

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Chowbent Primary School**

Atherton

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106443

Headteacher: Mr D Bury

Lead inspector: Mr D Clegg

Dates of inspection: 1 – 3 March 2004

Inspection number: 255795

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	188
School address:	Laburnum Street Atherton Manchester Lancashire
Postcode:	M46 9FP
Telephone number:	01942 883410
Fax number:	01942 897773
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Higson
Date of previous inspection:	7 September 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

A smaller than average school with pupils aged 4 to 11 years. There are a similar number of boys and girls although there is an imbalance in some year groups, most noticeable in the current year 5. All pupils are taught in single age classes.

There is an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and with statements of special needs. The main difficulties are moderate learning problems. The great majority of pupils are White British, the main other group is White Asian. Almost all pupils speak English fluently.

There is an average proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

The school has a number of notable features including:

- 'Healthy Schools' award
- Silver award as an 'Eco' school
- High level of involvement in the education and business partnership (EBP) initiative.

When children enter the school they are attaining broadly average standards.

Since the last inspection the school has moved into new purpose built accommodation.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4341	Mr D Clegg	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs
111358	Ms V Lamb	Lay inspector	
4343	Ms S Billington	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Art and design Design and technology Music
10207	Mr A Khan-Cheema	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education English as an additional language

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Standards achieved are broadly average but some pupils could achieve more in some subjects. The teaching is satisfactory. The management of the school is satisfactory but there are weaknesses in the way the school has been led since the last inspection. Parents have good views about the school and pupils are very positive about what the school does for them. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There is very good provision for personal development and consequently pupils have very good attitudes to work
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make good progress
- Standards in writing, science and religious education are too low
- The rate of improvement since the last inspection has been too slow because strategic planning is weak
- There is some very good curriculum enrichment, particularly through the education business partnership
- There is a good level of care and support for pupils
- Marking of pupils' work is not as helpful as it could be

The school has not made enough progress since the last inspection. The accommodation is very much improved but standards overall are no better and have declined in some subjects. Some of the weaknesses identified in the last report remain. It is only in the last twelve months that there has been a determined effort to get to grips with some of the weaknesses. The quality of teaching is similar to the last inspection. There are some improvements in the management of subjects although the developments are relatively recent.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall pupils achieve **satisfactorily** although the progress they make as they move through the school is erratic. Children in reception make a successful start in learning the basic skills of reading and mathematics but could achieve better in writing. The weakness in writing is a feature throughout the school. Achievement in other subjects varies; it is satisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT) and some work in art and design is of a good standard. However standards in science and religious education are lower than they should be.

Pupils' personal development is **very good**. They are very well behaved, work very hard and maintain a good level of concentration. These features help pupils to learn.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching is satisfactory although it varies between good and unsatisfactory. The weaknesses in teaching impact on how well pupils achieve and how rapidly they make progress. Marking does not always help pupils as much as it should.

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall, but with some significant features that are very good. There are some very good opportunities for pupils to take part in a number of activities involving local businesses. This makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. There are good links with the community and pupils particularly benefit from the very good links with the local secondary schools.

The school provides a good level of care and support. Pupils' personal development is particularly well monitored.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Management and leadership are **satisfactory** overall but there are weaknesses in aspects of leadership. There has not been enough drive and determination in seeking improvements since the last inspection, although over the past twelve months there has been a greater sense of purpose and direction. Some potentially effective management procedures are being put in place, although it is too early to judge the impact of some of the initiatives. Not enough use has been made of test results to monitor how well pupils are doing and this has meant that plans to improve have not focused enough on raising standards.

Governance is satisfactory. There have been some recent changes in the governing body and governors share a sense of purpose, although they do not have sufficient knowledge of the school's weaknesses.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are positive about the school. They receive good information but some parents are concerned that there is no clear routine for how much homework pupils are given. The school is currently addressing this. Pupils are very positive about their lessons; they have a great deal of confidence in their teachers and feel they are helped to learn as much as possible.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the standards of achievement in writing
- Raise the standards of achievement in science and religious education
- Improve strategic planning through better use of performance information and having higher aspirations for pupils
- Improve the quality of marking of pupils' work

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Overall the standards achieved are broadly in line with the national average although there is some variation between different subjects. For the most part, pupils are now achieving satisfactorily but in the last two years some could have achieved more.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in reception make a good start in mathematics, reading and personal and social development
- Pupils could do better in writing
- Standards in science and religious education are too low
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- Some work in art and design is above expectations

#### Commentary

1. There is no significant difference over time between the performance of boys or girls although there is some variation year on year.

