spans excellent to unsatisfactory.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 58 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	6 (10%)	21 (36%)	27 (47%)	3 (5%)	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. A further five part lessons were seen in which there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching.*

17. While the teaching in Years 1 to 6 has some positive attributes it is not of a good enough quality overall to drive up standards of achievement and to enable pupils to derive maximum benefit from their learning. To a large extent it is a lack of consistency that slows pupils' learning and results in achievements that are below those that many pupils, particularly the higher attainers, are capable of. Variations in the quality of lessons occur between classes, between year groups and between subjects. While some lessons sparkle with life and buzz with the sound of interested pupils, others plod along from one standard activity to another. The compound effect of this is to produce an irregular pattern of learning rather than a continuum of progressive development in knowledge, understanding and skills.
18. This is not the case in the reception classes, where the cohesion of provision and close working relationship between teachers generates a learning environment which is lively and productive. Reception staff constantly monitor children's development and use the outcomes of assessment constructively to plan activities which closely match the learning needs of the individual. Consequently children of differing attainment learn well and make good progress during their reception year.
19. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 construct detailed lesson plans and ensure that the resources pupils will need are readily available. New tasks are introduced clearly so that pupils have a secure understanding of what they have to do and how to go about it. Teaching assistants are successful in using a range of strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and

to ensure their inclusion. However, in general, the teaching in Years 1 to 6 fails to take full advantage of the solid start children are given in reception. It is in the content of activities where a major weakness lies. Too many lessons simply deliver the programme of work as illustrated by the various national guidance documents. Teachers do not recognise the implications of the word 'guidance' and often give insufficient thought to how the activities need to be modified or changed to fit the needs of their pupils and to stimulate their learning. This is particularly evident in the teaching of skills in subjects such as mathematics and science. The teachers' lack of understanding of how to fully utilise the requirements of the National Curriculum and national guidance results in many pupils having sound subject knowledge in these two subjects but insecure skills at enquiry and problem solving.

20. The teachers' relationships with pupils and class discipline are often good. This makes for a pleasant working atmosphere in which there are minimum interruptions to the flow of the lesson. There are examples of very effective teaching, particularly where the teacher's subject knowledge is strong and an appropriate balance is struck between instruction, discussion and practical work. Teachers use questions frequently to encourage pupils to think and often vary them carefully to ensure that pupils of different attainment have the opportunity to answer. Pupils respond well to this approach and quite frequently will follow an answer with a question of their own. Where the teaching is good, teachers use these opportunities well to extend pupils' understanding, but in other instances teachers move on without responding fully because they want to get on to the next part of the lesson plan. In general teachers are being constrained by their lesson plans and their delivery lacks innovation and flexibility.
21. There has been too little improvement in the quality and effectiveness of assessment since the last inspection. The shortcomings in assessment can be seen clearly in teachers' lesson planning. Because many teachers do not have clear understanding of the purpose and use of regular assessment, much of their lesson planning is based on the delivery of the next element of the scheme of work rather than on a careful consideration of what pupils have learned in the past, whether that learning is secure and what they are ready, or need, to learn next. Consequently pupils may be moved onto a new piece of work before they are ready for it or be spending time going over something they already have a secure grasp of. This leads in the first instance to insecure learning and in the second to wasted time and a lack of progress.
22. A lack of useful assessment data makes it difficult for teachers to set realistic targets for pupils to aspire to and the marking of work often fails to identify where pupils have been successful and where their weaknesses lie. Consequently pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve is limited. Whole-school assessment and recording arrangements do not provide a sufficiently clear overview of the achievement of pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are weak tools for assessing the progress of these children, as many targets are too broad and hence very difficult to evaluate.

## **The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is poor overall. It is good in the reception classes, unsatisfactory in Year 1 and Year 2 and poor in Year 3 to Year 6. The quality and range of resources are unsatisfactory. The accommodation is satisfactory overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is insufficiently broad and balanced and does not meet the learning needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs
- Reception children receive a stimulating programme of activities
- Provision for personal, social and health education is inconsistent and is unsatisfactory overall
- Insufficient curriculum development has taken place since the time of the last inspection
- There is a good range of enrichment activities

## Commentary

23. The school provides children in the reception year with a good range of carefully planned activities that incorporates all the recommended areas of learning for children of this age. Very good links are made between the different areas of learning, enhancing the understanding the children have of their work. In Years 1 to 6 there is an imbalance in the curriculum provision due to the excessive amount of time pupils spend in literacy lessons. This leaves insufficient time for appropriate allocation to be made to other subjects. There are also inconsistencies between classes and year groups with some teachers allocating reasonable time to a particular subject but others allocating very little. Examples of this can be seen in history and religious education. In religious education the problems are compounded by the lack of a cohesive programme of work. This means that not only are there inconsistencies in the amount of time spent on the subject but also that the curriculum fails to meet statutory requirements. In mathematics and science the provision for the pupils to learn how to carry out investigations and solve problems is unsatisfactory because the curriculum does not provide them with sufficient well-structured opportunities to develop the skills they need.
24. Although the school has high standards of behaviour and pupils have good attitudes to school the programme promoting pupils' personal, social and health education is loosely structured and mainly unplanned. The good ethos of the school has largely come about through the positive role models the staff provide, the sensitive manner in which staff talk through problems with children when they arise, and health-related issues being addressed as part of the work in science. This constitutes an informal approach to personal, social and health education which only partially meets the curriculum needs of the pupils. Although the school has now implemented some initiatives they lack cohesion as a programme of work and in the case of time set aside for class discussion staff have received insufficient training to make it fully effective. The school has yet to clearly define what will constitute personal, social and health education and how much time will be allocated to this aspect of teaching and learning throughout the school.
25. Very little development has taken place to the curriculum during the past six years and it has declined in quality. The school has introduced the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and these are used daily. It is symptomatic of the curriculum of the school that these two strategies have failed to develop beyond the original concept. The school has not modified and adapted the original format to meet the particular needs of their pupils and to inject pace and rigour. Consequently too many literacy and numeracy lessons are routine rather than stimulating. This is not always the case and where individual teachers have taken the initiative, lessons come to life and pupils' interest is stimulated. Exciting literacy work in other subjects is sparse. There are few examples of extended pieces of writing being done in subjects such as history, geography or religious education, all of which are subjects rich in opportunities for language work. Similarly mathematics and ICT occur too infrequently in other subjects. In the main, the curriculum co-ordinators manage the more mundane aspects of their subjects such as resources reasonably well. They are not innovative, however, in moving the subjects forward or developing them as part of a whole curriculum.
26. The school makes unsatisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs. Documentation is variable in quality, and the processes for targeting support are not based upon a rigorous evaluation of need. There are inconsistencies in provision between classes and many individual education plans are not sufficiently specific about the curriculum that will be provided to help pupils to meet their targets.
27. The school has a good range of activities that enriches the curriculum and promotes pupils' interest in learning and enthusiasm for school. This includes activities such as visits, including residential visits, visitors into school and extra-curricular activities. Participation in sporting activities is good and the musical programme has brought the school considerable success over the years and a strong reputation in the city and beyond. Pupils participate in regional

