

INSPECTION REPORT

ENGLISH MARTYRS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119605

Headteacher: Mr A Dunn

Lead inspector: Mr D Speakman

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th February 2004

Inspection number: 256072

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 Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	227
School address:	Sizer Street Preston Lancashire
Postcode:	PR1 7DR
Telephone number:	01772 556092
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Gillespie
Date of previous inspection:	9 th -13 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average sized voluntary aided Catholic primary school serves the local area and one much wider than the immediate city centre vicinity. The great majority of pupils come from areas that experience significant social deprivation. This means that the school's intake is generally socio-economically well below average. Few pupils join or leave during the school year, although the school has experienced high levels of pupil movement in the past. About 90 percent of the pupils are White–British with other pupils coming from a limited range of other ethnic backgrounds. The school reports a recent increase in the number of pupils of other ethnic backgrounds joining the school. Fourteen pupils speak English as an additional language and are supported through external funding. Eleven of them are at an early stage of English acquisition. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above average and six pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Special educational needs include moderate and specific learning difficulties; social, emotional and behavioural problems; speech and communication and hearing; and visual or physical disabilities. The attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. As part of the school's work towards gaining the Healthy Schools Award, it has been granted the Physical Activities in Education Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20086	Mr D Speakman	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), personal, social and health education (PSHE), English as an additional language.
1329	Mr W Twiss	Lay inspector	
8316	Mrs J O'Hare	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, music, physical education (PE).
12060	Mrs P Peaker	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school that provides a good quality of education and gives good value for money. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average but because of good teaching, high levels of inclusion and a good ethos, pupils leave the school with average standards in mathematics and science and in most other subjects. Standards in English are below average, but in art and design, they are above average.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The quality of teaching is good at all stages of the school.
- As a result of good provision in the nursery and reception, children have a good start to their education.
- Standards in English are below average and in art and design they are above average.
- All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and those at different levels of attainment, achieve well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and teaching assistants support their good progress well.
- The leadership of the headteacher is good and is fundamental to the school's drive to improve. He is supported effectively by the deputy headteacher and other staff with leadership responsibility. The governors make a good contribution to the school's development.
- Procedures for whole school tracking of pupils' achievement are under development but do not yet give a sufficiently clear picture of pupils' progress throughout the school.
- The curriculum is of a good quality and benefits from good levels of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in the arts and sports. Resources for information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.
- The school looks after its pupils well and this reflects its caring ethos. High levels of inclusion are evident in the work of the school.
- Links with parents are good and the school has very productive contact with the community.

The level of improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The school was inspected in 1998 and since then standards have been maintained in most subjects. In English standards have declined although pupils' attainment on entry is now lower. They are much better in art and design. The quality of teaching has improved. Development of whole-school assessment procedures and their use has been insufficient. The curriculum is much improved and the quality of leadership is now good, an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has responded well to issues raised in the previous inspection and these have been fully addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

E denotes that the school ranked in the lowest 5% nationally*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Achievement is good. Pupils start in the Foundation Stage with well below average attainment. Children achieve well and they meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of learning, except in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. In Years 1 and 2 all pupils achieve satisfactorily and attainment remains below average in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2. However, they are achieving well in developing good learning skills, which then support their future effective learning. Standards in all other subjects are in line with those nationally expected except in art and design, where they are above average. Achievement is good in Years 3 to 6 and standards are average in mathematics

and science and in most other subjects. Standards in English remain below average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In art and design standards remain above average.

Pupils' personal qualities are satisfactory overall. Pupils' attitudes towards school and learning and their behaviour are satisfactory. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Attendance is good and punctuality satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good at all stages of the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to plan challenging and interesting activities based on sound day-to-day assessment data. As a result teaching meets all pupils' needs and encourages good levels of confidence in their own ability to tackle the work. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and are effective in dealing with occasional inappropriate behaviour. However, this sometimes slows the pace of lessons, such as in Years 1 and 2 where a significant proportion of pupils' learning skills are underdeveloped and here learning is satisfactory. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good; teaching assistants provide valuable support and are effective.

The curriculum is good. The school provides a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that has many areas of strength. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. There is a good level of teachers and a very good number of teaching assistants. Resources are good in the Foundation Stage, but they are unsatisfactory for ICT. The school shows good levels of care for its pupils and there is a good and supportive relationship between the school and its parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is good. He has a clear vision of the needs of the school which is based on a good knowledge of the school. Plans for school improvement are well thought out and appropriate to the school's needs. He is effectively supported in this work by the deputy headteacher and other staff with leadership responsibility. The governors provide good levels of challenge and support and contribute well to the work of the school. Statutory requirements are fully met. Procedures for performance management and professional development of staff are good, and are effective in identifying the school needs and moving it forward at a sound pace. Assessment systems for monitoring pupils' achievements as they move through the school are under development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school. They are pleased with the school's work. The parents like the caring nature of the school and feel that the staff work hard to help their children to achieve well. They feel that the school responds positively to their concerns and encourages them to help in school and with homework. The parents appreciate being able to approach staff informally at the start and end of the school day. The inspection team agrees with them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise standards in English.
- Improve the tracking of pupils' progress throughout Years 1 to 6.
- Improve the resources for information and communication technology.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are average in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, but below average in English. Achievement in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good; in Years 1 and 2 it is satisfactory. All groups of pupils, regardless of gender, race or ability, achieve equally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and achieve well.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily, whilst those in Years 3 to 6 achieve well. All groups of pupils, regardless of gender, race or ability, achieve equally.
- Standards in English remain below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. In mathematics and science, standards are below average at the end of Year 2, but average at the end of Year 6.
- Due to a very good level of improvement since the previous inspection, standards in art and design are above average.