#### Reception Year

2. During their time in reception children make a good start on many aspects of learning, doing particularly well in reading and mathematics. They also do well in their personal and social development. However, they do not do as well as they could in learning early writing skills, mainly because they do not have enough opportunities for writing. By the time they start year 1 the majority of children reach, or surpass, the levels expected in reading and mathematics but are not doing as well in writing.

#### Years 1 and 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (17.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.3 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.0 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Results in the most recent national tests were below the national average. Over the past three years results have been quite erratic varying from well above to well below the national average.
4. The standards seen in the inspection are a little better than the most recent results would suggest. Pupils in years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily and in year 2 are attaining average standards in reading and mathematics. Achievement in writing is not as good and the standards achieved in year 2 are below average.
5. Standards in other subjects vary; in science standards are below average, in information and communication technology (ICT) standards are in line with the national expectations. Standards in RE are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. There was too little evidence to judge the standards attained in other subjects.



## Years 3 to 6

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.5 (27.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.1 (26.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.6 (27.9)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

6. In the past three years the results in national tests at the end of year 6 have varied from well below to in line with the national average. The overall trend in the results, in terms of improvement, is below the national average. The most recent results (2003) were the lowest for some time. Part of the explanation for this is that this particular group of pupils had a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. It is also the case, however, that in some previous years pupils in years 3 to 6 could have achieved more.
7. The current group of year 6 is attaining higher standards than the previous year 6 group. In reading and mathematics, standards overall are broadly in line with the national average. Standards in writing are below the national average.
8. The level of achievement varies as pupils move through the school. For instance, the current year 6 pupils did not make as much progress as expected in year 4 and the current year 3 pupils are not doing as well as they could.
9. Standards in science are below average, in ICT standards are average and there is some art work that is above expectations. In RE, standards are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.
10. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language perform similarly to other pupils.
11. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs do well. They benefit from well-targeted support in lessons and make good progress against their learning targets.

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

This is a strong feature of the school. Pupils at all stages are very positive about school; they work extremely hard and are very keen to succeed.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Throughout the school children are eager to contribute to lessons and are very attentive
- Older pupils take responsibility seriously
- Year 6 pupils are very sensitive to cultural differences; they are mature and sensible
- Children are very well behaved
- Pupils are not aware of their learning targets

### **Commentary**

12. Pupils in all year groups are very well behaved in lessons and when they move around the school.

13. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. They are enthusiastic about their work and happy to talk about it with adults, they make a significant contribution to the success of lessons; they are very quick to put up their hands to answer questions. The oldest pupils are very sensible and mature. They take their responsibilities around the school very seriously and enjoy being fully involved in school life. They have particularly mature and positive attitudes to cultural differences. For instance, year 6 pupils spoke very positively about people from different backgrounds and how they may be the 'same inside' although different on the outside.
14. The school is currently reviewing the use of learning targets. Pupils know that they have specific learning targets but are not yet always clear about what they are. This diminishes the impact of the targets in motivating pupils and means they are not as involved as they might be in recording how well they are progressing.
15. Overall, pupils respond very positively to what the school does to help them to mature (see paragraphs 76 – 78).

### Attendance

16. Attendance is above the national average and there is no problem with punctuality.

#### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence	
School data	4.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

### Teaching and learning

Teaching overall is satisfactory.

