

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KIRKHAM AND WESHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Kirkham, Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119145

Headteacher: Mrs Val Colledge

Lead inspector: Mrs Chris Field

Dates of inspection: 23-25th February 2004

Inspection number: 256642

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	218
School address:	Nelson Street Kirkham Preston
Postcode:	PR4 2JP
Telephone number:	01772 682866
Fax number:	01772 686126
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Michael Moore
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is located in the small town of Kirkham on the western side of Preston in Lancashire. It is of average size and provides for 218 pupils from the age of 4 to 11, some of whom come from beyond the locality. The profile of the children's attainment is below average when they join the reception class, known as the *Foundation Stage*. A broadly average proportion of pupils have special educational needs; five have a statement for a range of different needs. Virtually all pupils in school are from European backgrounds and speak English at home. A very small number speak both Chinese and English. The school is currently receiving support from the local education authority to help pupils from a travelling background to catch up on reading skills.

At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher was away from school on maternity leave.

The school was accredited with the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2002 and is currently working towards achieving the Healthy Schools Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	Personal and social education and citizenship.
9428	J Butler	Lay inspector	
15414	D Carrington	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology and humanities.
30144	E Hastings	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, physical education, English as an additional language.
2818	G Warner	Team inspector	Science, music, religious education, foundation stage, special educational needs.

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## PART A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Kirkham and Wesham Primary is an **effective** school with a happy and very caring ethos that values all pupils highly. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is enabling others in school to develop their leadership and management roles well. The team spirit is very strong and everyone works hard to provide a rich and exciting curriculum that is taught well. Pupils' achievement is good in most subjects and parents are very happy with the quality of education. Governors are good critical friends and hold the school fully to account. The school gives **good** value for money.

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

- The headteacher is the driving force behind the school's many successes and provides very good direction to its daily life and development.
- Pupils' achievement overall is good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and design and technology.
- The provision made for science and art and design shows significant strengths.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs throughout the school is very good.
- Standards are above average in design and technology and well above average in science and art and design by the end of Year 6.
- The levels of challenge in the work provided for higher attainers are not consistent across years and subjects and this is limiting even better achievement.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, with particular strengths in reception and Year 6 that enable all pupils' learning to accelerate.
- The school's assessment, tracking and target setting systems although satisfactory are not yet sharp enough to enable managers to pinpoint where the best rates of progress are being made across subjects and years.
- The curriculum is rich and exciting and the excellent quality of display around the school reflects this very well. Very good links with the community and other schools add further enrichment.
- The care, welfare and guidance given to pupils are highly effective in creating a learning atmosphere in which everyone is valued. Pupils' attitudes, attendance and behaviour are all very good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and the school is successful in turning out very responsible young people who are well prepared for the next stage of education.

The school has made **good** improvement since its previous inspection in 1998. The three key weaknesses from that time have been improved successfully. The school's push on improving writing is showing good impact in the standards being reached. Raising the achievement of higher attaining pupils and better use of assessment are rightly still on the school's agenda for action. The school's future capacity for making improvement is good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

In the 2003 national tests Year 6 pupils attained standards that were average in English and well above average in mathematics and science when compared to those found in similar schools. The overall achievement of boys and girls was good in mathematics and science, and satisfactory in English. From a below average starting point, the achievement of the current Year 6 is **good** in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school has worked effectively to enable pupils to improve their writing and problem-solving skills and the good achievement shows that the strategies are working well. Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**. Pupils enjoy school; they try very hard with their work, and behave really well. Relationships are very caring and the school is a happy community. Attendance levels are well above those found nationally. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **very good**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided is **very good** overall. Teaching and learning are **good** overall with strengths in the teaching of science and in reception and Year 6 that lead to accelerated progress. Evidence from both the lessons observed and pupils' past work give clear indication of the good quality of teaching. Lessons are well resourced, interesting and stimulating, though assessment could be better used to ensure that higher attainers are enabled to make consistently good progress across all subjects and years. Very good provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs who are assisted in doing so well because their progress is tracked closely and they are set new targets that are well promoted in lessons. The curriculum provides a range of very worthwhile experiences across subjects and meets statutory requirements in all respects. Pupils receive very good care and support. They are very well looked after during the school day. The provision for their personal and social development is a strength and assists them to grow as very responsible future citizens. The school has a good partnership with parents and has forged very good links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are **good** overall. The headteacher is an innovative and inspirational leader and provides very good educational direction to the work of the school. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, senior and middle management teams in working towards continuous improvement. Governors are good critical friends of the school and work in an effective partnership with managers. They hold the school fully to account and apply the principles of best value well to all the decisions they take.

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

Parents are very happy with the school. There is strong loyalty and much pride in the way they speak so positively about the school. A very few were concerned about behaviour and the information about their children's progress. Inspectors can reassure parents that both of these aspects are positive features. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school. Pupils told inspectors they think lessons are interesting and good fun, they like the extra-curricular clubs and they feel that their views are listened to and valued.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure a consistent level of challenge for higher attaining pupils across subjects and years.
- Enhance the systems in use for assessing, tracking and targeting pupils' performance.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall.

**NB:** Due to timetable constraints, it was not possible to judge achievement in music and art and design.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standards in the 2003 national tests were well above average in writing and below average in mathematics in Year 2.
- The standards in the 2003 national tests were well above average in science and mathematics in Year 6.
- Pupils' achievement is good in English, science, information and communication technology and design and technology.
- The current standards being achieved in design and technology are above average, and in science and art and design, are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are enabled to make very good progress and achieve at least the levels expected for their age in the six areas they experience.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as others of the same age because of the good attention paid to reviewing their on-going progress.
- The level of challenge in the work provided for higher attainers is not consistent across years and subjects and this is limiting their achievement.

### **Commentary**

1. Over the last four years the school's intake has changed. The number on roll has reduced and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has increased. An increasing number of pupils are joining the school at non-standard times. The good achievement of current pupils across subjects has been maintained at the level reported when the school was previously inspected, although standards are not as high. The standards today reflect the lower starting point of the pupils.
2. Most children in the reception class, known as the Foundation Stage, start school with below average levels of skills and knowledge. By the time they are five and ready to transfer to Year 1, most have made very good progress to reach the level expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. The children do particularly well in building very good personal and social skills and developing significant creative talents. The levels they achieve in these two areas are above those expected for their age.
3. Throughout the infant stage boys and girls continue to build their skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate in English and science and at a steady pace in mathematics, religious education, humanities and physical education. Reading and writing skills are broadly average; speaking and listening skills are good. Struggling readers are given extra help to make progress. Some very good external support is being used to help a Year 1 pupil from a travelling background catch up with her reading and the progress made has been remarkable. There has been a big push on problem solving and although the pupils are developing these skills well in subjects such as science, there is less evidence of them being built systematically in mathematics as shown in the sample of work. For example, the over-use of worksheets last term, when supply staff were teaching the class, enabled pupils to demonstrate their knowledge but limited skills development in mathematics in Year 2. Pupils in the infant phase make good progress in information and communication technology and design and technology and build



very good skills in art and design. The standard of pupils' artwork is very high; the self-portraits created in the style of Picasso are outstanding.