music festivals with a good degree of success and also in national 'Music for Youth' events. The school choir has well over 100 members and there are two other smaller choirs and a school band of 35 as well as other ensembles. All these activities add richness to the lives of the pupils. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are introduced to a modern foreign language through the French lessons they receive each week, currently taught by a visiting teacher. These are much enjoyed and provide a firm foundation for future learning.

28. Over the years the school has spent a minimum of its allocated funding on learning resources and this places additional strain on teachers' ability to deliver a broad curriculum. The accommodation is spacious and has extensive grounds but the expansive layout does not lend itself well to a closely knit primary school. The school has recently received notification of funding for the development of a library for Years 3 to 6. This is urgently needed to help improve pupils' achievement in English.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils are well looked after in a safe and secure environment. The provision for pupils' support and guidance is satisfactory overall. The school has satisfactory procedures for listening to pupils' views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a good level of care and takes child protection issues very seriously
- Pupils receive effective support for their personal development but guidance given to pupils on academic subjects is not securely based on accurate assessment of their achievements and needs
- The school council does not reflect the whole school well enough

### **Commentary**

29. Pupils feel safe and secure at school. Staff are friendly and treat the pupils with care and respect. Supervision is good at all times. Child protection has a very high priority and all the staff have a good understanding of it as a result of recent training. The school's health and safety procedures are all satisfactorily in place although the system for arranging regular fire drills is not fully secure. Procedures for ensuring that all pupils are always treated equally have been reviewed and clarified since the new headteacher started and are now good.
30. Provision to support and guide pupils' academic development is unsatisfactory. Teachers have inadequate records of what individual pupils can and cannot do which makes it difficult for them to give advice on how pupils are to improve their work. The targets on the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs are not specific enough to support monitoring of the pupils' progress. Additionally, most pupils are taught by more than one teacher and the paucity of records results in a class teacher often not having a complete overview of a pupil's progress. Support for personal development is good. Teachers know the pupils well and there are good, trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils know that they can confidently turn to their teachers for support and advice on personal matters.
31. The school council introduced earlier this school year is settling down reasonably well and giving some pupils a good opportunity to learn about running a meeting and the responsibilities that come with being an elected representative. Membership, however, is only open to pupils from Years 5 and 6. This is depriving most pupils in the school of both an introduction to democracy and a more direct involvement in the way the school develops. Links between individual classes and the school council are not defined clearly enough. The result is that the school council is not a fully effective forum for gathering and responding to pupils' views.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents are good. The school has satisfactory links with the local community and other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have a good opinion of the school, which they think is improving under the new headteacher, although a few parents express concerns about the provision for pupils who have special educational needs
- Overall, parents are kept well informed although they do not fully understand the homework procedures
- Good links with the local high school enable pupils to make a smooth transition to secondary education

### **Commentary**

32. Most parents have a good opinion of the school. This judgement is based on half of all parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, combined with the outcomes of the parents meeting and conversations with parents during the inspection. Parents are particularly pleased that their children are happy at school, with the progress they make and that they are treated fairly. They also commented favourably on the impact the new headteacher is making on the way the school is run.
33. Information for parents is of good quality overall. The prospectus is easy to read and the newly introduced weekly newsletters contain a section by the headteacher that regularly gives a very good insight into the way he wants the school to develop. This effectively allows parents to comment at an early stage of any developments. Arrangements for parents to meet their children's teachers formally are good with an initial meeting in September with their year group teachers and then formal opportunities in the autumn and spring terms to meet their English and mathematics' teachers. The headteacher has recently made it far easier for parents of pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 to meet their children's teachers informally after school, and parents appreciate this.
34. Pupils' reports are satisfactory. Progress is clearly stated but the targets are often too general to allow parents to be involved in their children's learning. Many of the sections on personal qualities give little indication whether any improvement is necessary. Inspectors disagree with the minority of parents who think that the school does not keep them well informed on their children's progress. Inspectors, however, agree with those parents who find the school's homework procedures confusing. There is a lack of consistency in the setting of homework.
35. There are inconsistencies in provision for pupils with special educational needs across the school, caused to a large extent by a lack of effective monitoring. This has led to some concerns by a small number of parents about the quality of provision for their children, for which there is some justification.
36. Pupils are well prepared for the transition to secondary education as a result of good links with the local high school. There are good transfer arrangements, including a secondary teacher visiting the school to teach design and technology to the pupils in Year 6. Opportunities for the pupils to visit the high school and meet their future teachers are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. The leadership of the new headteacher is good but the leadership and management of senior staff are unsatisfactory. Governance is also unsatisfactory and there are breaches in statutory requirements.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, and has begun to systematically tackle the school's inadequacies
- Systems to check on the quality of teaching and the effect it is having on the pupils' learning and achievement do not work well enough
- Subject leaders have too little first-hand knowledge about pupils' learning and achievement but the management of the Foundation Stage is much more effective
- The governing body is too reliant on others for its evaluation of the school
- The school's finances are managed well
- The school improvement plan does not provide a firm platform for development
- The organization and use of information about pupils' attainment and achievement is weak
- As a consequence of its serious weaknesses the school provides unsatisfactory value for money