#### Main strengths and weakness

- Lessons are well planned
- There are occasions when teachers' expectations are too low
- Teaching assistants support pupils with special needs well; in some lessons the assistants could be more involved
- Specialist teaching in years 5 and 6 is beneficial
- Teachers manage behaviour very well; lessons are characterised by constructive relationships
- Teachers make sure that all pupils are fully included in lessons
- Marking is unhelpful and pupils do not know their learning targets

#### Commentary

17. Lessons are generally well planned and teachers take account of the range of ability. The use of national guidance for planning is helping to give lessons a good sense of purpose. The work pupils do is generally at the right level although there are occasions when the work is too easy and they do not learn as much as they could. This is often the case with higher attaining pupils.
18. The impact of the teaching assistants is variable. In the most successful lessons they are used very well, they are fully involved right from the start supporting particular children by reinforcing

key teaching points. In too many lessons, however, they do not contribute to lesson introductions and only begin to make an impact in the middle of the lesson when they work with groups of pupils.

19. In years 5 and 6 teachers use their own particular teaching strengths. This improves the quality of lessons, particularly in ICT and aspects of personal, health and social education (PHSE). The occasional use of specialist teachers from local secondary schools is also very beneficial, particularly in teaching aspects of science.
20. Throughout the school, relationships in lessons are constructive and harmonious. Pupils feel secure and have confidence in their teachers. Pupils' very good behaviour in lessons helps them to learn; teachers manage any misbehaviour constructively and positively. There is a good inclusive atmosphere throughout the school; this is evident in the smooth manner in which visiting children from the local special school fit into lessons very well.
21. Most work is marked but teachers seldom make comments about how well pupils have done. Teachers are beginning to set targets for pupils although pupils themselves are not aware of what their targets are. Because pupils do not know their targets and marking makes no reference to them, they are left in the dark about how they are doing and what they need to do to get better.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	6	13	2	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

**The curriculum**

The school provides an overall satisfactory curriculum but there are some significant strengths.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very good range of enrichment activities
- There is a well targeted programme to support pupils with special educational needs
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal development (see paragraphs 76 - 78)
- There is not enough RE and science taught

**Commentary**

22. The school meets the needs of the great majority of pupils and offers a reasonably balanced range of activities. Learning is made more interesting through the various activities and visits arranged through the school's links with business. The range of visits is wide and includes Haydock Park racecourse, the local council offices and local environmental projects. These visits broaden pupils' experiences and make a significant contribution to their personal development.
23. Pupils who find learning difficult are well supported. Teaching assistants help them to get the most from lessons and the specific programmes of work designed for them are also very helpful; these often make it possible for pupils to reach their learning targets.
24. Whilst lessons are often well planned, there are gaps in the curriculum in some year groups. The curriculum planning for both science and RE is not followed consistently across the school. This results in pupils not learning as much as they should and so standards are not as high as they could be.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school takes good care of its pupils. Achievement and personal development are monitored satisfactorily. The school involves pupils well in its work.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Each pupil has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school
- There are good health and safety and child protection procedures but the school does not follow up unexplained absences as rapidly as it could
- Pupils are successfully involved in school life
- Pupils' personal development is monitored carefully

### **Commentary**

25. The very good relationships between pupils and with all adults are a strong feature of the school's good care for pupils. The school takes effective steps to provide pupils with a clean, safe and secure environment in which they are happy and can learn. Staff are suitably trained in child protection issues.
26. Personal development is enhanced by involvement in the healthy schools initiatives and by careful tracking of behaviour. Pupils are rewarded for their efforts and success. They feel fully involved in school life through, for instance, involvement in environmental work and in devising class and school rules. A few pupils are more actively involved by taking responsibility through representing others on Eco committees and acting as trained play leaders for younger children.

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

The school's partnership with parents is good. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are well supported in making a good contribution to their children's learning although some remain unsure about homework
- Pupils benefit from the school's very good links, and its involvement, with other schools and colleges

### **Commentary**

27. The school provides parents with a good range of relevant information that enables them to work closely with staff for the benefit of all pupils. They also receive appropriate information about how well their children are progressing. The recently introduced planner is a particularly well used means of day to day communication. Almost all parents hold positive views of the school's work but many want clearer information about homework. The school has just begun to address this by providing more information about what is expected. The headteacher reports a very good turnout to special events and a significant amount of money raised by parents and friends of the school towards extra resources and activities for pupils. Parents are very involved in supporting their children with reading.
28. The school makes very good use of opportunities to reach out into the community and so enhance the curriculum and pupils' experiences. Links with other schools provide pupils with opportunities to meet others of their age, for instance, in sporting competitions. There are well-structured procedures for pupils transferring to secondary education. The school's involvement with colleges, for instance in training new teachers and childcare students, brings extra help in class.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