4. The table below shows that in 2003, pupils in Year 2 attained standards that were average in reading, well above average in writing and below average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools the standards were below average in reading, well above average in writing and well below average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching level 2 was broadly average in mathematics and reading, but the proportion reaching the higher level 3 was well below that found in similar schools in mathematics and below in reading and science. Standards fell considerably below those reached in 2002 in all subjects. Current standards in Year 2 in English, mathematics and science are better than they were in 2003. Standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.5 (16.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.6 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.6 (17.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 33 pupils in the year group.*

5. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and design and technology and satisfactory progress in religious education, humanities and physical education in the junior stage. The work set for the higher attainers in science enables a good level of challenge and through practical investigations and research their thinking skills are also extended really well. Very good attention is paid to enabling pupils to record their work independently and with accuracy. The levels of challenge for higher attainers is not as assured in mathematics, geography and history. Pupils of different capabilities are set broadly similar tasks and this caps higher achievement. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well-honed as are their skills of investigation and research. Pupils of all capabilities are making accelerated progress in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 because of consistently very good teaching and the strong focus on enabling pupils to plan and manage appropriate aspects of their studies; to review their own progress and to identify the next steps for improvement. Standards in art and design are well above average; curve stitched design work in thread are of high quality. Standards in physical education are average, though swimming skills stand out as strengths with nearly a hundred per cent of pupils able to swim the required length by the time they leave school.
6. Pupils with learning difficulties do especially well because of the early assessment of their needs and very good support they receive. Individual education plans identify very precise targets for them to work towards and through a system of regular checks they are revised and adjusted as necessary. This approach of *plan, do* and *review* has a very beneficial impact on the achievement of pupils with special educational needs. This very effective system has good practice pointers that could be extended to support other pupils' learning.
7. The table below shows that in 2003, pupils in Year 6 attained standards that were average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Standards were well above those found in similar schools in mathematics and science and average in English. The achievement of these pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 was well below average in English and average in mathematics and science. The school's overall trend in raising standards fell below that seen nationally in 2003. The school's drive for improvement is however, proving successful and the declining trend in English standards as shown by the national test data has clearly been stemmed.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (27.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.4 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.1 (29.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 31 pupils in the year group.*

8. Writing which was the key area of weakness in the English tests has been given good attention. Pupils are being provided with wide and exciting opportunities to write creatively and at length, though even more mileage could be gained from extending writing opportunities in subjects such as geography, history and religious education. Writing in the style of classic authors on display in Year 6 is of very good quality and demonstrates well the level that pupils are enabled to achieve. Standards are currently average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. The standards though lower than in 2003 represent good achievement by these pupils over their time in school. The targets set for Year 6 pupils' performance in the 2004 national tests are challenging, but inspection evidence shows that pupils are well on track to meet them. The school's next step is to use assessment and tracking processes more rigorously to target raised achievement in all years.

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

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**. Attendance is **very good**. Pupils develop **very good** social skills which are broadened to encompass moral, cultural and spiritual dimensions that will serve them well as they go on through life.

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

- Attendance is very good and well above the national average, with minimal unauthorised absence.
- Pupils are proud of their school and of their achievements there.
- They try very hard in lessons, and listen and concentrate well.
- Their behaviour is very good both in lessons and in their free time.
- Pupils are very polite and treat visitors with courtesy.
- Very good relationships are a feature of the school, which has a very friendly ethos.
- Children from whatever background are welcomed and embraced by the school community.
- High self-esteem is fostered and pupils encourage one another to do well.
- Pupils learn to be considerate of others and to be socially responsible.

#### **Commentary**

9. This aspect is a strength of the school which forms the bedrock for the good learning which takes place. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and parents ensure that their attendance is very good and well above the national average. Punctuality is good, and there is only minimal unauthorised absence. In conversation pupils said the things they enjoy most about school are being with their friends and all the good things they can learn about and do, especially the art.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/3 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.5	School data :	0.1
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.*

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, as is their response to the extra-curricular provision. For example a lunchtime choir rehearsal had some 42 pupils voluntarily giving up some of their playtime. In lessons pupils listen very attentively, concentrate on their tasks, and take pride in the finished pieces of work. They tackle new tasks with enthusiasm, for example the pupils in Year 6 relished the chance to interpret some real ordnance survey maps.
11. Throughout the school behaviour is very good and good manners are much in evidence. Pupils respond very well to the promotion of good behaviour, the awards of points, and the supervision of their peers. Those pupils in Year 6 with responsibilities of monitoring day-to-day activities at break-times carry out their duties sensitively and with the general co-operation of their schoolmates. Although space is very limited in the playgrounds, play is harmonious and considerate of others. A few parents have concerns about bullying but the inspection did not find any evidence to suggest that anti-social behaviour or harassment is a problem, and indeed when any minor disagreements occur, they are handled very effectively. During the inspection it was noteworthy just how polite and friendly the children were to visitors and to one another.
12. Very good relationships are a feature of the school. Pupils are honest and trusting of one another, and respond in kind to the caring and respectful way with which the adults treat them. They can empathise with other people, be it in their class discussions or circle-times, or with the needs of the less fortunate. They also show respect for people of different ethnic backgrounds and other cultures. High self-esteem is fostered and pupils encourage one another to do well. While growing in confidence themselves, pupils still maintain a genuine interest and pleasure in the successes of others, as was demonstrated by the spontaneous applause of older pupils in response to the Year 1 assembly based on nursery rhymes.
13. In other aspects of their personal development pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. They are enthusiastic learners who can work well independently or in groups. They have a very good awareness of the needs of the whole community and are very keen to take positions of responsibility. The school council members demonstrate a strong sense of moral values and a social conscience. The school rules came from the pupils themselves, and the infant children understand and follow the busy bee code of behaviour. In their spiritual development pupils can reflect on and appreciate mystery and beauty in music, art and creation. Their enthusiasm for multi-cultural experiences like the Chinese take-away in reception and the ancient Egyptian role-play in Year 3, as well as visitors to the school, develop into a respectful understanding of the ethnic and racial diversity which is part of Britain today.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **very good**. Pupils benefit from a well-rounded education in which most achieve well academically, develop very good personal and social skills and grow into young adults who are good to know.

Teaching and learning are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good, with strengths in reception and Year 6 that enable all pupils' learning to accelerate.
- Teaching and learning in science is good and in art and design is very good.
- Good team teaching in the Foundation Stage is enabling the youngest children to make a flying start to their education.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and this helps them to learn successfully.
- Consistently high expectations for behaviour, with the emphasis on praise and encouragement, and very good relationships are at the heart of the very good learning environment created.
- Teachers' assessment of how well pupils of different capabilities are learning is not sufficiently precise to ensure that higher attainers in particular are consistently challenged in their work.