## Commentary

37. At the time of the last inspection the quality of the leadership and management was judged to be good. However, over a number of years, the quality has slipped and the school has failed to address management issues identified in the last inspection report. Although the headteacher has made a start, the school has yet to establish systems to regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. As a result, managers lack an informed view of where the strengths and weaknesses in teaching lie and what needs to be done to bring about improvement and raise standards of achievement.
38. The headteacher has assessed the school's current position accurately and well. His good leadership and sense of realism have ensured that the most urgent problems have been identified and actions planned to resolve them. The headteacher has also laid the foundations for more effective management systems, such as those needed to assess pupils' development and to evaluate their progress. He has started to monitor the quality of teaching across the school and for the first time there is a modicum of reliable information upon which to base decisions. The headteacher's clear vision for the future has yet to be appreciated fully by all staff and governors, but for the first time in many years the school is showing clear signs of improvement
39. Effective management procedures are not yet embedded in the school's routines and there are far too many inconsistencies in the way things are done. Consequently the school is not fully inclusive and does not meet all of its stated aims. Good practice in some areas of the school is missing in others and those with senior management responsibilities have yet to establish coherent strategies to which all can adhere. For example, the school has not developed and implemented systematic ways to record pupils' progress and predict what they could achieve. The absence of this analysis means that teachers have too little information about pupils' achievements and this has a detrimental effect on the way lessons are planned and taught.
40. The curriculum for religious education does not meet statutory requirements. The locally agreed syllabus is not fully implemented and teaching times vary considerably across the school. In some classes pupils receive insufficient lesson time to learn effectively or to cover the syllabus adequately. This has mainly gone unnoticed by the school because few systems are in place to check the curriculum in this and other subjects. The role of the subject co-ordinators in monitoring provision is underdeveloped and the weaknesses in subject management identified in the last report remain. Co-ordinators have too little understanding of the standards pupils are attaining or of the quality of teaching to plan strategically for improvement. There is naivety about what subject management entails with some co-ordinators focusing on low level actions, such as reorganising resources, rather than on the key area of raising achievement. Consequently across the school as a whole, subject

leadership is unsatisfactory. In contrast the management of the reception year is good because the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the impact provision is having on children's learning and can plan for development securely.

41. The monitoring and evaluation role of the special educational needs co-ordinator does not provide a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator has only limited involvement in developing the strategic direction of provision for these pupils and the school as a whole lacks a common sense of purpose in developing inclusive approaches.
42. The provision of opportunities for staff development linked to school improvement planning and opportunities for improvement through performance management systems is unsatisfactory. Consequently, staff have insufficient well-focused opportunities to extend their teaching and management skills. The school improvement plan does not constitute an efficient management tool. Key priorities are not immediately apparent or are too broad and the sheer wordiness of the plan makes evaluating how much progress is being made towards identified targets far too difficult. The headteacher has recognised these shortcomings and has sound plans for the restructuring of this key document and the processes associated with it.
43. The governing body is supportive of the school and keen to provide pupils with a good education. Many governors visit regularly and have a good understanding of the community the school serves. However, the governing body does not have a strategic overview of the school. Governors rely too heavily on information from school managers and others, without challenging them or asking for supporting evidence. This has led to an unrealistic view of how well the school is performing and of the challenges it faces. Governors have not monitored effectively the key issues from the previous inspection. This has led to a lack of understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses of the school which makes it difficult for governors to contribute effectively to school improvement and development. The governing body has not ensured that all statutory requirements are in place. As well as the shortcomings of the curriculum for religious education mentioned earlier, the school has yet to put in place a fully operational race equality policy.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1023904
Total expenditure	1006843
Expenditure per pupil	2018

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	10359
Balance carried forward to the next year	27420

44. The financial management of the school is good. The bursar has a clear understanding of the finances of the school and has organised good systems for the smooth running of the school. Furthermore as a member of the governing body, the bursar provides a range of detailed information for governors about the school's current finances and its potential needs for the future. For example the implications of the reducing pupil numbers have been calculated and savings planned to avoid a budget shortfall.
45. Although the finances are administered effectively and securely, the school does not spend the funding allocated to it efficiently to promote pupils' achievement. As a result the value for money the school provides is unsatisfactory.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

The reception teachers and the support staff have created a stimulating and closely integrated environment where children feel relaxed and confident. Children's attainment on entry to reception is broadly that expected but there is a wide spread of ability with some children having special needs and others demonstrating good basic skills. Children make good progress in the reception classes and the majority of them achieve the early learning goals in all six areas of learning, with a number of children exceeding expectations. A particular strength is the high quality of personal, social and emotional development. The good and at times very good quality of teaching in the reception classes and the strong leadership and management have all impacted positively on children's learning, achievement and progress. Resources are better than at the time of the last inspection and this is an area of improvement that is continuing to be developed.

There is a strong commitment to improving standards in the Foundation Stage. Close teamwork is very evident between teachers and classroom support staff and high expectations are set for all the children. Staff plan and provide a well-balanced, rich curriculum that meets the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs. Relationships between children and staff are excellent, clearly fostering children's personal, social and emotional development. There are very good procedures in place for planning, monitoring and assessment. The clarity of the assessment data enables the staff to plan accurately and realistically for the children's further learning. All members of staff are involved and contribute to the planning of appropriate programmes in all the areas of learning. Throughout the reception areas children work with great enthusiasm and with a strong sense of purpose.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers promote children's learning in this area very well in all aspects of their work
- Relationships between children and adults are excellent and help children develop confidence and self-esteem as well as making school a pleasurable experience
- Children work and play in a mature and sensible manner at all times