There are **weaknesses** in the school's leadership. The management and governance of the school are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has not been enough focus on maintaining or raising standards of achievement and the pace of improvement has been too slow in some key areas
- There are signs of some improvements in management, although the impact is not yet evident in some subjects
- The school places a strong emphasis on creating a good climate for learning

### Commentary

29. There has not been enough drive and determination by the headteacher in seeking improvements in standards since the last inspection. Overall the pace of improvement has been too slow due to weak strategic planning. Over the past twelve months there has been a greater sense of purpose and direction. The school successfully creates a good climate for learning in which pupils flourish personally, but the same attention has not been given to ensuring that all achieve their maximum academically.
30. Some improved procedures have been put in place although it is too early to judge the impact of some of the initiatives. These initiatives are leading to some improvements in the way subjects are managed, particularly mathematics and to a lesser extent in English. Some subject managers however, still do not have a clear view of how well their subjects are taught or how well pupils achieve across the school.
31. Senior managers are just starting to use test results to check up on how well pupils are doing, and using the information to set sufficiently challenging targets for pupils. There is a legacy of low expectations by some teachers that is now beginning to be challenged.
32. The way that support staff are used is helping to ensure that pupils with special needs benefit from lessons. They are effectively deployed and generally have a clear picture of what pupils' learning targets are and what they need to learn.
33. The governing body generally fulfils its responsibilities. Governors have some understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and understand that the standards need to improve in some areas. The governors, working through the chair, have been instrumental in bringing about the renewed sense of purpose within the school.

### Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£491789.00	Balance from previous year	£22552
Total expenditure	£498105.00	Balance carried forward to the next	£17262
Expenditure per pupil	£2663.66		

34. There are appropriate procedures for ensuring sound financial management.

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

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

Overall provision for the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

35. During the inspection the reception teacher, who is also the Foundation Stage co-ordinator, was absent and the class was being taught by a supply teacher. The nursery nurse who normally works with the class was also absent and a classroom assistant from another local school had come in to support the temporary teacher. A reception teacher who has an advisory role in the LEA was also supporting planning and teaching for the class. In view of these temporary arrangements, judgements are based partly on observations, but also on scrutiny of records of progress and the work of children currently in the reception class and at the start of year 1. Since the last inspection, provision for physical development has improved and the reception children now have access to an outside play area. There are more opportunities for children to write independently, but there is still work to be done in this area.
36. Achievement is satisfactory overall in communication, literacy and language; most children attain the expected levels at the end of the reception year, but few go beyond this. In mathematics and personal, social and emotional development, children achieve well. Almost all achieve at least expected standards at the end of the reception year, and in numeracy some higher attainers are working in the early stages of the national curriculum.

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

- Children have good personal and social skills and are developing good attitudes to learning
- Children get a good start in basic skills in numeracy
- Reading and speaking and listening skills develop well, but they do not achieve as much as they should in writing
- Learning is supported well through a good range of practical activities

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

37. Good relationships and well-established routines help children to develop confidence as learners. They become independent in choosing and organising activities for themselves. The majority of children listen attentively during class discussions and are eager to contribute their ideas and observations. They work well together and usually share equipment amicably, for example, when working in the sand tray or using construction equipment. Most work well as part of a group; this was evident as children used wooden blocks to make beds for the 'three bears' and talked together about the best type to use for each size of bear.

#### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

38. Good attention is paid to extending children's skills in speaking and listening. Almost all show good understanding of questions and instructions and respond appropriately. Many children are eager to offer comments and responses when they listen to stories. They generally speak clearly and a minority uses complex sentences and have a wide vocabulary. When re-enacting elements of the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', some children adapted the tone of their voices appropriately to represent different characters.
39. Children get a good start in early skills in literacy. Most have a good understanding of books and know that the print tells the story. They recognise some commonly used words and have good knowledge of the sounds at the beginning and end of words. When they start reception, many children represent their ideas through making marks or writing a series of letters. They make progress and the majority of children write their names independently. Most average and higher

attaining children are writing short recognisable sentences at the end of the reception year. Few go beyond this, however, and higher attainers in particular do not achieve as well as they should given their good skills when they start school.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

40. Well focused teaching and a good range of practical activities ensure that children have a good base of skills in mathematics, particularly in numeracy. Most children learn to count and match objects reliably up to 10 and higher attainers know about numbers up to 20. They begin to understand addition and subtraction through practical experiences. During the inspection, a group worked well on organising objects in different ways to make a total of five or six. Well-focused questions and explanations from the classroom assistant helped the children to understand the different number combinations that could be used. Most children show good understanding of mathematical terms such as 'more' and 'less'; well organised activities, using, for example, play dough and construction equipment, encourage them to use these terms accurately.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

41. No direct teaching was seen in these areas and evidence was too limited to judge how well children achieve. A range of activities was well planned to support learning early elements of science and technology. Children were making porridge and observing the changes that took place. Making finger puppets helped to support early learning in cutting and shaping materials. Children's co-ordination and control in fine movements is extended through activities such as drawing and shaping playdough. Little use was made of the outside play area, but the few children who were using scooters and pushing prams showed good control and awareness of space and of others.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory overall
- Standards are broadly average in speaking and listening and reading but are below average in writing
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress are providing some helpful information but this needs to be used more rigorously
- Not enough use is made of pupils' literacy skills in subjects across the curriculum

#### **Commentary**

42. Provision has improved since the last inspection. Resources are now satisfactory and the quantity and quality of reading books are good for most year groups. The range of books in the library is limited, but the school has recognised this as an area for improvement. Teaching has improved and there are better arrangements for assessment, but there is still work to be done to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should.

43. Most pupils listen carefully to adults and each other and show understanding of the main points of a discussion. Pupils in year 2 explain their ideas clearly and make appropriate responses to the teacher's questions. Older pupils extend their vocabulary and most adapt talk appropriately to

different contexts. Year 6 pupils listen carefully to others and question and explain their opinions during a discussion. Most pupils use a range of vocabulary and expression to make what they say interesting and they understand that they may need to change the way they talk to suit different occasions.

44. Pupils are generally enthusiastic readers and their skills develop appropriately as they move through the school. Good use is made of a range of 'big books' to teach reading skills to pupils in years 1 and 2, supported by a structured programme for learning letter sounds and word building. Most year 2 pupils read accurately and with reasonable understanding. They begin to understand the characteristics of non-fiction books and know, for example, that the contents page will tell them which section of the book to look at for specific information. Older pupils widen their range of reading and develop preferences for particular types of books and authors. Year 6 pupils enjoy a variety of authors, including Roald Dahl, Anthony Horowitz and Tolkien.
45. Most pupils attain average standards in writing but few reach higher levels. Year 2 pupils write short accounts, stories and instructions and are learning to use basic punctuation. Spelling of commonly used words is weak for many pupils and this is an area that the school has targeted for improvement. Pupils' progress in writing in years 3 to 6 is varied. Work in year 3 shows limited improvement on that of year 2 and for some pupils is of the same quality and is poorly presented. There are indications of improvement in year 4, with some focused teaching exploring how to make written work interesting and well structured. The range of written work has been extended recently and year 6 pupils have produced some well-structured arguments on the pros and cons of homework. Pupils are learning to introduce a range of vocabulary for effect and to vary sentence structure to engage the reader's interest. Handwriting is usually legible, but not always consistently joined, and this is also an area targeted for improvement.
46. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In most lessons, teachers make effective use of resources to teach specific skills and to give pupils a clear structure for follow-up tasks. Expectations of what pupils should achieve are too varied, but there are indications that these are beginning to rise in some year groups. Marking is weak and pupils are rarely given clear indications of how to improve or whether they are achieving their targets.
47. A range of assessment systems is in place but the school is not making best use of the information generated. Standardised tests are used well to identify pupils who may need extra support and the structured programmes that are put in place, for example, to teach letter sounds and word-building skills, are usually effective in helping these children to make up lost ground. For average and higher attaining pupils, there is not enough analysis of assessment information to check that they are making progress at a reasonable rate. This is resulting in some pupils not reaching the standards that they should in some year groups.
48. The subject is satisfactorily managed which is an improvement on the last inspection.