## Commentary

14. The learning environment created is productive and purposeful and of a very high quality. Pupils' achievements are given very good recognition in the excellent display in all areas of the school. Evidence from both the lessons observed and pupils' past work give clear indication of the good quality of teaching that is helping most boys and girls, irrespective of their background or ethnicity to achieve well. Pupils told inspectors they think lessons are interesting and good fun. Teaching is better now than it was at the time of the previous inspection.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16 (32%)	24 (46%)	11 (22%)	0	0	0

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

15. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage. Between them the teaching team have a good command of all areas of learning and are working in successful partnership to enable the children to learn well. Very good attention to the children's personal and social development ensures that they make very good progress in learning to cooperate with one another. The emphasis placed on enabling the children to show their talents in working creatively results in many of them achieving a level of quality in their work above that expected for their age. The superb weaving and chalk pictures using fingers are good examples of this. The Foundation Stage manager has rightly identified the next steps for development as improving the structure of outdoor play and learning.
16. Teaching is very good in art and design, consistently good in English, science, information communication technology, design and technology and never less than satisfactory in all other subjects. There is ample evidence of good use being made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning in different subjects. Classrooms in the infants and junior stages are hives of activity where very good relationships underpin the successful learning. Lessons are well resourced, interesting and stimulating. Behaviour is managed with a light touch because pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and act accordingly. Teachers use a range of methods to stimulate the pupils' enthusiasm and good application and this results in most building knowledge and skills at a good rate. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons, and this is good because pupils know what is expected of them as a result. In Year 6, an added extra that is supporting accelerated learning is the strong focus on questioning that enables pupils to think deeply about what they are doing, the way they are working and what they need to do to improve their work. Time targets are used well here to help keep a good pace to pupils' independent work. Teachers use plenary sessions well on the whole to reinforce key learning points but not all take the time to involve pupils in reviewing their own progress and identifying the next step for improvement. These features are the missing links in otherwise satisfactory lessons.

17. Pupils with learning difficulties are given good levels of support to help them learn well. They have well-written individual education plans with specific targets in place to help them aim high. The same level of provision is not consistent for high attaining pupils and sometimes not enough is expected of them. This is more often the case in mathematics, geography and history than in other subjects. An overuse of work sheets in some years is capping pupils' achievement in these subjects and this requires review. Higher attaining pupils are given good levels of challenge in science. The approach in science is very *hands-on* and the pupils enjoy the opportunity to research, investigate and share what they find out with others. In science pupils are enabled to take calculated risks as they hypothesise about the outcomes of different experiments may be and this way the school is building their confidence to have a go and not worry at all about personal failure. Those with creative talents are very well catered for in art and design and through music. The headteacher, as the person responsible for the provision for those pupils with gifts and talents, is currently working on a specific policy to encompass the best practice being developed in the school.
18. Most teachers' are assessing how well pupils are learning through a variety of methods but now need to inject more rigour into how they record pupils' achievements and how they target improvement. The provision for homework is good and this has resulted in some high quality topic work being produced, for example that displayed in the library completed by pupils in Year 5 and 6. Pupils' individual homework folders are well maintained and a credit to them.

## **The Curriculum**

The curriculum is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is rich and exciting and the excellent quality of display around the school reflects this very well. Art and design work is a particular strength.
- Very good use is made of visits and visitors to extend pupils' experiences.
- The accommodation has strengths and weaknesses. It is very well presented with some classes of a good size whilst others are only just adequate in size for the number of pupils being taught in them. The hall is a tight space for the range of uses, especially for physical education. Outdoor space is not ideal.
- Resources are of good quality, however a few of the very new interactive whiteboards are still not fully reliable.

## **Commentary**

19. The school plans and implements a very inclusive curriculum; equality of access and opportunity is good for boys and girls from different backgrounds and enables those with learning difficulties and emotional needs to achieve well consistently. The curriculum provides a range of very worthwhile experiences across subjects and meets statutory requirements in all respects. The school was accredited with the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2002 and is currently working towards achieving the Healthy Schools Award. Long and medium term planning is of good quality. Short-term planning is good for literacy and numeracy and adequate in other subjects. The objectives set for learning sometimes lack specific focus on what higher attaining pupils need to learn to achieve at good pace. Pupils told inspectors they especially like the extra-curricular clubs and the chance to learn new things. The curriculum for art and design stands proud as a significant strength in promoting pupils' creative talents. Parents told inspectors that the use of ICT has grown and provision today is much better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. ICT can be seen in pupils' work in most subjects and this is very positive. For example, the use of ICT to help pupils create their own pieces in the style of Paul Klee has enabled work of high quality.

20. There is a very good curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. The team of adults plan together very effectively to ensure that the children have lots of practical activity that enables them to *learn by doing* and grow quickly into independent learners who take full advantage of the exciting experiences being provided. The generous level of staffing here is pivotal in supporting the children's very good progress. Accommodation in the Foundation Stage is used well, though its layout is not ideal and outdoor play space is yet to be fully developed.
21. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. As a result of the thoughtful planning by teachers and their support in classrooms the curriculum is well matched to the pupils' specific needs. A very good feature is the way in which teachers share specific planning with teaching assistants that identifies *target words to be learnt*. The targets set in these pupils' individual education plans are very precise and well-focused reviews enable on-going interventions to be well made. The format of the individual education plans is very well conceived and enables parents and pupils to review progress and write comments alongside those of the teacher.
22. Very good use is made of visits and visitors to extend pupils' experiences. For example, pupils in Year 2 wrote exciting stories about the ginger bread man following the visit by a local children's author. Pupils in Year 3 had Ancient Egypt brought alive for them when *Indiana Jones* visited to show them artefacts found by archaeologists and explain their value in helping us to understand about the past. Visits are equally well chosen to aid pupils' understanding of the topics they are studying. For example a visit to Preston mosque helped the pupils gain useful insights into Islam. The residential visit to York was carefully planned to aid pupils' knowledge and understanding about history and geography as well as develop personal and social skills whilst living away from home. Extra-curricular clubs include line dancing, choir, netball, football, computer, homework, French and playground games and these add further value to the curricular experiences provided.
23. The school is well staffed and resourced. Accommodation has significant strengths and some weaknesses. The strengths lie in its presentation, which is light, bright and airy and maintained to a high standard. The quality of display is excellent in all areas of the school. The weakness is the lack of space both indoors and out. The addition of a new classroom and sizeable extensions to two others has made a considerable difference for the better. However, the classroom used by Year 4 pupils is cramped for space, though groups working under supervision, outside the class, relieve the pressure. The hall is a tight space for gym use. Teachers need to be mindful of health and safety issues in making sure that pupils do not work near to the stored equipment around the edge and this limits the pace at which lessons proceed. The school has no attached playing fields and the hard surface outdoor space wraps around the buildings giving rise to many small, enclosed spaces that are difficult to supervise. The staff do very well to overcome the barriers posed by these limitations and ensure that pupils do not suffer. Resources are chosen carefully to add interest to lessons. A few of the recently purchased interactive whiteboards and projectors are having teething troubles which cause difficulties for staff. This is a shame when the staff have been so willing to embrace the new technology to support both teaching and learning across the curriculum.

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

Pupils receive **very good** care and support.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Health and safety procedures are very good, and founded on staff vigilance and the teaching of safe practice.
- The care and welfare of pupils is a top priority and first aid practice is very competent.
- The pupils have very good, trusting relationships with adults in school.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

- The induction procedures for new pupils are very good.
- Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance in all elements of their personal and academic development, based on careful monitoring of individual needs.
- Academic guidance is good, based on careful monitoring.
- The school involves pupils well in day-to-day decisions that affect them, and particularly through the work of the School Council.