Commentary

1. Children start school with well below average skills, and although they achieve well in the Foundation Stage because of good teaching, standards are still below the expected levels overall, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, by the end of reception.
2. In the last three years results for pupils at the end of Year 6 in the National Curriculum tests have improved in English, mathematics and science at a pace better than the national trend of improvement. This is good, especially as the profile of the school is changing with increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language. For this reason, the pace of improvement has been faster in mathematics and science than in English because most of the barriers to achievement are language based. Overall achievement is good, although, due to underdeveloped learning skills, it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils because teachers are aware of their learning needs and ensure that they develop the necessary vocabulary to understand what is being taught. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in literacy and mathematics where grouping arrangements and the good support from teaching assistants in class help them to learn important basic skills. They make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.1 (15.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.3 (15.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.9 (24.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.6 (25.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.5 (27.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in English in Years 2 and 6 are below average. However, bearing in mind the low starting point when pupils enter Year 1 and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, their achievement is satisfactory. Attainment in reading is below average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils develop a satisfactory basic sight vocabulary and know how to work out unfamiliar words. Only higher attaining pupils develop higher order reading skills such as using meaning to help them read accurately. By Year 6 pupils read with expression, using punctuation as a guide. Speaking and listening skills remain below average because many pupils lack confidence to speak with a degree of fluency in front of the class. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary and in some cases are only able to offer simple sentences. Standards in writing are below average throughout the school. Although the writing of higher attaining pupils is clear and legible, well structured and generally grammatical, there is a high proportion of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, whose writing is of a lower than nationally expected quality for their age in terms of punctuation, spelling and structure. Their writing does, however, convey meaning satisfactorily.
- In mathematics, standards at the end of Year 2 are below average. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well and standards are average at the end of Year 6. Although Year 2 pupils have a secure understanding of number, too few show sufficient competence in solving problems. By Year 6, most have learned to use their mathematical skills competently, and this helps them work at levels nationally expected for their age. In science pupils have developed secure experimental and investigative skills and sufficient knowledge and understanding of fair testing. This has a positive impact on the acquisition of skills and knowledge in other aspects of the science curriculum. In both mathematics and science, pupils' limited literacy skills affect their ability to interpret and answer questions accurately.
- From a very early age, pupils use computers frequently and develop satisfactory basic computer skills. This secure start enables pupils to achieve satisfactorily and maintain average standards in information and communication technology across the school. Standards in art and design are above average. Pupils produce good quality work using a wide range of both two- and three-dimensional techniques. There is good attention to detail and it is clear that pupils at all ages have developed a wide range of good art and design skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Attendance is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and has improved significantly since the school was last inspected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a very inclusive community, free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are enthusiastic and eager to learn; this is very supportive to teaching and learning.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 display satisfactory attitudes and behaviour, but the behaviour of a small minority of pupils disrupts the pace of lessons at times.
- Relationships are generally good and contribute well to pupils' learning.
- The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct and stimulates them to learn, but pupils' response is not consistent throughout the school.
- Pupils generally are willing to take responsibility and they make good gains in personal development.
- Attendance is above the national average and has improved since the previous inspection.

Commentary

6. No examples of any oppressive behaviour, bullying, racism or sexism were seen during the inspection and all pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. The very strong focus on inclusive education for all pupils is seen in the way it helps them to understand how to live in a community, where everyone has equal opportunities.
7. The children in the Foundation Stage display a lively interest and concentration in activities. Throughout the inspection, their behaviour was very good. They respond particularly well to the opportunities for free choice of activities. The children develop very good relationships with each other, based on the role model that the staff present to them. Children who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs listen attentively and behave very well. They quickly form trusting relationships with adults and other children.
8. Pupils in Year 1 to 6 generally co-operate with their teachers and support staff, but there is a small minority of troubled pupils, throughout the school, who find it difficult to co-operate and to abide by the school rules. When this happens, the progress is slowed because the teacher has to deal with occasional inappropriate behaviour and pupils' achievement is then satisfactory rather than good, despite some imaginative teaching. The policy for behaviour is carefully formed and well understood by pupils and their parents, but not all pupils, especially younger ones, have yet assimilated the codes of behaviour and conduct expected of them by their teachers. While most teachers set high expectations, there are occasions where these are not consistently applied throughout the school. This is where the behaviour of the minority of pupils detracts from the impact of well-planned lessons, slowing the progress of the rest of the class.
9. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils become familiar with their own and other cultures through visits and visitors. Their work in art and design and music contributes considerably to their development. Pupils from different cultures accept each other's differences happily and this is a good foundation for life in a multicultural society. The school fosters in pupils a sense of social responsibility, encouraging them to contribute to charity fund raising activities and understand the need to help others less fortunate than themselves. Year 6 pupils are regularly involved in helping the nursery and the reception children with activities such as during mid-day breaks or walking to the English Martyrs' Church. This is to the benefit of both Year 6 and the Foundation Stage children.
10. Pupils with special educational needs and those with pupils with English as an additional language have positive attitudes to their work, particularly when working with the support staff. They concentrate well on their tasks due to the very good support they receive for work which is well matched to their ability. Those pupils with English as an additional language show good levels of enthusiasm for learning when they are confident with the English language.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
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White – British	155	0	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	1	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

11. The school works with other schools and a variety of agencies, such as the local education authority Inclusion Service, to seek ways to improve the behaviour of the more challenging pupils. The overall commitment of teachers and the very effective support of special educational needs staff all provide a caring atmosphere in the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.9	School data:	0.3
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

12. The school achieves rates of attendance that exceed those seen nationally. Since the previous inspection it has worked tirelessly to improve its attendance monitoring and has succeeded in raising the overall levels of attendance significantly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Good teaching enables pupils to make good gains in their learning and achieve well overall. The curriculum is good and benefits from very good opportunities for enrichment. The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils. The school has good links with parents and other schools, and very good links with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching and learning are good in all subjects where judgements could be made. Assessment is satisfactory and used satisfactorily to plan appropriate tasks for pupils at all levels of attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectations and the very good use of support staff mean that pupils are well supported and achieve well overall.
- Teachers manage their pupils well and, as a result, pupils progressively develop good learning skills as they get older.
- Teaching methods and planned activities match the pupils' learning needs well.
- Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and teaching assistants provide valuable support and are effective in what they do.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use effective methods and resources to overcome obstacles to learning and ensure good achievement.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and is effective in enabling all pupils to achieve well overall. It is good in all subjects in which sufficient observations were made in order to make a reliable judgement. This is an improvement on judgements made at the time of the previous inspection and is due to careful monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and governors and honest feedback that is developmental in its nature. The impact of improved teaching and learning is reflected in rising standards when set against a lower attainment on entry.
14. Although learning and achievement are only satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is good. This is because there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and they have not yet developed satisfactory learning habits and are slow to settle. They find working without the direct supervision of the teacher or a teaching assistant difficult. However, teachers and teaching assistants persevere and overcome these barriers to learning effectively. They are effectively teaching pupils better personal and social skills so that they are able to learn more effectively as they get older. This is seen in pupils' improving attitudes to work as they get older.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7 (15%)	23 (49%)	17 (36%)	0	0	0

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

15. Based on their good subject knowledge and effective planning, teachers give clear explanations in their teaching and provide good guidance so pupils at all levels of attainment and pupils with English as an additional language feel confident in their learning. This has a positive impact on attainment and the progress that they make. All teachers are fully trained in teaching the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is good overall. Staff knowledge and understanding in information and communication technology is good, but the school does not have the resources set up to enable teachers to demonstrate a skill to a whole class. However, their good knowledge and teaching methods enable them to explain clearly, support pupils in small groups and secure sound progress in lessons. In this way teachers effectively find ways to overcome these obstacles to learning.
16. In the Foundation Stage, staff support the children very well. The staff have developed very effective teamwork and, together with the effective co-ordination by the Reception teacher, they have created an effective learning environment in which children have a good start to their education.
17. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils receive effective help from knowledgeable teaching assistants, who are well directed and know what they are expected to teach. Teaching within groups is well focused on pupils' needs and the targets in their individual education plans are clear and realistic. Support staff and teachers explain to pupils in their group what they have to do and often support them through the small steps of learning these pupils require. Consequently, their learning is good. The impact of good teaching is evident in the interest that the pupils show in their work and in their good behaviour.