#### **Commentary**

46. The children achieve very well and the majority of children exceed the early learning goals. Teaching and learning are of very good quality. The promotion of personal development has a high priority from the moment children enter the reception classes. Routines are very clearly established so that children know what is expected of them and happily abide by class procedures. Most children gain a very good level independence and are able to organise themselves for activities. When working together they are sensible and supportive and frequently become engrossed in an activity on their own. A group of boys eagerly shared a series of pop-up cards about the seashore and took great delight in identifying creatures and plants to be found at the seaside. Children are developing a good understanding of what is right and what is wrong and, following the story of the girl who found the mermaid's treasure, they were adamant that she should do the right thing and give it back to her. All the staff are very good role models for the children. They become involved in role-play activities, use praise and encouragement well and develop a strong sense of mutual trust between themselves and the children.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early reading and writing skills are taught well
- The class bases are rich in displays that effectively promote language development
- Children's listening skills are underdeveloped

### Commentary

47. In this area of learning children achieve well, although not all of them have learnt to curb their enthusiasm and listen to the ideas other children have. The majority of children achieve the early learning goals with a significant number reaching higher levels. Teaching and learning are good because activities are well planned and meet the needs of the children. The classroom environments are rich in displays of words that help the children when they come to write. The story of *Rainbow Fish* prepares the way for using a story as the basis for writing and as a group the children are able to construct a sentence on the board. The teacher makes very good use of the children's own ideas, where to start, how to spell words and where they should put capital letters and full stops. This, combined with sessions on letter sounds that can found at the beginning of words, prepares the children well to write independently. Lively teaching using well-chosen books develop a love of reading aloud with the teacher and this leads naturally into children wanting to read on their own. Books are displayed in an attractive manner and children naturally go to pick them up and look through them, often sharing them with an adult. Although children listen to instructions, during group activities they are so keen to make their contribution they do not listen carefully to others. This is an aspect of the area of learning that the teachers are constantly working on in order to improve the children's listening skills.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a good range of practical activities that make learning interesting
- Children have a secure knowledge of numbers up to ten and beyond
- A lack of resources for mathematics places some restrictions on the range of activities teachers can provide

### Commentary

48. Achievement in this area of learning is good. The majority of children reach the early learning goals with a significant proportion of children achieving beyond that standard. The good, and at times, very good teaching and learning in this area stem from the quality of the activities prepared for the children. Not only do these activities capture the imagination and concentration of the children but also they provide solid learning opportunities to help the children gain knowledge and understanding at a good rate. The mental session, at the beginning of a lesson on coin recognition, started with the children confidently counting up to 20 and then back to nought and following this by quickly counting in tens up to 100. This was followed by a lively session on coin recognition where the children had no difficulty in recognising coins up to one pound and they laughed at the teacher when she suggested they looked for a 3p coin. In small groups the children then worked with the teacher on buying items for the seaside and in some cases giving change, a difficult concept for very young

children. Although resources have been improved many of the activities relied heavily on resources brought by the teachers from home or ones they had made at home.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision for children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Topics are very well planned
- Productive links are made with other areas of learning
- Children are confident in using the computer

### **Commentary**

49. Teaching and learning are good and at times very good in this area of learning. Children achieve the early learning goal and a number achieve beyond this point. Topics for each half term are planned jointly using the expertise of the three teachers and the classroom assistants. As a result of this teamwork the topics are vibrant, interesting to the children and wide ranging. The topic that has just been completed looked at the life-cycles of creatures and produced a wealth of good quality work covering many of the areas of learning. The diary of a caterpillar involved the children in writing about the days of the week. Artwork was produced and models were made. Attractive prints of butterflies were made to show how symmetrical their wings were. Links with mathematical development came through graphs of what the hungry caterpillar liked to eat and number caterpillars helped the children to order and write numbers up to six. The children use computers to enhance their learning. They are very confident in using the mouse to access different programs and their work with the computer is often linked to other areas such as art and design or language.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have well-developed skills and are able to use small tools and implements effectively when writing, drawing and painting
- Provision for outdoor play is limited

### **Commentary**

50. Teaching is good and children quickly learn a range of appropriate skills. They achieve well and become confident, particularly in their use of small tools. They use brushes well when painting, can join materials with glue, make models and cut out shapes with scissors. When writing they control their pencils well to form the shapes of letters and by the end of reception year many are able to use the skills they have acquired to write their names clearly. In a physical education lesson on the playground they showed how well they were beginning to control their body, using the space productively and moving in a variety of ways over and along a skipping rope. However, the outdoor play area is small and restricts the range of activities that can take place, particularly adventurous and imaginative play. The area can only be used in fine weather as there is no shelter and this restricts the occasions when children can enjoy outdoor facilities. This limits the scope of what children can learn and consequently places some restrictions on their achievement.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links between creative work and other areas of learning are good
- The quality of children's artwork is good

### **Commentary**

51. Strong links are made between the creative work the children do and other areas of learning. This not only gives a clear purpose to the learning but also enables children to see the relevance of their work. Children's paintings of the fruits eaten by the hungry caterpillar are of a very good quality. They had closely observed the oranges, pears, apples, plums and strawberries and then carefully used paint to depict them accurately. The computer had been used to generate pictures of caterpillars, and art and number work came together through what the caterpillar ate each day. The work children do in art is of a good standard. They are encouraged to be observant and to look at colour, texture and shape and to use their materials in a creative and stimulating manner.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The school is part of a local authority pilot scheme to introduce **French** into the curriculum of primary schools. At present this is taught to pupils in Years 3 to 6 for 30 minutes each week by a visiting specialist teacher but responsibility for the subject will gradually be handed over to class teachers. Although there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about provision, in the two lessons seen pupils were obviously enjoying the experience and learning effectively. The teacher used a good range of activities to motivate and interest pupils and the good relations that had been established ensured pupils close attention and good behaviour. Year 3 pupils' rendition of *I can sing a rainbow* in French bore clear testimony to the pleasure they gain from their lessons and a minority are already developing clear accents in their speech. The enthusiasm with which Year 6 pupils tackled the names of the months in this unfamiliar language bodes well for their future learning. The French lessons pupils are receiving are laying a firm foundation for achievement in modern foreign languages.