### Commentary

24. Health and safety procedures are followed diligently. Given the somewhat cramped environment in some classrooms, and the small playgrounds, staff are extremely vigilant and children are taught to be safety-conscious. First aid procedures work well, and the child protection arrangements are in good order.
25. The process of introducing new pupils into school, either in the reception class or later on, is handled very well. They are given a very detailed and welcoming pack of information to help them settle in quickly and comfortably. Children from a travelling background receive good support to ensure their successful integration with their peers.
26. Teachers and support staff know their pupils very well and form very good relationships with them. Pupils trust the adults with whom they have contact, turn to them willingly for advice and try to follow it through. Pupils with special educational needs have very good support which is carefully tailored to their needs. Although good, the advice provided for mainstream pupils is sometimes less clear. For example, several pupils in their questionnaires said they were not always sure what they needed to do to improve their work, and when questioned pupils did not have an immediate answer about the nature of their own targets for improvement. The quality and consistency of the support for personal development, especially behaviour, is very good.
27. The school takes an active interest in what pupils think about school life, and has had a School Council as a formal platform for these views for several years. Pupils from Years 2 to 6 have democratically elected representatives who seek the views of classmates and who have created the school rules by general consent. Currently the council is seeking ways of supporting those children who find playtimes difficult.

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

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and has forged strong and effective links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

- Parents are very happy with the school, they hold very positive views about the all round education provided and family values promoted.
- Parents are provided with good quality information.
- The Parent Teacher Friends Association supports the school very well with fund raising and resources.
- Very good links with other schools and the community benefit pupils' learning.

### Commentary

28. The school operates an *open door* policy and has a well established system of communication with parents which includes regular newsletters informing parents about the life and development of the school. Parents' letters about a range of matters are posted on the school's notice board and there are also useful information sessions held to share information, for example about how to help your child prepare for school. Following the meeting of the new reception class parents in May, the school organises an activity box exchange system until July which enables parents to bring their child into school weekly to choose an activity and take it home to enjoy together. Reading diaries are a positive feature that enables parents and

teachers to talk to one another about reading, and this helps cement the home-school links well. Parents are fully involved and work as equal partners in ensuring that the needs of pupils with learning difficulties are met effectively. There are a few parents and grandparents who loyally assist in a variety of roles and contribute positively to pupils' learning. The school has identified that it wants to further increase the number of parents who provide voluntary support and who may want to contribute the schools' developing work towards healthy school accreditation. A dedicated and very active Parents Teacher Friends Association organises a range of social and fund raising events, which are well supported by parents and make a highly valued contribution to school resources to the benefit of the pupils.

29. The school is outward looking and has very good links with the community. These include churches, pre-school providers, local business, the high school to which most pupils in Year 6 transfer and charitable organisations. The school is a partner junior school with a local specialist engineering college and there have been shared collaborations in drama, sport and music. Very good links are in place with Pear Tree Special School. An integration programme has been set up for children from both schools to work together in creative and physical aspects of the curriculum and develop mutually respectful relationships and better understanding of the uniqueness of one another in so doing. Every week an adult friend from Sunny Bank, a centre for mentally disabled adults, joins with Year 1 for a morning of shared activities. The children in school are encouraged to have a sense of community spirit and each year the school is involved in a range of local events that have included taking harvest gifts to local elderly people, being heavily involved in Kirkham's bid to be the Best Small Town in Britain in Bloom, and visiting the local day care centre and hospital to sing carols at Christmas.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are **good** overall. The headteacher leads the school very well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher is an innovative and inspirational leader and provides very good educational direction to the work of the school.
- The deputy headteacher, senior and middle management teams are working successfully towards continuous improvement.
- Governors are good critical friends of the school and work in an effective partnership with managers. They ensure good financial control, hold the school fully to account and apply the principles of best value well to all the decisions they take.
- Systems to set targets, share them with pupils and check that they are met require more rigour.

### **Commentary**

30. The headteacher gives a very clear steer to the school. She works very effectively to enable others in school to develop their leadership and management roles well. There is a very strong team spirit and all staff work hard to ensure that the curriculum is rich and exciting and that teaching and learning are of good quality. The school's mission is central to its work and is well promoted in school.
31. Other managers support the headteacher well. The deputy headteacher is clearly a positive influence in school and is a very good role model. She ably undertakes her responsibilities in a cheerful and thorough way. She has won the confidence of staff in the good lead she has given to ICT developments. She is very alert to the next steps required in driving forward the assessment for learning agenda.
32. Senior managers are developing as an effective team who have good insights into school performance. Subject leaders manage their subjects well and have good understanding of



strengths and areas for improvement. They have clear plans of action, which are pursued successfully. Thus, improvement to subject provision has been good since the previous inspection and there is good capacity to maintain this advance.

33. School improvement processes work well in school and there are clear links between the school's key targets, staff performance-management systems and the professional development programme, including staff training. These close ties ensure that best impact is felt in making advancement in the school's provision. The school is self-critical and well placed to develop its tried and tested practices in reviewing progress still further.
34. A caring coordinator who is very well informed and clear about what needs to be done to support them leads the provision for pupils with special educational needs effectively. The policy is up to date. Individual education plans are carefully drawn up with achievable targets. Support staff are managed efficiently and their talents are well deployed. The coordinator makes effective use of the special needs budget and ensures that the good quality resources are used well. The school spends more on providing for pupils with special educational needs than it receives and this is a clear indication of its fully inclusive approach.
35. The governors are led very effectively by the Chair who is actively involved in school and has developed a thorough knowledge of its work. Governors manage their work efficiently, they ensure statutory requirements are met and they make the necessary checks and comparisons to ensure that the school follows the principles of best value well. They are also thorough in the way they hold the school to account. Governors, therefore, have a good command of the school's successes and areas for further work.
36. The system of target setting and tracking is in an early stage of development. It is more established in English than in other subjects, though work to develop it is a key priority in mathematics. At present, the school tracks the past performance of pupils through its sound procedures for assessment. It does not yet fully use the available data to set rigorous targets for individuals and groups that are then tracked systematically to ensure that achievement is spot-on. The targets set are sometimes very general, though some teachers break these down into more manageable steps for groups of pupils in their class, such as in Year 5. The targets set in all years, are not sufficiently tied into the marking of work and the reporting system and there are inconsistent opportunities for pupils to self-review and evaluate their own targets in lessons.
37. The most recent financial audit reported good control. There are good procedures in the office to manage finance and governors keep a very watchful eye on the budget.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	483,686
Total expenditure	468,049
Expenditure per pupil	2,167

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	43,699
Balance carried forward to the next	59,336

38. The budget balances are on the generous side, though there are appropriate reasons for this. In the main, they relate to the maintenance of staffing levels and the development of the accommodation and resources. The school provides a very good quality of education, enables pupils to achieve well and gives good value for money.

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

## AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good** and is a strength of the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well from a below average starting point across the six areas they experience and most are on track to reach the standards expected for their age.
- Teachers plan with care and work sensitively with support staff to enhance the learning of the children's basic skills.
- Purposeful practical activities underpin the very good progress that most children make in their personal, social and creative development.
- Effective leadership and management and very good teaching ensure the children get off to a flying start in their education.
- Provision for children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good, because adults take every opportunity to develop skills on a one-to-one basis.