18. Teaching methods match pupils' learning styles well and effectively support pupils' learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught through the use of meaningful learning resources of a visual nature, which enable them to build secure ideas and learn effectively. This was seen in a Year 2 mathematics lesson when pupils had to rotate a space shuttle towards different planets to support their learning about angle and direction. Pupils are encouraged to use and apply what they have learned and teachers often use practical methods effectively. These are evident in science, where pupils are given good opportunities to investigate and experiment. In mathematics, teachers give pupils good opportunities to solve problems using their knowledge and understanding effectively to consolidate learning. In art and design, pupils are encouraged to learn independently by trying out, evaluating and improving their work.
19. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Their management of pupils is good and teachers consistently apply the school's agreed approach to behaviour management, so pupils become aware of what is expected of them. Teachers recognise and comment on those pupils who are co-operating and others soon follow the example and quickly settle at change of activity, for example.
20. The school strongly promotes educational and social inclusion. It is evident in the way planning gives due recognition to all pupils within classes in all year groups, and well-matched activities to meet their needs. A very good example was observed in a Year 5 literacy lesson, where the pupils enthusiastically worked on composing myths, using a 'writing frame'. The support assistants unobtrusively helped the pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language to engage their imaginations and to produce sensitive and expressive writing. Pupils are given enough knowledge and understanding of specific vocabulary to be used at the beginning of each lesson. They feel confident therefore to contribute. Questions are well targeted to pupils' prior attainment and well directed, so pupils at all levels of ability and from all backgrounds are able to make a contribution.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. The school ensures all pupils have a good quality and range of learning opportunities. It provides them with very good opportunities to widen their experiences through extra-curricular activities and a variety of visitors to the school. The school's accommodation and resources support their learning satisfactorily overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and well balanced to enable the pupils to achieve well overall; there is a strong emphasis on basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good and imaginatively planned to promote good achievement.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The pupils are effectively supported by well-trained learning assistants and they make good progress towards their targets.
- The curriculum is very innovative, inclusive for all pupils and very well enriched through educational visits and visitors. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in the arts and sports.
- There is a good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. All work as a very effective team.
- Resources for information and communication technology are currently unsatisfactory and, as a result, pupils are not able to have sufficient access to computers to develop skills further.

Commentary

21. The curriculum is broad and well balanced and enables all groups of pupils to achieve well in subjects and areas of learning. Statutory requirements are fully met. Curriculum provision has been improved very well since the previous inspection and the school has taken into account a good range of innovations which are appropriate to the specific circumstances of the school. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the key areas of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology and this reflects the school's aims to improve standards. As a result, most pupils achieve well. While there is a strong emphasis on the basic skills, the school ensures that the pupils have full access to the arts, such as music and art and design. This was an issue at the last inspection, which the school has addressed very well, because now, standards in art are above average. The school's determination to maintain breadth and balance in the curriculum is seen in the provision for pupils to participate in art and music activities, in lessons and in visits to galleries and to the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, for example. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is stimulating and planned carefully to provide for their varying needs. It provides the children with many good opportunities to explore and to investigate inside and outside the classroom.
22. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good. The school tries to ensure that pupils' special educational needs are identified as soon as possible so that lessons can be modified to provide for everyone's needs. All pupils on the special educational needs list have individual education plans highlighting their individual needs. These are regularly reviewed to ensure that targets reflect the progress made. All pupils with special educational needs have access to the same curriculum as their peers. This is one of the features that make the school so inclusive.
23. The school is continually reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it is adapted to the needs of all the pupils and to the particular circumstances of its community. As a result, the curriculum is very innovative and rich through the carefully planned educational visits and visitors that encourage the pupils to learn. Visits are made to places linked with curricular topics. Through the enthusiastic approach of the co-ordinator for physical education, the school participates in local inter-school sporting activities, where the pupils learn to take up an interest and to mix socially with others. Through this subject, the co-ordinator is successfully encouraging a healthy lifestyle, which includes diet and exercise. The participation in these activities is high, providing very good opportunities for learning.
24. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a very wide and varied range of activities in sport, music and information and communication technology. This list is not exhaustive. In addition, the school brings in coaches for basketball, netball and football, to which both boys and girls are invited to participate. The school is constantly seeking to widen and to enrich pupils' experiences and learning. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for participation in the wider community.
25. There is a good match of teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum and a very effective group of support assistants in the school. There is a sense of joint purpose that binds all staff in the school and therefore is a key factor in the school's continuing improvement. There is a satisfactory range of resources in most subjects. There is a good range of resources to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs, but those for information and communication technology are currently unsatisfactory.

The accommodation is satisfactory, very well maintained and effectively enhanced by attractive displays that celebrate pupils' efforts and success. The accommodation for the children in the Reception class is limited, but forward planning ensures that they gain maximum benefit from their learning in the space available to them.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with good support and guidance and the involvement of pupils in the work of the school and its development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction is a strong feature and enables the children to settle into school well.
- The care and welfare of the pupils is good.
- The headteacher and staff have a good knowledge of all pupils' needs.

Commentary

26. The staff work effectively with the families and their children as they come to into the school for the first time. Well thought out induction procedures invite the parents and carers into school to get know the staff and its routines. The very youngest children are encouraged to spend a short time in classes before they formally join the school. This is useful in helping them to become familiar with their new surroundings and helps to minimise the traumas that can occur when children leave their parents for the first time. Staff make home visits and through these, they can quickly gain an impression of the likely needs of the children as they start at the nursery. Because of the high quality induction offered the children settle quickly into their lessons.
27. The staff and governors take the care and welfare of the pupils seriously. They are vigilant in their inspections of the premises. They regularly assess potential risks and take prompt action to remedy any shortcomings. Child protection procedures are securely routed in a well-communicated policy and all staff know what they must do if there are any concerns. In lessons, the teachers pay particular attention to safety in lessons such as physical education, when teachers made sure that the pupils worked sensibly and safely. The school has robust procedures for the administration of medicines and for recording and reporting any mishaps. Qualified first aiders are on hand to offer competent support for any minor injuries.
28. The headteacher and his staff know the pupils well and are alert to their individual needs. They make sure that the pupils are aware of the dangers that they may face outside of school and by developing personal, social, health and citizenship lessons, they are encouraging pupils to carefully consider their own safety. The school harnesses the expertise of visitors and the professional support agencies effectively to offer further support and guidance. In classes the teachers and their assistants will often give individual support and thus make sure that all pupils can participate fully in lessons. The staff works hard to provide support for the high number of pupils who need extra help with their learning. They often provide different and interesting work to help these pupils to achieve their best.
29. The care and support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils they work with well. The school's values are well reflected in the way that pupils with special educational needs are given opportunities to take part in all school activities. Their contributions are valued highly and their achievements recognised. The teacher with responsibility for special educational needs keeps very good records of pupils' progress as they move through the school. Teachers and support staff are aware of the specific needs of pupils with English as an additional language and ensure that these are met, both in and out of lessons.
30. The previous inspection found that support and guidance was satisfactory and also identified some good features. The school has improved this aspect of its work and the overall provision is now good.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents express a good level of satisfaction with all that the school provides.
- The school works hard to involve the parents in its work and information provided for the parents is good.
- Links with the community are very good and enrich the pupils' learning.