#### English

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards, despite improvements in speaking and listening, have declined since the last inspection and pupils are underachieving
- Pupils make insufficient progress in writing and standards are below average
- Although recent initiatives are improving matters, information about pupils' progress is not collected and used well enough to raise standards
- Teaching and learning are not monitored effectively in order to improve the quality and help raise standards

#### Commentary

52. At the time of the last inspection standards at the end of Year 6 were judged as being above the national average. Currently standards are close to the national average, except in writing where they are below average. The pupils enter Year 1 with a good range of skills in English. This is not built on sufficiently well. Standards in writing have declined. Pupils are underachieving because, although the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, it is not good enough to drive up standards and assessment is poor. This underachievement, although it is variable from year to year, exists for all groups of pupils at the school, including pupils with special educational needs.
53. The introduction of the National Strategy for Literacy has enabled teachers to plan comprehensively for English. However, although vast amounts of time are allocated to certain aspects, such as reading, results do not reflect improvements in line with the amounts of time spent on this subject. The school has not implemented a common strategy for teaching English throughout the school, leaving teachers to plan and organise the timetable individually. Insufficient checks are made to see if this approach is working. The subject leaders have insufficient time to comprehensively evaluate the quality of planning and teaching and learning. There are no functional tracking systems to check on learning from year to year and identify areas for improvement. Test scores at Year 2 and Year 6 are not analysed closely enough to determine how well pupils are performing. The lack of information about pupils' learning is a prime cause of underachievement. This exemplifies the unsatisfactory leadership and management of the subject in the past. Only this year, with the appointment of the headteacher, has a system been organised to follow how pupils progress through the school and, because of a lack of accessible data, this is not yet fully functional.

Overall, these deficiencies mean that insufficient strategies have been put in place to raise standards.

54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but too often lack flair and innovation. Classroom routines are well established and relationships are good. This results in good behaviour and pupils who are keen to learn. The beginning of lessons often catches pupils' attention and focuses their minds on a passage to read or a piece of writing to tackle. For example, in Year 5 pupils had to write a description of a *Wizard's Room* and the teacher had a shiny box, representing the room which captured the imaginations of the pupils, as she spoke in a whisper about what might be in it. However, pupils' rate of learning begins to slow when tasks are being tackled because the pace of lessons is not brisk enough, and pupils often lack a sense of urgency in their work. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are grouped by ability for English, but in only a few lessons is work differentiated sufficiently for the range of ability in the group. Where work is made interesting and pitched well, such as in a Year 2 lesson in which questions had to be made from statements, pupils concentrate and work hard throughout, but this is not always the case. Variations in the quality of teaching can be detected in teachers' lesson plans. Some teachers show clearly what pupils are expected to learn and structure lively tasks to meet the objectives, while others simply list the activities pupils will carry out without giving sufficient thought to what pupils will gain.
55. Standards in speaking and listening have improved since the last inspection. They are satisfactory overall. Teachers sometimes make effective use of questioning in lessons, which enables pupils to give more thoughtful and considered answers. For example, one pupil answered a question about a story in Year 3 with, "They might not have been able to swim because they've got all that heavy armour on." Pupils listen carefully to each other during class discussions and show good levels of respect for others' views. This gives them time to formulate their own ideas and then give confident answers.
56. Progress in pupils' reading is satisfactory and standards are in line with national averages. Pupils read in groups each day. The teacher works with one group, while other groups read or tackle an activity individually. The progress of the teacher-led group is often better than the other pupils. By the end of Year 2 pupils know about letters and sounds, can check a word using different strategies and mostly understand what they read, often using good expression when reading aloud. Older pupils increase their vocabulary and knowledge through written exercises and practise reading skills daily. However, few pupils are very enthusiastic independent readers. Only a small proportion are widely read and can name authors and favourite books. Library books within the school are inadequate. There are too few books for pupils of all ages and these are not attractively displayed, and the library area is insufficiently used for reading and research, to really enthuse pupils about reading. Pupils' reading is supported well at home. Parents and other adults listen to pupils read regularly, giving valuable practice in reading skills.
57. Pupils' progress in writing is uneven throughout the school, and between classes in the same year group. This exemplifies the inadequate monitoring of standards, and unsatisfactory subject leadership. Some work is marked well, such as in Year 6, with pointers for improvement. This is often linked to targets in pupils' books. However, in other some classes the targets are out of date and work is less well marked, with few comments. Occasionally the presentation of work is very good, but often it is not. Some pupils in Year 6 are still practising handwriting using double lined books. Pupils write for a broad range of purposes, including play scripts, poetry, letters and stories. They use basic punctuation correctly but are not adventurous with their writing styles. Although the spelling of words is often almost correct the frequency of inaccuracies spoils pupils' work. Despite significant amounts of work being completed in some classes, all too often tasks lack a brisk pace and this is reflected in finished work, which is slapdash or lacks depth. Too few pupils overall are working at the higher levels.



## Language and literacy across the curriculum

This is unsatisfactory. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their skills in reading and writing in other subjects. In subjects such as history and geography, for example, pupils' writing lacks flair and individuality because they have not been able to express their own thoughts and ideas. Computers are not used often for word processing. Pupils' written work in other subjects such as history is limited. The lack of development of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects has a significant adverse impact on their achievement in English as a whole.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum does not provide pupils with enough opportunities for practical work or for using and applying methods of calculation
- More able pupils are not challenged sufficiently
- Assessment is not used well enough to inform planning
- Teachers' planning is detailed and clear, and teachers and teaching assistants soundly support the pupils' learning
- Children are confident and articulate in explaining their mathematical methods
- Marking is inconsistent. It is not always used well enough to inform pupils about what they need to do to improve
- The co-ordinators' role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning is not sufficiently developed