## **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

49. Year 2 pupils begin to make satisfactory use of their skills in subjects such as science, for example, writing simple explanations and labelling diagrams, and in religious education, when they re-tell the Christmas story. Occasionally the activities they are given are too low-level, for example where they sequence a series of pictures rather than writing an explanation of what they have learned. For older pupils, the use of literacy skills in subjects such as science and geography is very limited. An over-use of worksheets or putting missing words in sentences inhibits opportunities for pupils to think about how to organise and present information. There is very little evidence of work based on independent research using a range of sources such as reference books, the Internet and CD Roms.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving
- There is some good teaching but overall the quality varies too much
- The rate of progress made by pupils is erratic
- Some good management systems have recently been put in place

## Commentary

50. Results in mathematics have been variable in the last three years. Results at the end of year 2 have ranged from above to below the national average. Results in year 6 have been consistently below the national average. The standards during the inspection indicate some improvements; the current year 2 and 6 pupils are attaining standards in line with the average; some year 6 pupils are attaining particularly well. There is however some continuing variation between year groups because the quality of teaching is making a difference to how well children achieve. Test results show, for example, that current year 6 pupils did not make as much progress as expected in year 4 and, similarly, the work of the current year 3 pupils would indicate that some are not moving on as fast as they could.
51. Children in year 2 have a sound grasp of basic number. They count accurately, have some grasp of addition and subtraction and a basic understanding of simple multiplication. They are aware of number patterns such as odd and even numbers. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of how numbers work, for instance, they understand the relationship between fraction, decimals and percentages. They use the four operations successfully to solve problems and are well prepared to move on to the next stage of education.
52. Lessons are generally well planned; the use of national guidance is beneficial and is ensuring that learning is moving on. When the plans are not followed, some lessons lack focus and children do not make the progress they should. In the more successful lessons teaching assistants are well used to support a specific group of pupils. They are fully involved right from the start, reinforcing key teaching points and making sure that all children participate fully. They are also very well briefed by the teacher. In other lessons the teaching assistants are not sufficiently involved; they simply listen to the teachers' explanations and only begin to make an impact in the middle part of the lesson.
53. The subject is beginning to benefit from improved management. One reason for the variation in standards since the last inspection is that there has not been enough regular checking up on teaching and not enough use of information about how well pupils have been doing. This is now being rectified; there are new systems in place to check on pupils' progress and steps are being taken to tackle weaker teaching.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

54. The inspection found limited evidence of mathematics being used across the curriculum. Some data handling skills were being used with the oldest pupils in managing responses to questionnaires. Overall however, there was very limited evidence of numeracy skills in subjects such as science and geography.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are too low
- The quality of teaching is variable
- Aspects of the curriculum are not adequately covered
- Test results are not analysed rigorously enough to highlight weaknesses and plan for improvements