Commentary

31. The response from the pre-inspection meeting with the parents and their questionnaire shows that they are pleased with the school's work. The parents like the caring nature of the school and feel that the staff work hard to help the pupils to achieve well. They feel that the school responds well to their concerns and encourages them to help in school and with homework. Parents appreciate being able to approach staff informally at the start and end of the school day. The previous inspection judged partnership with the parents to be satisfactory. The school has worked effectively to improve this aspect of its work and it is now good.
32. The headteacher and staff value the contribution that the parents make to their children's learning. Parents like the workshops that the school provides on important matters like literacy and numeracy and find these of value in helping with homework or in class. In the Reception class, for example, parents took the children on a "shape trail" to help them understand this important part of their mathematics work. The parents often accompany the pupils on their visits and trips and they like coming into school to see performances and celebrations.
33. The school provides good quality information for the parents. The pupils have designed an attractive cover for the school brochure, which is informative and well presented. Each term, the teachers send out a short summary of what the children are going to study and a home / school record enables parents and teachers to record pertinent comments about the pupils' achievements in reading. Many parents attend the annual consultation evenings and discuss with the teachers how their children are doing and how they can make even more progress. The governors and staff consider the appeal and timings of meetings for the parents carefully. They have, for example, improved attendance at them by selecting flexible and convenient times and by adding into agenda interesting topics such as information on the teaching of literacy. A loyal band of volunteers supports the work of the Friends Association and through social and fund raising events they buy additional resources for the school.
34. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed by the teacher with responsibility for special educational needs of their child's progress. Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning and strategies to do so are shared with them.
35. The staff work hard to build productive links with the community. There are very strong links with the church and the pupils visit it regularly. The church premises are also used to accommodate courses for the parents. The school holds themed weeks on topics like science and books. It harnesses the resources and expertise of visitors well to make these events interesting for the pupils. Volunteers from the local business community regularly visit the school and help the pupils with their reading work. The locality is used well and the pupils use the local museum and art gallery to good effect to improve their learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher and of other key staff is good. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and other staff with leadership responsibility have a clear view of the needs of the school and its future development.
- The governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have the expertise to support and monitor the effectiveness of initiatives.
- Commitment to inclusion, equal opportunity and meeting the needs of individuals is very good.
- Whole-school procedures to track pupils' achievement are in the early stages of development.
- Financial control and the management of other resources is good.

Commentary

36. The clarity of vision for the school, by the headteacher, and his high aspirations and realistic, yet challenging aims for all pupils are key factors in the success of school improvement in recent years. He is well respected by all. The governing body supports the headteacher in bringing about these improvements by making a major contribution to the life and work of the school. Governors are confident and have a good idea of where the strengths and weaknesses lie in the school. The leadership of the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators is good and also offers good support to the school through clearly defined management roles.
37. The school's commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils and to meeting their needs is very good. The leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and as a result, these pupils achieve well. The special educational needs co-ordinator carries out her responsibilities effectively and efficiently. Trained teaching assistants are effectively deployed and managed and have a significant role to play in pupils' progress. The school is aware of the growing numbers of pupils with English as an additional language and is responding well to their specific needs. The school has developed systems which reflect very good inclusive practice, which ensures that all pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language are fully involved and well supported. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are of a good quality and are fundamental to the good quality provision in this stage of the school. Overall good leadership represents an improvement on the judgement made at the time of the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory.
38. Management is good. There are good systems for the performance management and professional development of teachers and teaching assistants, and these are soon to be extended to include all other staff working for the school. Targets are well linked to the school's needs and this ensures that all staff work in a unified manner towards school improvement. Performance management is used very well, not only to focus on the needs of the school, but also to develop teachers' individual expertise. This is a significant achievement because it has enabled teachers to improve to an extent that teaching is consistently good across the school. Although there are systems, particularly in English and mathematics, for identifying areas for development, these are not yet used as well as they could be for tracking individual progress across the school and setting targets. The assessment manager is aware of this and has assessment plans ready for implementation.
39. Strategic planning is thorough, arising from a combination of contributions from the headteacher, other staff with responsibility and the governing body. Governance of the school is good. Statutory requirements are fully met. Governors provide helpful levels of challenge and support for senior management. Financial management is of a good quality and closely linked to school improvement planning. The systems are secure, and governors ensure that best value principles are applied rigorously to ensure value for money. Allocations are appropriately directed and used to raise standards, for example, money is currently being directed to fund improved information and communication technology provision.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	599171	Balance from previous year	77992
Total expenditure	586845	Balance carried forward to the next	90319
Expenditure per pupil	2585		

40. The carry forward figure of £90319 into 2003/04 represents 15.07% of the total budget. This has been significantly reduced this year to maintain a good teacher:pupil ratio and is now within the recommended carry forward range.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

41. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Since the last inspection, the school has made good improvements in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The children enter the nursery with attainment that is well below average overall, especially in language and communication skills and in personal, social and emotional development. Very good induction to the nursery means that children quickly settle in. They make good progress and develop and consolidate their skills well. They achieve well in all the areas of learning in the nursery because the quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good features, and the good curriculum, where teachers emphasise the development of social, language and mathematical skills, means that children are well prepared for the reception class. Children continue to do well in the reception class because the teaching is good and activities are well matched to their needs through the very effective use of very good assessment procedures. The provision is well managed overall and children's progress is very carefully monitored. Through effective leadership and management, the staff are inspired to make children's learning relevant, challenging and enjoyable. The previous inspection judged that provision was good and standards are similar to those identified then.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make very good progress and achieve very well.
- Teachers and support assistants ensure that all children feel secure, valued and included; there is mutual respect.
- The accommodation in reception class is limited, but staff minimise restrictions by forward planning.

Commentary

42. The children achieve very well in this area of their learning, because the teaching is very good. They achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. The staff ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued individually. They provide very good examples and have high expectations of children's behaviour and learning. There is a very good balance between teacher- and child-initiated activities, through which the children become independent and enthusiastic learners. There is a lovely, calm atmosphere throughout the Foundation Stage, which supports children's learning well. When parents or carers bring the children in, the children happily choose activities after self-registering and settle to these with confidence and concentration. The children behave very well, and take responsibilities when organising their play. A particularly inspiring scene was observed during the inspection when children from a nearby special school visited the nursery. The care and concern that the children showed to their disabled visitors was deeply moving and was a very good example of the wider education provided at English Martyrs' School. This weekly visit brings out the best in these young children.
43. In the Reception class, despite the cramped accommodation, the two teachers and staff all provide the children with carefully planned activities to build on the earlier development. The results are seen in the way that the children initiate new ideas, such as their role play in the Life Boat Station, where they busily organised rescues and ensured that everyone wore life jackets. Through the wide variety of activities provided for them for independent play, the children know how to organise themselves and they understand that there are rules for working and for playing together. The forward planning by the co-ordinator and staff ensures that children's learning is not compromised by lack of space.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the nursery and the reception classes, good teaching promotes language skills in all activities.
- Children achieve well, because teachers and staff are skilled in developing children's language skills.
- Teachers and support staff encourage children's enjoyment of stories and imaginative ideas.