### Commentary

58. Although at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainment is close to the national average, the good levels of attainment pupils show when they first enter Year 1 are not built upon well enough, and across Years 1 to 6 as a whole pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Unvalidated test results for Year 2 pupils in 2004 show that standards have generally been maintained but have not improved. The school has still to receive the 2004 results for Year 6 pupils but in 2003 pupils' performance, like that of the younger pupils, was broadly average. However, a significant proportion of both boys and girls could do better and standards are not as high as they should be. In most lessons, pupils with special educational needs receive sensitive support from the teachers and teaching assistants and make steady progress. However, the problems that adversely affect the learning of all pupils also impacts on the overall achievement of pupils with special educational needs and they too make insufficient gains from their learning.
59. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory because the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, which were consistently good throughout the school, are now satisfactory. Similarly, there is now insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils, whereas at the time of the last inspection work was well matched to the abilities of these pupils. There has been a decline in standards since the previous inspection, when pupils were attaining above national averages.
60. The quality of teaching is sound overall, but varies considerably between very good and unsatisfactory. In a very good lesson in Year 2, for example, the teacher planned a careful progression of activities to help pupils consolidate their understanding of the importance of hundreds, tens and units. In a successful beginning to the lesson pupils used counting songs to revise numbers beyond 100. Children responded enthusiastically and explained their mental methods confidently. As the lesson developed to the ordering of a set of three-digit numbers, pupils listened carefully to each other and checked each other's contributions.

Within the very positive learning context, errors were used effectively as teaching points. Mathematical vocabulary was reinforced and developed well. There was very good provision for pupils of all abilities in this lesson as the teacher's questions were appropriately framed to ensure challenge for all children, with harder questions for the higher attaining pupils. The very good features of this lesson also characterised good and very good teaching seen in other classes. However, such lessons are in the minority.

61. Where teaching is weaker the work set is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' and the level expected of the more able is too low. To a marked extent this is because information from assessment is not of a sufficiently good quality and what is collected is not used effectively by teachers to plan for the next steps in children's learning. At times, the numeracy strategy is implemented too rigidly, so that teachers fail to respond to pupils' learning needs. For example, in an unsatisfactory lesson, pupils were unable to solve calculator problems because the introduction to the task focused on higher order skills before most had had a chance to consolidate basic techniques.
62. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work varies across the school. All work is marked, or at least acknowledged with a tick, but there is not always enough constructive guidance on what the next steps should be. As a result, pupils are not helped to reflect on their mistakes and do not know how to improve and to keep on improving. In some classes, pupils spend too long practising skills and reinforcing strategies already understood.
63. Subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. The co-ordinators are aware of some gaps in teaching, for example problem solving, and have promoted training for teachers to remedy this. However, the benefits to pupils' learning are still to be felt. The assessment co-ordinator has recently set up systems to track and assess pupils' performance over time in order to raise standards but the use of this information to plan and set targets for pupils is not yet sufficiently developed. Co-ordinators have not systematically monitored the quality of teaching and learning and therefore do not have a clear overview of mathematics throughout the school. This has led to inconsistencies in standards and provision. It has prevented support and professional development being closely targeted towards those staff who would benefit from it most.
64. The curriculum overall is unsatisfactory because there is an over-emphasis on number at the cost of other aspects of the subject, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Too few opportunities are provided for children to apply their mathematical skills to real-life situations, although very recently all classes have ensured that there are more opportunities for problem solving.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. Pupils' use of mathematics in other subjects is unsatisfactory. Overall, they have too few opportunities to use and apply their knowledge to other subjects, although there are some examples of successful application of skills such as when pupils complete block graphs or tables in science or when they program floor robots. The policy for mathematics makes very little reference to the use of ICT in mathematics, and no ICT lesson observed in the computer suite during the inspection focused on mathematical skills. Computers in classrooms were not seen to be used during the inspection.

## SCIENCE

The provision for science is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages acquire an acceptable level of scientific knowledge but their enquiry skills are underdeveloped
- The curriculum does not provide teachers with sufficient guidance on what they should be teaching or the assessments they should be making
- Although teachers' knowledge is satisfactory they lack an understanding of how to promote pupils' enquiry skills
- Subject co-ordinators do not have sufficient information upon which to base their decisions
- Pupils' attitudes to science are good and they are interested in learning new things

### Commentary

66. There has been insufficient improvement in the subject since the last inspection. The performance of Year 6 pupils in the national tests was close to the national average in 2003 and the school is expecting results to be similar or a little better this year. However, pupils' test results hide an imbalance in their attainment which becomes apparent during practical lessons. While pupils acquire a solid bank of factual knowledge which helps them to answer test questions their enquiry skills are much less secure.
67. By Year 6 many pupils do not have a clear understanding of the process they need to employ when carrying out investigations and need more help from the teacher than is expected at this age. A minority of higher attaining pupils are able to explain how information can be gathered through investigation and how it should be interpreted, but the majority have only a tentative grasp of the procedures they need to use to obtain reliable information. The school curriculum does not provide a clear enough programme of practical activities or the framework needed to ensure that pupils acquire the skills and techniques of scientific enquiry in a progressive and logical sequence. Weaknesses in assessment stem from the shortcomings of the curriculum. Teachers have difficulty evaluating any gains pupils make because, in many cases, what they should be looking for is not clearly laid out.
68. The teaching of enquiry skills is unsatisfactory because, with a few exceptions, teachers do not have a clear enough understanding of how to promote the pupils' learning in this key area of science. In too many lessons, teachers plan exercises which involve a considerable amount of writing and a minimal amount of practical work. In general, teachers' interpretation of the national guidance is too narrow and unimaginative. Even in lessons where pupils are given practical tasks to perform, the procedures they have to follow are often determined by the teacher and involve mainly observation. There is a lack of opportunity for pupils of all ages to make decisions about what information is needed and how to go about collecting it. This has not gone unnoticed by pupils, some of whom identify science as one of their least favourite subjects for precisely these reasons. In contrast, where lessons are interactive and pupils' involvement is high, the level of enthusiasm they show for the subject is good and pupils of all ages demonstrate a keen interest in finding out how the world around them works.
69. The teaching of factual information is satisfactory and successfully promotes pupils' knowledge of many of the important ideas of science. For example Year 6 pupils recognise that friction slows moving objects and Year 2 pupils appreciate that living things can be grouped according to their characteristics. Teachers support pupils well while they are working and ask frequent questions to keep their minds ticking over. However, some of the questions teachers ask do not make the pupils think deeply enough about how and why things happen as they do, and opportunities to challenge the higher attainers in particular are missed. From

the manner in which pupils often follow the questions put to them with sensible and stimulating ones of their own, the potential for higher achievement is quite plain.