### Commentary

39. The Foundation Stage children are the thirty-four who attend full time in the reception class. Many of them have had some pre-school experience but a growing number come directly from home. The children's attainment on entry is below average in all areas of learning. This has been a growing trend of attainment on entry to the school. They are well supported by the comprehensive, well organised induction programme. Children come into school in the term before they begin full time attendance with parents and carers and enjoy the *Experience Afternoons* arranged.
40. The quality of teaching is very good. As a result, the children are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals in all areas of learning. The children are developing very good attitudes to learning and behave very well. All children's needs are expertly catered for with the special needs of some children being identified at an early stage. Class teachers carefully support these needs in their lesson planning as well as in the way that learning is developed. Teaching assistants and volunteer helpers give additional sensitive support. All staff are involved in the on-going assessment of learning that is an important feature underpinning the children's very good levels of progress. This systematic approach to tracking what the children are learning ensures that they are achieving very well in all areas of learning.
41. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The full time and part time teachers give an effective lead to all staff who work with the children. The Foundation Stage curriculum is clearly the basis for all of the children's activities which are resourced very well. The accommodation is bright and stimulating indoors. The lack of a designated outside area imposes a restriction on the best development of physical activities.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and emotional development is a very important part of provision. It underpins all work in the Foundation Stage and children achieve very well.

- All children are treated with respect and know they are part of a highly caring community.

### Commentary

42. The children settle happily into the well-ordered routines because they have had opportunities to come into the school before their full time attendance. Consequently they are confident learners. All staff have clear expectations of behaviour, courtesy and collaboration. The children are encouraged to share toys and equipment with one another and to show respect for people and equipment. Children quickly learn to treat each other with care and kindness. A good example of this was when they moved into a circle and shared their thoughts about friendship with concern for one another's feelings. The children listen to one another thoughtfully whilst the adults work sensitively with them. Puppets are used imaginatively to foster the idea of being able to talk openly to one another. Adults act as good role models by initiating discussions without dominating them. Children are encouraged to expand their language skills by adults asking perceptive questions. When the children move into a range of carefully organised activities, staff enhance the opportunities to develop their personal and social skills by involving themselves fully. The staff take part as equal partners in the role-play that is central to the children's emotional development. The good relationships that are developed as a result underpin the very good progress that the children make. Teaching is of a consistently high quality and children are on course to achieve the early learning goals before the start of Year 1. It is impressive that many will exceed them from their lower than average starting point.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff seize every opportunity to develop children's speaking skills through good quality discussion.
- There is a good level of one-to-one support for children of all capabilities.

### Commentary

43. The children are given many opportunities to develop their communication, language and literacy skills meaningfully in both large and small groups. Overall most make good progress to reach the level expected for their age by the time they transfer into Year 1.
44. Reading skills are given close attention through class story times and the one-to-one sharing of books. The children take books home regularly and parents are encouraged to hear their children read daily. Parents and governor volunteers give very good support to helping the children practice their reading skills in school. The children show pleasure in sharing books with the adults who work with them.
45. A very close focus on writing helps the children to develop their imagination alongside building spelling skills. In a lesson observed by inspectors, the children shared knowledge and understanding of composing a letter in a large group and listened carefully to what the key features of good letter writing are before working independently in writing a letter to a friend in another school. Higher attaining children wrote the letter with good levels of skill and a good use of vocabulary. In smaller groups the children develop skilful understanding of how letters in the alphabet help them to spell words accurately. The use of magnetic letters to form words in an interactive way was seen to engage the children's sustained application and helped them work with good success. A carousel of activities supports the children in developing their skills through role-play.
46. Adults pay great attention to supporting children's speaking skills effectively through good quality discussion. Every child gains in confidence because they know their ideas are valued. For

example, a well-briefed teaching assistant worked very skilfully in building the children's vocabulary as they went on a bear hunt in the playground. Another group developed role-play and speaking skills by taking on various roles in the classroom *Wonderful Wok* café. Through a good range of exciting activities, speaking and listening skills develop well.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Team teaching works very effectively in enabling children to achieve well in mathematics and reach the level expected by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Staff develop mathematical vocabulary very well.
- Practical activities are very well planned and stimulate very good learning by children of different capabilities.

### **Commentary**

47. A good range of practical activities develops the children's mathematical knowledge and understanding very well. They show a real enthusiasm for mathematical activities because learning is fun. The adults work with the children as a very effective team. They miss no opportunity to promote purposeful talk about the activities so that the children's knowledge and understanding is being constantly re-enforced. The high ratio of adult support regularly proves to be beneficial in aiding the children's good achievement. The children work conscientiously because they are interested and enjoy counting activities. The children made significant progress in building counting skills in a very good lesson in which they worked with real money. A pair worked confidently on the computer adding coins up to £2 with accuracy. Others worked with their teacher and support assistant identifying the correct amounts of money to enable them to buy the food items pictured on cards. Others found coins in *buried treasure* in the sand tray by using magnetic sticks or fished for coins from the *bottom of the sea* in the water tray before sorting them and matching coins of the same value. In all of the activities planned the children are enabled to develop mathematical knowledge and understanding and problem solving skills very well.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The practical nature of the activities developed in order to support the children's skills as learners about their world is very helpful to them.
- Children have numerous opportunities to explore and experiment with tools and materials of their choice.

### **Commentary**

48. Many children enter the Foundation Stage with a limited knowledge of the world in which they live. They develop greater understanding through an exciting range of purposeful activities linked well to topics. The practical nature of the activities developed in order to support the children's skills as learners about their world is very helpful to them. Through very good teaching most children are on course to reach the early learning goals by the time they reach Year 1.
49. When they are finding out about different places in the world they actually experience something connected with the place. When the children focus on Italy their teacher carefully introduces the

shape of the country by the use of maps. Pictures are used to show the children the differences between Italy and their own country. The children listen carefully and make sensible contributions to the discussion as they talk about the food that they know comes from Italy. They move into a range of interesting activities comparing different sorts of pasta or discovering differences when pasta is cooked and uncooked. Other children are creating very pleasing collages with different sorts of pasta. They do this with dexterity and skill.

50. The school provides a range of visits and visitors to enrich learning. Experiences have involved a baby clinic in which a friend of the school brought in her baby and talked to the children about how to look after it. Summer and Autumn walks around the town help the children to look at the features that are special to Kirkham. The links with Pear Tree Special School that involve children from both schools working together are widening the children's understanding of the uniqueness of one another. The children listen attentively to stories that support their knowledge and understanding about different feelings, such as love, as a starting point to learning in religious education. In a successful lesson observed by inspectors, the teacher shared photographs with the children of people she loves and explained why before the children passed hugs around the circle to show their feelings for one another.
51. Children build with plastic construction materials in pairs. They have perceptive discussions with one another about the various attributes of the height and stability of the towers they are building. They use their hands with care and concentration in order to build skilfully. Many of the experiences that develop the children's knowledge and understanding of their world effectively supports their learning in other areas.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Appropriate opportunities are given to the children to develop their physical skills effectively.
- The limited space out of doors is not conducive to supporting good opportunities for children to run, jump, skip and balance. At present there is no provision for climbing.