Commentary

44. Children make good progress in their communication, language and literacy through the skilful teaching that they receive in the Nursery and in Reception. They achieve well in all areas of language acquisition, but standards remain below expectations and most children will not achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. The staff provide good opportunities for children to copy simple sentences with new vocabulary and support them well verbally when they are doing this. The teachers and staff listen to the children's comments and sensitively correct any mistakes. When a child who speaks English as an additional language, for example, called a robot's foot, 'leg', the teacher carefully revised the names of different parts of the illustration and returned to the word in different settings.
45. In both year groups, there are many opportunities for children's imaginative play and group work, which require talk to complete the task. This is seen in the well-structured role play on offer to them. These opportunities also lead the children to read and to write, for example, letter sounds, initially, then to write their own names and thank-you letters to the Life Boat Station. The teachers make these very good links with speaking and listening, reading and writing and carefully integrating activities to maximise learning. Children feel confident to express themselves, because they know that all adults value their opinions. The staff provide very well for children with special educational needs and those who learn through English as an additional language. In the nursery, there is a dual language assistant, who effectively supports those children who have low or no knowledge of English. The staff use their professional knowledge to build on children's experiences of language at home, and also by providing a range of opportunities for children to engage in speaking and listening activities in English with adults and other children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn through carefully planned practical activities, which make learning enjoyable and fun.
- The very good teaching results in children's good and often, very good achievement.

Commentary

47. The attention that staff give to developing mathematical language helps the children to make good progress over their time in the Foundation Stage. In the nursery class, the children develop early ideas of measuring through exploring different containers when playing in the sand or water trays. They successfully learn to count when they help the teacher to count the number of children present and the more able ones contribute the next number if one child returns the following day. The children use construction apparatus effectively to explore shapes. In the reception class, the children begin to use their well developing mathematical skills to make two-dimensional shapes in the playground, using a variety of apparatus. When visiting nearby Moor Park, the children gather conkers and compare how many each has managed to collect, enabling them to develop satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the relative size of numbers and order. Staff seize a wide range of opportunities to support children's mathematical development and make learning interesting. For instance, in the Almond and Maddock's Shipyard set out for different areas of the curriculum, the children make boats, using paper, glue and other resources. Through this practical activity, they learn to use their developing language and mathematical skills in trying to overcome problems, such as boats capsizing, because the masts were too high. This helps them to develop early ideas about measuring and comparative sizes. There are very good links with learning from the environment and from observation at first hand. With the help of the classroom assistant, the children became 'Shape Detectives' exploring shapes they could see in corridors, classrooms, doors and floor, for example. Through all these activities, the children enjoy mathematics and are eager to learn more. As a result, they achieve well and sometimes very well in their mathematical development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of very good teaching children achieve very well in knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The staff create a lively learning environment that stimulates children's curiosity.

Commentary

48. The very good teaching provided in the Nursery and in the Reception class is seen in the lively environment, which stimulates children's curiosity. All staff plan topics that capture the children's curiosity. As a result, children achieve very well in this area of their development. In both year groups, through carefully planned visits to immediate surroundings and further afield, such as Blackpool Zoo, children learn about a variety of jobs that people do and what is involved. They have visits from the firemen, who bring the fire engine for children to explore. The local police are also involved and children visit the nearby sandwich shop, where they observe that staff making different fillings for different types of bread and buns. In both year groups, the children learn to use the computer and explore art programs, for example, to make attractive prints. They develop early computer skills very well and learn to use the mouse competently and become familiar with a keyboard. This establishes a secure foundation for future work in information and communication technology. In the reception class children develop early science investigation skills well through activities such as testing which items will float or sink, and on the basis of this exploration, they soon made sensible guesses and predictions what would happen if things were placed in the water trough. As a result of these activities, children also learned new words and how to recognise different boats, such as 'cargo-carrier'. Practical activities characterise learning and development in this area. For instance, when a boat, which children designed and made, capsized, the teacher skilfully asked what they can do to rectify matters. This led the children to propose and test a variety of solutions to solve the problem. This is very good preparation for future learning. A particular strength of the opportunities on offer to the children is the way that their knowledge and understanding of the world is widened. For example, the local priest showed the children how a child is baptised in the Catholic Faith. In addition, the children celebrate the Eid and Divali, and learn about other festivals and celebrations such as birthdays, not only those appertaining to their own circumstances.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and results in children's very good achievement.
- Space is limited in Reception, but forward planning maximises learning for children.

Commentary

47. Children achieve very well in physical education through the very good teaching they receive. Teachers and staff plan activities which improve children's physical co-ordination and control. Children in both year groups reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. The children grow in confidence, and through careful arrangements, the staff ensure that the children's physical development is not delayed because of limited space. The outdoor area, specifically designated for the use of Foundation Stage children, is carefully timetabled to ensure full access for this development to take place. In the Nursery, the children engage their imaginations when playing outdoors. They run, jump and use equipment for physical activities. The children are encouraged to paint and to use writing and drawing implements with increasing control and as a result these skills develop very well.
48. The previous inspection report judged children's progress as unsatisfactory, because the Reception children did not have sufficient hall time to develop an awareness of space, and to move with confidence. The school has since made very good improvements. During the inspection, the children were observed using the hall for acquiring skills of throwing and catching, which they managed with improving control and dexterity. Despite the cramped space in the classroom, the children are provided with many good opportunities to develop their physical skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good. It is imaginative and helps children to achieve very well.
- There is a very strong focus on learning through role play, which engages children's imaginations.