## Commentary

55. Standards in science are below average and there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection. Recent initiatives by the newly appointed co-ordinator indicate that significant developments have the potential to improve provision and raise standards. However, monitoring and evaluation needs a sharper focus to ensure sufficient challenge for the more able pupils and to support pupils who are failing to attain expected levels.
56. Whilst pupils can recall some aspects of the science they have been taught, their knowledge is not secure. In discussions, year 6 had to be prompted to remember key information and they used very limited scientific vocabulary when talking about aspects of their work. For instance they could not talk with any detail about the key ideas behind 'fair testing' and struggled to recall any recent investigations they had done. Most year 6 pupils were unable to apply their understanding of science to everyday situations.
57. Discussion with pupils and observation of lessons show that pupils are generally interested in the subject and are keen to increase their knowledge and understanding of science. In the lessons pupils listened very attentively to instructions and were generally well behaved. Pupils are willing to learn, are almost always co-operative and in general spend the majority of their time on task in lessons. However, due to other weaknesses in the subject, pupils' good attitudes are not resulting in good learning. Much of pupils' work is recorded on worksheets and in most cases the introductions and conclusions for the experiments are identical. The opportunities for pupils to develop their own understanding of science are limited. Work in pupils' books indicates that teachers' expectations in terms of encouraging independent investigations, and helping pupils to use their scientific knowledge to predict and evaluate their work, are limited. Marking is poor and there is insufficient use of ICT to support learning in science. Consequently pupils' skills in recording and presenting their findings in a variety of forms are not developing in a systematic and progressive way.
58. Although lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory and one was good, pupils' work shows that many aspects of teaching are unsatisfactory. Teachers' expectations are too low and pupils are not challenged to think for themselves. Teachers do not use teaching strategies that promote skills of scientific investigation such as predicting, evaluating and formulating hypotheses on the basis of their findings. Pupils are not exposed to a variety of graphical techniques like bar graphs and pie charts to present their scientific findings. The only good teaching observed was planned and led by a visiting teacher from the neighboring secondary school. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to think for themselves and they overuse worksheets. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped and there is a need to establish an agreed marking strategy.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some good use of resources although the ICT suite is too small for teaching a whole class
- Teaching is satisfactory overall although some is good

## Commentary

59. By the time pupils leave the school they have successfully developed the expected range of skills in using ICT. For the most part, pupils are confident and competent in making use of computers and are familiar with a range of programs.
60. The school's resources vary in quality. There are, for instance, a good number of programmable toys (roamers) for the younger children and the control panel of the 'roamers' is replicated on a computer program in the ICT suite. This enables younger pupils to have a good deal of hands-on experience both inside and outside the ICT suite. The decision to employ an ICT technician has been beneficial. The technician provides teachers with a knowledgeable assistant who helps to support pupils in lessons and who is also capable of taking a leading role in providing pupils with clear explanations and talking them through new programs.
61. Despite being in a new building, the ICT suite is very cramped and barely adequate for a whole class. This does impact on the quality of lessons occasionally where pupils do not have sufficient space to work. The school is currently planning to refurbish the suite to provide more working space and also exploring the possibility of making ICT more accessible in the classrooms.
62. Despite the restrictions imposed by the size of the suite, the teaching is often good. The technician helps to raise the quality of some teaching and the use of specialist teaching in years 5 and 6 is also helpful in ensuring that lessons are successful. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good; this enables them to provide clear explanations and to work with the programs in a confident manner, making sure that the lessons move on at a good rate. Teaching is also effective in emphasising key vocabulary. In some lessons, an example was a good lesson with year 1, teaching ensures that ICT makes a contribution to learning in other subjects, in this instance, literacy.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. There is satisfactory use of ICT across the curriculum. There is some use of ICT to support work in other subjects. Art programs are used to explore particular techniques; the use of digital photography was particularly impressive in art work with year 5. ICT supports some aspects of numeracy, particularly in data handling and in spreadsheets, and word processing is helping some aspects of literacy. There is limited evidence of ICT making an impact on other subjects.

## HUMANITIES

There were no **religious education** lessons observed so there is no overall evaluation of the provision. However, there was enough evidence to enable a judgment about standards.

Not enough evidence was gathered to make a judgment about standards in **geography and history**. Only one lesson was seen in geography, and none in history.

## Religious Education

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no significant improvement since the last inspection; standards remain too low
- Pupils do not have sufficient access to a broadly based religious education
- The school makes good use of its strong links with the local clergy
- Pupils' knowledge about the diversity of faith and culture in British society is limited