### **Commentary**

52. Physical development is similar to other children of this age on entry to the Foundation Stage. Children achieve well through good teaching and reach the goals expected.
53. In an effective lesson held in the school hall the children travelled with well controlled speed to the rhythm of the music being played. They moved around with good levels of control because they were concentrating very well on what they were doing. At the same time great pleasure and enjoyment was being expressed at the skill with which creative movement was being accomplished. Benches were used to further extend the movement skills of the children as they balanced and jumped. The children were helped to control their movements accurately as they placed the mats themselves to help them to land with safety. They were helped to do this with the sensitive, and unobtrusive intervention of the teacher and support assistant. The teacher and support assistant worked with them as good role models in helping to refine movement and use the space to best advantage.
54. The children develop their finer physical skills through handling glue spreaders, scissors, paintbrushes and other tools. They use oil pastels with care to extend their patchwork patterns. They are also able to create pleasing collages with pasta because they skilfully manipulate the different pastas with confidence.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff use every opportunity to teach skills directly and offer a good balance of opportunities for children to learn through play.
- Children's work is attractively displayed and provides them with an exciting learning environment.

### Commentary

55. The children enjoy a wide range of creative experiences. These are successfully fostered in their imaginative play, story time, art and music. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and the children make rapid progress. By the time they move into Year 1, standards are above those of other children of this age. Staff successfully create an atmosphere of fun and focus their attention on teaching skills, such as using paintbrushes and mixing paint. Children produce clay models, develop outstanding artwork using textiles and create recognisable drawings of themselves. Displays are of high quality. They are lively, interesting and relevant. They give good insight into the development of individual children.
56. The children listen carefully to music as they move creatively in the school hall interpreting the mood and atmosphere of the music well. They also compose and perform music with very good levels of confidence. They use percussion instruments as well as their voices in order to develop their story about going on a bear hunt. The children make their own choices of instruments to describe the grass, the river and the mud that are important elements in the story. They not only play with skill but also gain a great deal of enjoyment from re-telling the story in this way.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall achievement in English is good.
- The drive to improve writing by Year 6 is having a positive effect on achievement.
- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well as a consequence.
- More consistent challenge for the higher attaining pupils across the years would help to raise achievement still further.
- There is effective leadership and management of English is effective.

### Commentary

57. Standards in English at Year 2 in the national tests have shown some fluctuations over the last few years due to the particular make up of the different groups. Pupils are now achieving standards in line with the national average and this represents good achievement when considering their below average starting point on entry. They have also suffered disruption due to some unexpected staffing difficulties earlier in this school year. By Year 6 pupils have achieved well in maintaining the average standards achieved in 2003 despite almost twenty five per cent of pupils having special educational needs. The very good level of provision of support and well-matched work provided for pupils with linguistic needs has ensured their good progress.

58. Overall standards in speaking and listening are average across the school and achievement is good. All staff use questioning well to help pupils build these key skills. Most pupils speak confidently and engage willingly in class discussion to express their ideas and points of view. Older pupils offer critical evaluations of their own and the work of others when invited to do so. Drama, role-play and hot seating activities support the development of pupils' confidence in their communication skills. Pupils in Year 6 are currently being given very good opportunities to express their ideas and reflect on what they need to do to improve their work. This focus is having a good impact on their speaking and presentation skills.
59. There is good achievement in reading overall. Pupils generally show enjoyment of reading especially when exciting and stimulating reading activities are promoted in lessons. Standards are broadly average at Year 2, although very few potentially higher attaining pupils are yet achieving the level of which they are capable. At Year 6 standards are also average. Pupils follow a structured reading scheme that includes a range of published works, and visit the school library every week to borrow fiction or non-fiction books. Regular opportunities to read independently or in groups are provided during the school day. In some, but not all classes, one to one reading takes place. Slower readers, including those with learning difficulties are given good support to help build their reading skills. Pupils' confidence is boosted through the provision of clear strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Older pupils are developing preferences for particular types of books and told inspectors they enjoy reading the works of JRR Tolkien, Jacqueline Wilson and JK Rowling. They have a good working knowledge of how to use the library for research purposes. Reading progress is enhanced by the support given by parents who read with their children at home, though some do not have much support. School managers are hoping to involve more reading volunteers in school to support reading and inspectors agree this would be a good thing to do.
60. Standards in writing are average by Year 2 and by Year 6. There is clear evidence in the written work completed by pupils that they are achieving well. Following the weakness identified in writing in the 2003 national tests, much effort has been concentrated on the drive to raise standards. This has included:
- The development of an action plan.
  - Training for staff on the national guidelines criteria for writing.
  - The observation of good practice through visits to leading literacy teachers, and Beacon schools.
  - Undertaking a writing task in all years that is assessed and levelled by the staff together.
  - Creating an environment for the promotion of writing, for example through using displays to give writing high status.
  - Providing pupils with writing journals that contain key features of different genres.
61. Pupils' write for a range of purposes and genres and are productive in their use of creative ideas and vocabulary. Challenging targets are set in Year 6 and pupils are well on track to achieve them. Presentation skills are developing well by Year 6, but spelling standards are still in need of improvement. Some use is made of ICT to enhance presentation through word processing, the drafting out of written work and the completion of compositional work in a range of genres. Despite this good thrust to improvement, even more gains could be made if planning identified writing opportunities across the curriculum.
62. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was a good overall standard. Teachers demonstrate a good command of the teaching of literacy. Their lessons are well planned; they use effective teaching methods and make good use of good quality resources to ensure pupils learn well. Pupils are managed very well and behaviour in lessons is very good. They show very positive attitudes to learning and work well both independently and together. The teaching in Year 6 was of a very high quality, and high expectations and challenge underpin the good progress the pupils make. They work hard and acquire knowledge and skills at a good rate. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is encouraging and developmental. Positive comments celebrate the successes pupils have, and targets for improvement are identified, though the links between

class literacy targets, personal literacy targets in target books and the teachers' assessment of how well pupils are learning are not always well made. Planning in literacy lesson is good in identifying the key learning objectives for average attaining pupils and in identifying what pupils with special educational needs are going to learn specifically. More focus could be given to identifying what the higher attaining pupils are expected to know, understand and be able to do by the end of the session, in a bid to add more consistent levels of challenge to their learning experiences.

63. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The recently appointed subject leader has a good overview of English, and has been influential in identifying strategies for improvement, especially in writing and the dissemination of best practice.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

64. The use of language and literacy skills in other subjects is good overall. Speaking and listening skills are well promoted. The attention to extending writing is more variable. Writing is used well in science across the school for example, where pupils demonstrate independence in recording their findings through using different formats. In religious education writing is developed well, especially in Year 4 but there is less development of writing in other years or in geography and history. Good opportunities are provided for the use of English in a variety of ways through the use of ICT.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Achievement is good in junior classes and standards are average by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Mathematics is well led and managed.
- Target setting and tracking systems require more rigour.
- Higher attaining pupils could be challenged more.
- The curriculum is good with an improving focus on problem solving and investigation.
- There is good development of mathematical skills and knowledge across the curriculum.