Commentary

49. Teachers and support staff plan exciting and stimulating activities which develop children's imaginations very well. As a result, the children attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. The very good learning is due to the wide experiences provided, which enable the children to delve deeply into their imaginations. During the inspection, the children in both year groups were observed to be completely absorbed in role-play, such as in the Doll's hospital and in the Life Boat Station. In the Nursery, the children chose a piece of the robot illustration and an instrument to match it. They delighted in making sounds imaginatively, to represent their part of the robot.
50. In Reception, the children develop lively imaginations through a good range of learning opportunities. They painted after the style of Picasso and produced something new from their imaginations, integrating their own ideas with those of the painter's Blue Period. This helps to develop their cultural awareness. In the Life Boat Station, they rang up for assistance and when that did not appear instantly, they blew the whistle on their life jackets and frantically shouted for help. Others rescued them and 'recorded' the incident in the log book. This is just one example of the many opportunities that Foundation Stage staff provide for children to develop creatively.
51. In the Almond and Maddock's Shipyard set out for different areas of the curriculum, the children made boats, using paper, glue and other resources. Through this practical activity, they also learn to use their developing language and mathematical skills, as well as those in creative and physical areas of their learning. During the inspection, the children were observed to be absolutely engrossed in trying to overcome problems such as boats capsizing because the masts were too high. They discussed the

difficulties and explored ways to rectify their designs. This is very good preparation for children's next stage of education.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by the end of Year 6.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language is good.
- The quality of teaching is good, but too much of the time is spent in managing pupils' behaviour, so the pace of learning is satisfactory.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to guide teachers in their planning to raise attainment.
- Pupils have valuable opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

52. Standards in English at the end of Year 2 are below average and they are still below by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. Given the low starting point when pupils enter Year 1 and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. This represents a satisfactory rate of improvement since the previous inspection.
53. In reading, the pupils' attainment is below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They enter Year 1 with attainment that is below average. Priority is given to developing the basic skills of reading through which pupils develop a basic sight vocabulary and know how to use sounds to work out unfamiliar words. Only higher attaining pupils use meaning as a strategy to support their reading. Pupils in Year 6 use punctuation and expression satisfactorily to make their reading interesting. They are developing good attitudes to their reading and declare personal preferences for authors and types of text.
54. There are some pupils who have the confidence to speak with a degree of fluency in front of the class but not all pupils have the self-control to listen politely and attentively. Although teachers give pupils many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through discussions at the beginning and end of lessons and through 'Circle Time' in personal, social and health education, their language development remains below average. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary and in some cases are only able to offer simple sentences when answering questions or contributing to shared writing.
55. Standards in writing are below average at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. Although the writing of higher attaining pupils is clear and legible, well structured and generally grammatical, there is a high proportion of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, whose writing is of an unsatisfactory standard. This is due to a lack of understanding of punctuation, spelling and structure, which reflects in their writing in English and in other subjects. Their writing does, however, convey meaning satisfactorily.
56. The quality of teaching is good. However, when too much of the teachers' time is taken up managing pupils' behaviour the pace of learning slows and the pace of their learning and achievement are satisfactory. The teachers have a good knowledge of how pupils develop their literacy skills and they implement the National Literacy Strategy well. They work hard to meet the needs of different pupils and they are largely successful, particularly with those pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language. These groups of pupils receive good support from the teachers and teaching assistants, which contributes significantly to their progress towards their individual targets or meeting their specific English language development targets. Other pupils of lower ability are often included in the groups given additional help in the lessons, which helps them to achieve well. In good lessons, behaviour is managed well and pupils concentrate on their work. The teacher establishes an atmosphere which is conducive to learning, is enthusiastic and motivates pupils to give of their best.

Although teachers collect a range of information about how well the pupils are doing, they do not regularly make it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve or how to reach the next level.

57. Curriculum co-ordination is good. The subject leader is able to monitor progress through a variety of methods and is well aware of the need to raise standards further. Writing has correctly been identified as a priority for the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Teachers make good use of the pupils' developing literacy skills in other subjects, though the quality of writing in different styles in other subjects requires improvement. They respond well to the opportunities to write reports, accounts and instructions in subjects such as science, history and design and technology.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well and standards are in line with those nationally expected in Year 6.
- Standards are below average in Year 2.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress.
- The subject co-ordinator gives a satisfactory lead to the subject and he has a clear picture for future development that is firmly based upon further improvement in standards.

Commentary

59. Standards in mathematics are improving. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003, pupils achieved standards that were average when compared to all schools and were above average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils who gained the higher level 5 was well above average for similar schools, which means that the school ensured that this group also achieved well. Inspection evidence indicates that the situation is similar this year. Pupils in Year 6 are now working at levels nationally expected for their age and current attainment is average. Overall achievement is good. This represents a good level of improvement since the previous inspection.
60. Pupils enter Year 1 with attainment that is below that nationally expected. Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress but attainment remains below average at the end of Year 2. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 have poor social skills and there are high levels of pupils with special educational needs and behavioural or emotional needs. Consequently teachers in Years 1 and 2 are still very much teaching and supporting pupils to develop effective learning skills. They are successful in this, which is evident in the much improved attitudes and work habits of older pupils at the end of Year 6. This means that achievement and learning are satisfactory although teaching is good.
61. Teachers in Year 1 and 2 use good methods that are appropriate to the learning needs of these pupils. The resources used are of a visual nature to give pupils good opportunities to work practically. For example, when learning about turn and angle, Year 2 pupils used rotating models of the space shuttle and investigated direction and turn well, although pupils' understanding of angle remained at a basic level. Teachers explain any specific vocabulary to be used at the beginning of the lesson so that all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language are able to understand the discussion. Teaching assistants are very well directed and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, such as explaining clearly about position using the placing of animals in a model farm yard with a group of Year 1 lower attaining pupils
62. By Year 6, pupils have caught up; their achievement is good and attainment is average. This is because teachers in Years 3 to 6 build well upon the solid foundation established by the end of Year 2 and the quality of teaching and learning is good. A strong focus throughout Years 3 to 6 is on enabling pupils to use, apply and combine their knowledge and understanding of different areas of mathematics. Pupils in a Year 6 lesson did this well. They used their spatial awareness and knowledge of co-ordinates and symmetry to reflect irregular shapes through the different axes. The pace was rapid and held pupils' attention, resulting in good quality learning. During the inspection, pupils in most classes throughout the

school were working on the theme of turning and angle. Clearly, good overall gains in knowledge and understanding were evident.

63. During the inspection, the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good, but was good overall. All lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to explain new knowledge simply and in a way that is understood by the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of what these pupils can achieve in terms of quantity and quality of work.
64. The subject co-ordinator gives a satisfactory lead to the subject. He has the necessary skills and knowledge and is aware of what steps need to be taken in order to raise standards further, particularly at the end of Year 2. There is a subject action plan, with appropriate targets which are evident in the school's practice and are supporting rising standards. There are satisfactory systems in place for collecting and analysing assessment data. This data is used effectively in setting targets for improvement, but not yet in tracking pupils' progress across the school. This is identified as an area for development.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Numeracy skills are being satisfactorily developed across the curriculum. Pupils make good use of their acquired skills in supporting their learning in other subjects. In design and technology, they accurately measure the length of materials before cutting to the correct size. In science, pupils measure accurately the distances travelled by cars in their investigations on forces. In information and communication technology they use their understanding of 'larger or smaller than' when researching databases.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising as more emphasis is given to scientific enquiry.
- The good quality of teaching ensures that pupils achieve well.
- Assessment in science needs further development.
- The subject is led and managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator; it is very well enriched through input from the local university.