70. Although the subject co-ordinators are aware that the teaching and learning of enquiry skills are the main priority for improvement they are unsure as to exactly where the weaknesses lie and consequently what decisions need to be taken in order to raise standards. This is because management procedures which enable important information about standards and the quality of teaching to be collected are not fully in place or effective. Consequently the co-ordinators do not have sufficient information about how well pupils in different classes are achieving or what aspects of teaching are in need of support. Simply speaking the co-ordinators do not have the tools to do the job and as a result subject management is unsatisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new ICT suite is providing pupils with good opportunities to learn, and teachers are becoming more confident in using ICT
- Because classroom computers are used only rarely, pupils do not have enough opportunities to refine and improve their work and this limits what they can achieve
- The curriculum does not include systematic planning of ICT links with other subjects
- Information from teachers' assessment is not used well enough to plan the next steps in children's learning
- Basic ICT skills are taught competently

### **Commentary**

71. At the time of the last inspection, the quantity, range and quality of resources were unsatisfactory. The building of the new computer suite and the purchase of a range of software have ensured that pupils have better opportunities to learn and to practise key ICT skills. Teachers have undergone training to improve their expertise and they are now able to support pupils more effectively. These developments are beginning to improve pupils' achievement, but they have not yet had their full impact on standards of achievement and for this reason improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.
72. Procedures for assessment are still at an early stage of development, and teachers' planning does not yet take enough account of pupils' previous learning. In the best lessons, teachers assess pupils' skills and move their learning on but lack of clear guidance means that this process is inconsistent and relies too heavily on the individual teacher.
73. The quality of teaching and learning in ICT lessons in the computer suite is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved over time and many teachers are now confident in teaching the subject and dealing with any technical problems should they occur. Teachers also use their subject knowledge well to explain new tasks. In a very good lesson for the older pupils in school, the teacher's clear and accurate explanations of how to set up a template using a desktop publishing program enhanced pupils' learning and enabled them to make good progress. Occasionally the programs that are provided are a little too easy and do not provide enough challenge for more able pupils.
74. Although some procedures have been introduced to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, these are not yet part of a strategic programme. The role of subject leader is unsatisfactory, because over time little direct monitoring of teaching, planning or standards has taken place.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. The use of computers in different subjects of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Whilst there are occasional good examples, overall opportunities are not capitalised upon enough to present work in a variety of formats such as text, tables, graphs or charts. In most classrooms, the computers were rarely turned on during lessons, and opportunities were therefore missed to refine or improve work begun in the computer suite. This places severe limitations on what pupils can learn and as a result, despite the gains pupils make during designated ICT lessons, standards are falling a little way short of those expected. Too many pupils are underachieving because they do not understand well enough how to use ICT to aid their learning.

## HUMANITIES

76. There was insufficient evidence to make firm judgements about provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning in **geography** and **history** as only one lesson was seen in each subject plus another which was a combination of the two. Teachers' planning was looked at, samples of work analysed and discussions held with pupils. Planning documents and the range of work offered for scrutiny indicated that the curriculum time allocation to these two subjects is limited and varies between classes. Whilst some year groups carry out quite extensive studies in history and geography, in other years work is sparse and insufficient to give pupils any appreciable knowledge or depth of understanding.
77. In discussion with pupils it is studies of the local area that they remember most clearly and talk about with greatest enthusiasm. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good understanding of life in Victorian England. A day in a Victorian schoolroom has given them an insight into how things have changed since that period and Victorian artefacts showed them how different living in a Victorian home would have been. Older pupils had studied other aspects of this period in greater depth and a visit to a local high school had engaged them in a whole day studying the impact of a coal mining disaster on the lives of people. Younger pupils make good use of maps of Charnock, visit the local vets' surgery, carry out traffic surveys and look at local transport to learn about the characteristics of the area in which they live. Older pupils are studying different environments and are engaged in looking at how mountain ranges are depicted on maps and what we can learn from looking at contour maps. The subjects are not used to effectively support and extend pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory
- Too little time is allocated to religious education in some classes so pupils have few chances to learn in depth and to make good progress
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning and some weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and understanding have not been identified
- Assessment procedures are inadequate and do not successfully track pupils' progress
- Opportunities for pupils to experience a range of faiths at first hand are very limited

### Commentary

78. By the end of Year 6 standards are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This is a weaker picture than at the time of the last inspection, where standards were judged to be satisfactory, and there has been too little development since the last inspection. As at the time of the last report, there is too little monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and of the impact it is having on pupils' learning. Subject management

is unsatisfactory and as a result the school is unaware of where weaknesses lie and what needs to be done to bring about improvements.

79. The school has chosen to teach Christianity along with Islam and Judaism in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus but these are not taught consistently in all classes. Pupils have a reasonable knowledge of aspects of Christianity and talk about God, Jesus and the major festivals such as Easter. However, most pupils have a very sketchy knowledge of Judaism and little knowledge of Islam. They cannot name the places of worship for these faiths and have few ideas about prayer, Holy Books, customs and important people of either faith. Pupils' books reflect their limited knowledge. Where written work is more detailed much of it is focused on Christianity. Overall progress is unsatisfactory and across the school as a whole pupils do not achieve sufficiently well.
80. Curriculum timetables and teachers' planning show significant inconsistencies in the time allocated to this subject in different classes. In about 50 per cent of classes the lesson time allocated to religious education is only half of that recommended in the locally agreed syllabus. During the inspection a small number of classes had none planned at all. The variable amount of work in pupils' books and the differing frequency with which it occurs across classes and year groups support this analysis. This exemplifies the damaging effect of the lack of monitoring and how it is adversely affecting the pupils' learning.
81. The teaching in the lessons observed was broadly satisfactory. Teachers use a range of strategies in their lessons to make them interesting. Music, drama and visitors help pupils to learn effectively but some of the resources used are inappropriate. The small size of the book read to the whole class about a miracle meant some pupils could not see the illustrations and so paid less attention than those at the front who could see the pictures clearly. Some teachers lack confidence and sufficient knowledge to deliver the curriculum effectively. This is having a negative effect on pupils' progress and on their enjoyment of the subject. In discussion pupils frequently identify religious education amongst their least favourite subjects. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and do not enable teachers to check the progress of pupils to give them a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work.
82. Some, but not enough, use is made of visits and visitors to give pupils further opportunities to extend their learning. For example, the local vicar visited to talk to pupils about her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Pupils enjoyed this experience, and prepared for and learned effectively through it. However, pupils have not visited places of worship or talked with members of the faiths studied in school. This lack of first-hand experience adversely affects pupils' knowledge and perceptions of different world religions.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