#### **Commentary**

65. There has been some fluctuation in the standards achieved in the Year 6 national tests in recent years. In 2003, they were well above the national average and the year before that they were average. After analysing the trends in recent years, the school made important changes to the provision for mathematics, which are beginning to impact positively on the standards achieved. This year, the pupils in Year 6 are achieving well, given their starting point, and they are likely to reach average standards by the end of the school year. Standards are also average in Year 2, though achievement is currently satisfactory in infant classes. Instability of staffing in Years 1 and 2 over the last eighteen months has had a negative impact on pupils' work in some respects. Staffing is now back to normal and strategies are usefully in place to raise standards.
66. In all, the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. The scrutiny of pupils' work completed since September shows this good quality clearly in the junior classes, especially in Year 6, where there has been an acceleration of achievement over the period. Whilst good teaching was observed in some lessons in the infants, pupils' past work points to a satisfactory quality of teaching and learning over the longer period. Current practice suggests that the good quality of teaching and learning experienced in earlier years in infant classes is being rebuilt successfully.



67. There is a good curriculum for mathematics with appropriate focus on basic numeracy skills. The subject leader, who gives a good steer to mathematics and manages her responsibilities well, has identified the improvement of problem solving and investigation as a core priority for the subject. Changes made to the curriculum and teaching and learning have resulted in some good work in this aspect of mathematics, such as the work by Year 1 to investigate the number required to complete a sequence of numbers adding to a given total. These pupils were observed to work algebraically with ease as they used different approaches to find the missing quantity.
68. The subject leader has also worked well to develop the system of assessment. Recently, a target setting and tracking process has been introduced. At present, this is implemented inconsistently from class to class and it is not yet tied closely to the marking of work. However, the system has good promise for the future as the subject leader has good opportunities to find out about the provision for mathematics through the school and is an influential member of staff.
69. Mathematics is a well resourced subject and work to improve the quality and use of ICT resources for the subject has been effective. There is ample evidence of the use of ICT to foster mathematical thinking and skills, such as the spreadsheet based work in Year 6 that focused on the use of a simple formula to total a string of test marks and Year 2 work to show the results of a traffic survey and audit of favourite pets in graph form.
70. Whilst pupils generally achieve well in mathematics, there is some variation between groups. Boys and girls achieve equally successfully and there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, many of whom have a numeracy strand to their individual education plans. Pupils who speak English as an additional language do well in their work. However, the challenge for higher attaining pupils could be more demanding, as the expectation of what such pupils will achieve is not consistently identified in lesson planning. This results in the assessment and tracking of achievement not being as sharp as it could be in identifying learning spurts or shortfalls.
71. Mathematics has been improved well in school. A promising start has been made to answer the issues identified here. Challenging targets have been set in Year 6 and there is good capacity for the school to maintain its rate of progress with improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

72. In general, the school has adopted a successful strategy to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding by giving opportunities for such work in many subjects. Thus, for example, there are good links to science, ICT, design and technology, geography and history. This benefits pupils' arithmetic, measurement and data handling prowess, but also their problem solving and investigation work.

### **SCIENCE**

The provision for science is **very good**.

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

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, and very good in Year 6.
- Achievement is good throughout the school.

## Commentary

73. Good teaching and learning in science has been sustained since the time of the previous inspection. The school's strength in developing the pupils' investigative approach to learning ensures that standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. The skills of investigation are built on throughout the school. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is firmly underpinned by the opportunities given for pupils to find out for themselves by testing hypotheses fairly. Consistently good use of accurate scientific language supports this approach.
74. A particular strength is the consistently good teaching throughout the school with some very good features. The scrutiny of work showed that in most classes an above average proportion of pupils are attaining average levels of skill, knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, in most classes over a third of the pupils are attaining at well above average levels. Pupils clearly have the skills to plan investigations, predict outcomes, run a fair test, evaluate the results and generalise their findings by the age of eleven. The very good teaching in Year 6 challenges pupils to systematically develop their understanding through questioning some initial thinking before drawing final conclusions. Throughout the school activities are well planned and resources well used to interest and engage pupils. There is good use of information and communication technology to support pupils' work in science. Good use of interactive whiteboards helps the pupils to focus upon their tasks. This results in pupils enthusiastically persevering in dealing with some complex questions being asked by teachers in some tasks. Pupils are attentive and listen to their teachers and one another in whole class discussions. The teachers hold high expectations of good behaviour and pupils, who are keenly interested in their work, respond well. Pupils with special needs are very sensitively supported by both teachers and support staff and achieve as well as all other pupils. They often join in the small group or paired tasks that are a further strong feature of the science curriculum. This develops the pupils' sense of co-operation and collaboration well. It contributes effectively to the good pace of learning as well as their social and moral development.
75. There is a clear understanding of the need to assess the pupil's achievements as a result of the good leadership and management of the subject. The monitoring of attainment and progress of pupils is systematically approached. The subject leader has a clear view of standards and monitors the teaching and learning across the school. Good resources are available to staff and pupils and are used well to help to raise standards. There has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection and standards in the subject have good capacity to be sustained as a result of this strong leadership.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weakness

- Pupils achieve well in ICT and reach average standards by the age of eleven.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There is good leadership and management of ICT.
- The cross-curricular use of ICT is good.
- Assessment procedures, whilst satisfactory, are not consistently applied.
- The cramped accommodation and unreliability of some computers are barriers that are coped with very well.

## Commentary

76. The school has invested heavily in new accommodation and resources for ICT in recent years. This has paid dividends as the curriculum is now broadly based, well focused on the

development of knowledge and skills and taught regularly and effectively. There are some teething troubles to sort out, especially concerning the new interactive whiteboards, two of which are not fully reliable. The accommodation in the ICT suite is very cramped when large classes of older pupils work there. Both of these factors affect learning and achievement, though staff overcome the difficulties as effectively as possible.

77. Achievement in ICT is good through the school and has been sustained at the level it was when the school was previously inspected. Skills and knowledge are built well in all strands of the subject. For example, Year 2 pupils worked confidently to control *Roamer*, the programmable vehicle, which was disguised as a spider. By giving commands concerning forward and backward movement and instructions as to distance and left and right turns, the pupils were able to produce a web of lines to show the route covered by their spider as it wove its way across the floor. Standards are average in general, though in some strands of the subject standards are above average, as in the work by Year 6 to create presentations of information that linked successive pages in smooth progression and incorporated *hot spots* to call up Internet websites which held relevant information for the user.
78. The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, the use effective methods and insist on very good behaviour and hard work. Teaching assistants do a good job in their support of groups of pupils and are effective in their work to ensure that pupils with special educational needs keep up and share in the good achievement. Assessment is satisfactory. It is not yet as effective as that in English and mathematics as there is scope for different interpretations of the procedures from class to class.
79. Leadership and management of ICT are good. The subject leader has been influential in the improvement to provision and has good opportunities to check and evaluate the calibre of work completed in all classes in school.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

80. The quality of cross-curricular ICT work is good. Planning for such experiences is thorough. The strongest subject links are to English, mathematics, geography and history. Links to science are not as strong as might be expected and this is a missed opportunity.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' learning in religious education supports well their very good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

### **Commentary**

81. The religious education curriculum is firmly based on the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress in learning about different religions. The achievement of current pupils in religious education has been maintained at the level reported when the school was previously inspected, although standards are not as high. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average. All pupils, including those with special needs who receive good levels of support from class teachers and support staff, achieve satisfactorily. There are good opportunities in some years, for example in Year 4, for pupils to improve their basic literacy skills in religious education work, with ample

chances to write at length about the different themes. In other years, there is more limited recorded work as the focus is on discussion or drama.