Commentary

66. It was not possible to observe a science lesson in Year 2, as it was timetabled to take place later in the week. Judgements, therefore, are made on scrutiny of books, wall displays, on discussions with pupils and with the co-ordinator. Standards are average at the end of Year 2, as in the previous inspection. Standards are also average by the end of Year 6. All elements of the subject are taught, thereby ensuring appropriate coverage of the curriculum and progression of learning for the pupils.
67. The previous report stated that the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels was close to the national level. It is now average when compared with all schools and well above average when compared with similar schools. The school has maintained its standards, but they are rising overall because of the emphasis being placed on scientific enquiry. Achievement is good throughout the year groups. Boys and girls do equally well. The pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well, because of the very effective support they receive in class from the teaching assistants.
68. The school is placing stronger emphasis on enquiry skills and learning from practical investigations. The pupils in Year 2, for example, enthusiastically recall tests to find out how far toy cars would travel on different surfaces. They discovered that cars only moved 'when the surface is smooth'. In their experiments on forces, pupils use their developing mathematics skills to record distances using metric measurements. Year 1 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties and through this appreciate that brick is the most suitable material for building a house. Pupils develop sound early investigation skills. Through experimenting with Lego for example, they realise that bonding bricks made stronger walls than those arranged in linear layers.
69. The interesting activities and a strong emphasis on investigations ensure that pupils' learning is productive in all areas of science. In a lively and animated revision session in Year 6, the teacher helped the pupils to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of forces and motion, by sketching illustrations and providing clarifications. The pupils knew that there are reasons for things speeding up, and for slowing down, for example, when a parachute is used. The more able pupils explained that gravity is a force, which pulls objects down towards earth. Through the very good input by the teacher, the pupils were able to make links with practical science, such as designs of racing cars and about friction, including air resistance as a force, which slows the movement of objects.
70. The good quality of teaching lies at the heart of good learning for the pupils. The teachers make the purpose of their lesson clear and a good range of interesting activities ensures that the pupils make good learning gains. In Year 3, the teacher posed challenging questions on materials and their properties, with a good proportion of pupils showing that they understand insulation. On the basis of their well developing scientific skills, the pupils were able to make sensible predictions about the rise in temperature on a thermometer, with the teacher holding it in her gloved hand. This lesson resulted in pupils' raised spiritual awareness, because the teacher identified an opportunity for spiritual development in the workings of the human body.
71. Teachers differentiate tasks well to ensure that pupils' different needs are appropriately met. This was evidenced in Year 5, where the pupils were presented with challenges to meet their specific needs. In discussion with them following their investigations, the pupils explained that there is a limit to the mass of solid, which will dissolve in a given volume of water. The less able pupils were able to make as good progress, because of the very effective support they received from the teaching assistants. This is just one example of the school's commitment to inclusion in practice.
72. The co-ordinator for science is enthusiastic about the subject. She leads it well by providing guidance to teachers and support staff for investigations and practical work. She has discussed with staff how to level pupils' work in science, but the school has not yet developed consistent procedures for tracking pupils'

achievement throughout the school. Development is planned to help teachers pinpoint what the pupils know, understand and can do and what they need to learn next to improve. Science is very well enriched through educational visits and visitors, such as Preston College and University providing talks on forensic science and holding workshops to raise the profile of the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are unsatisfactory.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are average because teaching is good.

Commentary

73. Standards in information and communication technology are average, even though the resources are unsatisfactory. The computer suite is shared as a special educational needs base and is therefore not always available for use, and some of the software available is not sufficiently stimulating for pupils of this age. Additionally, there is no facility set up for teachers to demonstrate using projectors or interactive whiteboards. However, teachers try hard to ensure that pupils have the best possible experiences that the resources will permit. Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach standards that are expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is similar to judgements made at the time of the previous inspection so the school has made satisfactory progress since then to maintain standards against more rigorous curriculum demands.
74. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum co-ordinator has had this responsibility for a year. In that time she has established a good working relationship with the governor responsible and as part of the on-going development has started planning for a significant improvement in resources in the near future. There has been some progress so far but there is still much that needs to be done. The school recognises this subject as an area for development.
75. Young pupils start to use computers to edit text and from an early age learn to accurately locate the cursor and use appropriate keys to delete and change text, for instance putting in capital letters where needed or inserting full stops. By Year 3, pupils are able to combine pieces of their own text and graphics which they access from the computer based Clipart library. This makes the presentation of their work interesting. This clearly shows the satisfactory development of their skills, and pupils in Year 6 recall changing the size of pictures and combining with text in good range of subjects, including English, history and geography. The editing skills of older pupils are improved satisfactorily and they use a satisfactory range of different print styles, varying size, style and colour to add interest. Pupils use the Internet effectively to research and produce papers such as in history when they researched English monarchs or Second World War battlefields. They also use e-mail competently. Year 6 pupils have completed the preparation of a multi-media presentation. Year 6 pupils talk with enthusiasm about their experiences with databases, spreadsheets and graph work. They recall accurately a wide range of experiences covering all aspects of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology.
76. The quality of teaching is good. The organisation of lessons enables pupils to have the same experiences as others in the class, even though resources create obstacles to this. For instance, Year 4 pupils were working on databases. The class had to be divided into two groups and half worked in the suite with the teacher (on a less stimulating program researching dinosaurs) whilst the others worked on the classroom computers learning the same skills with another, more interesting and visual program researching animals' habitats. To ensure equality of opportunity, the groups changed activity and therefore all had the chance to build the skills using the range of software. The teachers have good knowledge and they use this well to guide pupils and overcome the limitation of not being able to demonstrate in a large scale to the whole class at the beginning of the lesson.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Pupils confirm that they use information and communication technology in lots of other subjects and find that it supports their learning and makes it interesting.

HUMANITIES

History and geography were sampled. **Religious education** is subject to a Section 23 inspection.

78. One lesson in **history** was seen in Year 2 and one lesson in Year 4. Judgements based on these lessons, talking to pupils and looking at their work indicate that standards are at the level expected for pupils of this age. Pupils in Year 2 showed a good factual knowledge of the Great Fire of London. They were able to give reasons why it spread and understood how the characteristics of life then had a major impact on this disastrous event. Very good links were made with literacy. The book they studied served as a source of historical enquiry and as an example of the use of connectives. Their writing in an appropriate form as Samuel Pepys further reinforced the link. Pupils in Year 4 had the opportunity to pursue independent study and add to their knowledge of the Tudors by studying a variety of sources including the internet. Planned visits enhance the curriculum and contribute to pupils' cultural development.
79. Two lessons were seen in **geography**, one in Year 5 and one in Year 6. Judgements based on these lessons, talking to pupils and looking at their work indicates that standards are at the expected level for pupils of this age. In the Year 5 lesson, the teacher used a video to help pupils understand the effects of a river on the landscape and how and why rivers change over time. In addition to this resource, there were interesting aerial photographs and recent newspaper reports of rivers in flood. The pupils showed a good acquisition of specific vocabulary from watching the video. They used their note taking skills effectively whilst watching. There were some good opportunities at the end of the lesson for pupils to share their work. One boy's account of the river's journey in the style of a newspaper article received spontaneous applause. In the Year 6 lesson, pupils were learning how the environment affects human activity as they studied maps, pictures and information from the internet concerning the village of Grasmere. Pupils show that in looking at a locality they can make deductions, gather facts and form opinions. The teacher provided some good opportunities for the pupils to develop their confidence in speaking.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and music were inspected fully and are reported below in detail. Design and technology and physical education were sampled.