83. Only a small number of lessons were seen in **art and design** (one), **design and technology** (three), **music** (two) and **physical education** (four). It is, therefore, not possible to make detailed judgements about the provision in these subjects. Further information was gained from discussions with staff and pupils, and from observations of pupils' work and teachers' planning.
84. Insufficient lessons were seen in **art and design** to make firm judgements of the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence from pupils' work indicates that standards are in line with those normally seen for pupils of a similar age. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use materials with confidence. In Year 1 the work of van Gogh has inspired the pupils to paint their own still life pictures of the flowers, which are of a good quality. Year 2 pupils have experimented with tie dye, delighting in the designs that this process produces on their fabrics. Under the guidance of the teacher Year 3 pupils have revived the old craft of French knitting, becoming engrossed in the technique for long periods. The results of the hours of knitting have been made into

attractive hats, bags and pictures. It is in Year 6 that pupils' achievements are at their best with some very good work in the style of Lowry and some excellent paintings of birds where the pupils have used paint very effectively to illustrate plumage and colour. During the inspection pupils in Year 6 were producing a clay tile depicting the front of their house. Prior to doing this work they had collected photographs, sketches and drawings from which they could work. They thoroughly enjoyed working with the clay and were totally engrossed in the activity which was progressing very well due to the teacher's strong subject knowledge.

85. From the limited number of lessons seen in **design and technology**, all of which were in the older classes, and from the examples of pupils' work on display it is apparent that pupils receive a range of opportunities to learn which closely follow the national subject guidance. Year 2 pupils have produced an interesting and attractive array of finger, glove and plant pot puppets using a range of materials and construction methods, some of which they have decided upon themselves. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 6 pupils were involved in constructing moving toys to their own designs. They were able to employ techniques they had learned in previous projects, such as how to create movement using cams, and combine them with new methods they had recently been taught. The skills they were using were around those expected for their age but they had yet to grasp the need to use and modify their design to aid and guide construction. In a well-taught lesson in Year 4 pupils compiled original and interesting designs for special occasion sandwiches. In all three of the lessons seen pupils set about the tasks they were given with interest and enthusiasm.
86. Although insufficient lessons were seen to make a definitive judgement, there are strong indications that standards in **music** are at least good, and that all elements of the curriculum are taught regularly. In a very good Year 5/6 lesson pupils were introduced to a Victorian comic opera song, and reflected perceptively upon the similarities and differences between the lyrics of this and those of a modern musical song. Pupils were provided with good opportunities to compose and perform. The starting point of a performance is often an idea developed collaboratively by pupils in class, which is then refined and extended into a much more sophisticated composition. This collaborative working makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and gives pride in their own achievements. A very high proportion of pupils benefit from instrument lessons taught by visiting teachers and there is a wide variety of opportunities for pupils of all ages to participate in extra-curricular musical activities. These range from small instrumental groups to the very large choir. Evidence from discussions with pupils shows that they value these opportunities greatly, and audio and video evidence provided, along with direct observation, demonstrates them to be of a very high standard. Pupils commented upon, and appreciated, the very high expectations of the specialist music teacher. The leadership and management role in music are unique in the school in that the subject leader is the sole teacher of music in the school. Whilst this brings great strengths as a result of her expertise and great commitment, it also leaves the school's music provision extremely vulnerable to any change.
87. Although four lessons were seen, these were across three different aspects of **physical education** and four age groups and therefore judgements about standards and teaching as a whole could not be made. Two dance lessons were taught competently and much enjoyed by the pupils as they put together a sequence of movements which matched well the objectives they had been set. The other lessons seen in games and athletics were taught satisfactorily and pupils' performance was around the standard expected for their age. However, while most pupils are able to perform to an acceptable and in some cases good standard, the lack of fitness of a significant minority of mainly older pupils adversely affects their performance. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator has a clear vision of what she wants pupils to gain from the subject and works hard to ensure that they receive a broad and interesting curriculum. As a result the school has been able to compile an application for the Activemark award which the co-ordinator is about to submit. Pupils have access to a good range of extra-curricular activities, some of which are coached by visitors from outside organisations. The

sports teams play regular matches against other schools and through periodic 'festivals of sport' productive links have been forged with schools in the local area.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

88. Only one lesson was seen in this subject area. Further information was gained from discussions with pupils and staff and from examination of various documents. While this provides an overview it is insufficient evidence upon which to base a secure judgement of provision overall. The school recognises the importance of this aspect of the curriculum, but has yet to put a meaningful programme of teaching and learning in place to ensure pupils achieve all that they could. Statutory aspects of health and sex education and relationships education are addressed through some other subjects, particularly science. Although important issues such as friendship, bullying, and the misuse of drugs are raised and discussed openly and sensitively at various times and during assemblies, this is in too *ad hoc* a manner and there is no guarantee that all pupils are receiving the same opportunities to learn. Just what will take place during class discussion periods is not planned sufficiently and objectives are too loose to guarantee a meaningful use of this time. The co-ordinator is new to the post and undergoing training to strengthen her own knowledge and understanding in order to carry out the work necessary to bring about improvement.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	5
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	6
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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