## **Commentary**

64. The school uses the locally agreed syllabus for planning but fails to meet all the requirements. There is little attempt to monitor coverage effectively and carry out a systematic evaluation of standards.
65. There is no evidence of an action plan resulting from the previous inspection. Individual teachers have tried things in their own classes and a part time specialist teacher has made a valiant contribution to teaching in years 5 and 6. However, there is no coherent curriculum to help pupils to learn about and to learn from, world religions. The subject manager is aware that RE is not improving as well as it should.
66. Year 2 pupils are aware of the importance of the Church and the Bible for Christians but most of them are unable to accurately identify religious artifacts or name any other places of worship or special books. Most year 6 pupils recall with interest what they learnt from assemblies by a visiting member of the local clergy but had difficulty in remembering what they had learnt in their RE lessons. When asked about the places of worship and names of festivals the majority of them were uncertain and guessed wrongly. Most were able to connect mosque, Ramadan and Muhammad with Islam but knew little about other festivals or faiths. One year 6 pupil who was able to correctly answer most questions added that he was able to do so as a result of watching TV programmes at home.
67. The very good community links established with local clergy help to broaden pupils' experiences. For example, visitors come into assembly regularly to give presentations and involve pupils in discussions. This is complemented by well-organised visits to the Mosque, the Jewish Museum and churches. The visit to the Mosque gave the pupils a valuable insight into Islam and the Muslim way of life. However, the opportunities for pupils to study different religions and their cultures are limited and do not provide them with sufficient understanding of life in multicultural, multi-faith Britain.

## **Geography**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is well planned
- There is good use of the locality
- Key subject skills are taught effectively

## **Commentary**

68. A number of visits to local places of interest contribute to the quality of provision in geography and are used to extend geographical skills, including map reading. Pupils plan routes using compass directions, use a range of maps with different scales and draw their own maps using a key.
69. There is some good work based on a study of a developing country. Pupils are encouraged to find out about a completely different environment, but at the same time to think carefully about their own, through making comparisons between their own locality and that of St Lucia. Mapping skills are also extended through the use of aerial photographs.
70. In the one lesson seen, year 4 pupils used atlases effectively and interpreted the key to identify tropical regions with wet and dry climate on the map. Pupils' work and teachers' planning, in addition to discussions with pupils, indicate that the subject is covered well.

## History

71. There were no opportunities to observe history teaching during the inspection. The scrutiny of pupils' work and subject documentation and discussions with staff and pupils support the judgments made.
72. In years 1 and 2 pupils have opportunities to observe and handle household artifacts, such as old flat irons. They demonstrate a developing understanding of the passage of time and the differences between past and present. They study how people lived long ago and make comparisons with the present day, making use of historical evidence.
73. By the end of year 6, pupils know that the past can be divided into different periods of time. They use time-lines to reinforce their understanding of chronology. Years 5 and 6 pupils recently completed a topic on World War Two. This involved them learning about the main events in the period, although the primary focus was on social change. The school makes very effective use of the links within the community by inviting people who can share their personal experiences about the Second World War with pupils. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop high-quality written work. There is a lack of depth in some of the work seen, with dependence on worksheets or on answering sets of questions relating to information sheets. As a result, history makes a limited contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were seen in any aspect of the creative arts. It is not possible to evaluate the overall quality of provision in **art and design, design and technology, music** or **physical education**. There was, however, evidence of some above average work in art.

### Art and design

74. Scrutiny of work on display shows that pupils learn to use a good range of techniques and study art from a variety of sources. Some good work on portraiture by year 2 pupils was based on study of Picasso using collage, pastels and crayons to create texture and form.
75. On the same theme, year 5 pupils used the work of Andy Warhol as the basis of self-portraits, making effective use of the digital camera and colour change for impact. Work based on a study of Gaudi's buildings involved pupils in creating patterns to convey curves, observational pencil drawings and making collage mosaics.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The overall provision for personal, social and health education is **very good**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- This is a high priority throughout the school
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities
- Links with business give pupils a wider view of the world

### Commentary

76. All staff give a good deal of attention to this aspect of pupils' learning. In lessons and around the school, staff reinforce good behaviour encouraging pupils to work and play together harmoniously. Involvement in the healthy school initiative is also very helpful in preparing children to eat healthily and have a rounded approach to staying fit. The Eco school initiative also promotes a sense of responsibility to the world through work on the environment.

77. The two above initiatives supplement the work the school does in giving pupils real responsibilities and encouraging them to become involved with the daily life of the school. Through, for example, acting as play leaders and taking part in litter hunts, pupils are actively seeking to make an impact on how the school operates.
78. The very well developed school business links is also very helpful in giving pupils a wide view of the world. The visits to various enterprises extend their grasp of the world of work as well as introducing them to a wide range of jobs and occupations.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