80. One **design and technology** lesson was seen in Year 2 and one lesson in Year 3. In both these lessons, pupils were planning and producing work at a level of attainment expected for pupils of this age. Some good links were made with mathematics in Year 3 when pupils considered nets of solids and they had good opportunities to develop spatial awareness. Pupils in Year 2 were developing early sewing skills in preparation for making puppets. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, learned new skills quickly. They approached the task, which they found difficult at first, with enthusiasm. They developed a good awareness of the design process. Pupils were supported well through good teaching.
81. Two lessons were observed in **physical education**, and further evidence was gathered from discussion with the co-ordinator. Standards seen were average, as found in the previous inspection. The co-ordinator for the subject is developing the subject well through initiatives such as Physical Activities in Education, and increasing the number of extra-curricular activities and expert coaching from groups such as the local Sports Council and Preston North End football team. The co-ordinator has worked with the staff to improve their confidence in teaching the subject. Having identified dance as the next area for development, the co-ordinator is ensuring that this aspect is fully developed in each year group. She reports to the governors, who maintain an overview of developments in this provision.

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The pupils develop their skills through a wide and interesting range of media and materials.
- Art and design contributes greatly to the life of the school.

Commentary

82. Art and design is a strength of the school. Standards are above those expected for most Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language, achieve well. This relates to the high expectations of pupils' art work by teachers throughout the school, the wide variety of work produced and the level of challenge which pupils experience. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
83. The range of work completed by pupils and that which is ongoing is evidence of good teaching. Teachers build successfully on previous learning, planning challenging activities which motivate pupils to sustain their interest over time and produce good results. Teachers encourage pupils to develop good working habits, using sketchbooks to practise details, for example, and pieces of work are developed, refined and improved. Pupils' work shows good observational skills and above average standards using a range of media and techniques including two- and three-dimensional work.
84. Art and design contributes greatly to the life of the school. Pupils' art work is celebrated in many attractive displays which enhance and reinforce the atmosphere for learning. These high quality displays in classrooms and communal areas of the school clearly enhance pupils' self-esteem. A boy in Year 2 proudly proclaimed 'I am an artist.' The subject also contributes well to pupils' cultural development through the good understanding of the role of famous artists in society. As part of their work on cultural diversity every class from the nursery through to Year 6 has studied this term the varied works of Pablo Picasso. A study of his painting 'Les Femmes d'Alger' led Year 2 pupils to discover the artist's fascination with African masks and they worked on producing their own masks in that style.
85. Good links were made with information and communication technology by pupils in Year 6. They took portraits of each other with the digital camera, cut up the photograph and put it back together as a distorted image. The next step was to produce a painting of the image in the style of Picasso. His 'Portrait of Sylvette' was the inspiration for pupils in Year 2 to make a sculpture from disassembled cartons and 'modroc' modelling material. This effectively linked their work to design and technology and science where they were looking at how materials change. The subject is well led by a specialist art teacher who has moved the school forward significantly since the previous inspection.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and results in pupils' good achievement in music appreciation and composing and performing.
- Music is very well enriched through educational visits and visitors.

Commentary

86. It was not possible to see any music lessons in Years 1 and 2. Judgements are made on the lessons observed in Years 3 to 6 and further evidence is drawn from discussion with the co-ordinator for the subject. The focus of lessons observed was music appreciation and composing and performing. Singing was limited to assemblies mainly. Instrumental tuition is on offer to the pupils from the local education authority's music service. There is a good take up of this specialist teaching and this adds significantly to the good achievement. Provision and standards of achievement have improved since the previous inspection.
87. Pupils achieve well, particularly in Years 5 and 6, in music appreciation and in composing and performing. In two very good lessons in both classes, the teachers inspired the pupils to learn how music can be used to create a mood and confidently express own feelings about an excerpt of music created for the Eden Project. The pupils in Year 5, for example, offered a range of musical images created for them by the orchestra. The teacher suggested to the pupils that they close their eyes to imagine the Tropical Rain Forest, and reminded them that 'we are part of nature'. One pupil with special educational needs aptly described the mood as 'You feel that something good is happening'. This was a good link with art and

contributed well to pupils' spiritual development. The teacher developed the lesson further by inviting the pupils to express their interpretations in shapes and marks.

88. In a very effective lesson in Year 6, the teacher suggested that the pupils pose questions for the orchestra in preparation for their visit to the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra next month, as part of their music enrichment programme. This opportunity enabled the pupils to consider the different roles for instrumentalists and simultaneously to consolidate knowledge, skills and understanding of music. The pupils were completely engrossed in the music. The teacher raised their self-esteem by stating that 'you are proper musicians'.
89. Leadership and management of music are good. The co-ordinator has replenished resources with plans for further development when the budget allows. She supports teachers well and has worked with Year 1 and 6 teachers on a composition project, as part of their professional development. There is a good range extra-curricular activity such as recorders and the school participates in inter-school musical activities annually. These opportunities successfully widen pupils' experiences of music.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Personal, social and health education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- The impact of the school council needs to be developed further.

Commentary

90. Pupils are encouraged to feel positive about themselves, to be actively involved in the life of the school and the wider community, and to make wise choices about developing a healthy and safe lifestyle. The school's needs for supporting pupils' personal development have been successfully identified as a result of good analysis by the management team.
91. The quality of teaching is good. In lessons, teachers have a pleasant, warm manner and relate well to the pupils. They show sensitivity when they carefully discuss different issues such as personal safety, class rules, caring for the environment and other issues that are relevant to the pupils at any specific time. Teachers endeavour to ensure that pupils at all levels of attainment are fully involved. This encourages pupils to develop a clear understanding of life and its challenges. They are able to recognise and talk about dangerous situations ranging from electricity and visiting the river to dangers posed by strangers.
92. Pupils are managed effectively and the strict rules of 'Circle Time' are revised at the beginning of every session. In this time for discussion of different personal and social issues, pupils are clearly expected to listen and an object, such as a book, is passed around the circle, which is the signal that pupils may contribute when in possession. Pupils are under no pressure to contribute, so all feel confident. They obey the rules generally well but should they break the code of conduct, they spend a short amount out of the circle, but still in view and able to listen. This makes a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills and their attitudes towards other people.
93. There is a school council, which consists of elected members from each class. They already discuss school issues, but the mechanisms for representing the views of the whole class and feeding back are not yet set up. The co-ordinator has some ideas about how this might develop. The school is working towards gaining the Healthy Schools Award and to date has gained the Physical Activities in Education Award, which is having a positive impact on provision for physical education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