82. Pupils learn about Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism and Judaism. They are enabled to reflect on the issues such as the value of friendship and importance of belonging. In Year 4, pupils have written some lovely pieces about the feelings that light can give. As one pupil wrote: *trapped in a tunnel I would feel cold, scared and lonely...coming out of the tunnel into the sun, I would feel happy, warm and relieved.* By Year 6 the pupils are being encouraged to reflect on deeper meanings of their learning from religion as well as about religion. In a very successful Year 6 lesson pupils considered the importance of the noble truths to the followers of Buddha and thought about how these applied to their own lives. Pupils showed good understanding as they developed a fourth truth to help a healthy lifestyle.
83. The leadership and management of religious education have recently been taken over by a part time teacher. The subject leader has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the provision. Already a good level of leadership has been given to developing a wider view of world religions. Assessments at the end of units of learning are usefully being developed to fit in with the medium term plans.

## Geography and History

Provision in geography and history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weakness

- Geography and history have a firm place in the curriculum.
- ICT is used well to advance pupils' skills and knowledge.
- The over use of worksheets caps achievement, especially for the higher attaining pupils.
- Assessment requires enhancement.
- Enrichment from visits and visitors contribute well to the quality of provision.

### Commentary

84. Not enough lessons were observed in the two subjects to report on them separately in detail. However there was a representative sample of work completed this school year from both subjects, so it is possible to report the two subjects together. Overall, provision is satisfactory, with strengths. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average in all classes.
85. It is evident from pupils' past work that there is a regular programme of geography and history in the curriculum, with a good balance in the alternation of the two subjects in each class. Work in geography and history makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural education and ICT skills are enhanced by some good work in the two subjects, for example, in the research undertaken by Year 5 pupils about World War 2. An area for improvement is the need to review the use of worksheets, which is dominant in the work in many classes. Thus, all pupils, regardless of attainment, complete the same work to the same level. Higher attainers, in particular, are not challenged by this approach and it is sometimes difficult to pick their work out from that of pupils in other attainment groups.
86. Geography and history are led and managed soundly. Assessment of knowledge and skills in both subjects is inconsistent and requires more rigour. However, the enrichment of the curriculum by visits and visitors, such as *Indiana Jones* who shared his archaeological expertise with Year 3 pupils discovering the life and times of the ancient Egyptians, is a strength. A well organised visits programme helps bring pupils' learning alive, as for example in the Year 5 pupils' visit to Tatton Park where children and staff dressed in the style of the 1930's and spent the day living the life of the times.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

## Art and design

87. The school is an art rich environment celebrating the very high quality of the **art and design** provision pupils have received at all levels of the school. The subject makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' aesthetic and cultural appreciation and is an undoubted strength of the school because of very effective leadership. No direct observations of lessons were possible during the inspection but it is clear from the displays of pupils' work that very good standards are being reached by pupils of all ages, and that teaching and learning are also very good. In Year 1, pupils have used paint and pastels to decorate their high quality *Fantastic Faces* in the style of Picasso. The standard of work for this age group is quite exceptional. Pupils of different ages collaborate using a range of brush strokes and printing techniques to produce three-dimensional friezes. Year 2 pupils' work to represent Monet's *Garden* is of very high quality. All pupils have benefited from studying the techniques and styles of classical and well-known artists, including LS Lowry, Van Gogh, and Modigliani, and have used them to produce their own works of art. ICT programmes such as *Dazzle* enable pupils to work in different ways, for example in the Mondrian style or to replicate pieces of modern art such as that created by Paul Klee. In all years, the Internet is used to find out about artists and see examples of their work. The school aims to further develop the use of ICT to support pupils' experiences.

## Design and technology

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above average standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum offers a good range of experiences.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- No formal assessment system is yet in place.
- Good leadership and management are instrumental in supporting good achievement.

## Commentary

88. The subject continues to be a strength of the school as pupils achieve above average standards by Year 2 and by Year 6. The good quality of work done in this subject is very much in evidence in the super displays around the school, and in some cases is linked to the very high quality of artwork. For example, in an art display based upon Monet's *Garden*, Year 5 pupils have designed and made some very attractive and intricate *fantasy flowers* from wire and paper.
89. The design and technology curriculum offers pupils a good range of experiences including the plan, design and make of moving vehicles, cam operated toys and belt bags. A feature of the curriculum is the wide variety of materials that pupils are able to work with. There are useful links with other subjects for example science, when pupils build switched electrical circuits. ICT control programs are used to help pupils understand how mechanisms can be made to move when they are researching products. Good quality resources support learning in the subject well.
90. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned to prepare pupils for the task of designing and making, and to ensure that pupils learn the related vocabulary. For example in Year 1, good teaching ensured that pupils learnt all the different parts of a vehicle they were going to make through a variety of stimulating and interesting activities. Effective learning takes place as a result and pupils build their knowledge, skills and understanding well. In other classes good opportunities are provided for planning, working through the design process, and evaluating. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils confidently assessed and evaluated their own work and the work of others orally in the plenary. Teaching assistants work well in partnership

with teachers to support pupils with special educational needs, and this ensures they achieve very well.

91. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a good view of the levels of achievement in school through her monitoring activities. Although there are no formal assessment procedures, she holds regular discussions with staff to evaluate progress and to identify areas for further development. Reviews of completed work are usefully carried out.

## **Music**

92. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the course of the inspection. The expertise of the specialist part-time music teacher was used very well with the Year 1 class. The pupils' starting knowledge and understanding of rhythm and beat was already at a level beyond that normally found and was further extended by the end of the session. The pupils were demonstrating very good control of pitch in their singing and playing of percussion instruments. This quality of work was arrived at as a result of the carefully structured planning of the teacher. Pupils are provided with a range of very worthwhile experiences in all aspects of music. Pupils are keen to talk about music and do this knowledgeably. They told inspectors they enjoy playing instruments together in school, some also play in a local band. Pupils' collaboration in musical performance was clearly seen in the polished performance of the brass ensemble in an assembly time. There is a very good, sweet quality in the pupils' singing together throughout the school and particularly by the school choir. The skills of becoming very competent musicians are clearly embedded and confirm the strength of the subject throughout the school. The head teacher gives strong, committed leadership to the development of the subject.

## **Physical education**

Provision in the subject is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weakness**

- Extra curricular activities usefully support the sporting provision.
- Exemplary record keeping shows that most pupils achieve well in swimming.

### **Commentary**

93. The school works well within the limitations of the accommodation. The hall and outdoor space are quite small and it is difficult for staff and pupils to access the playing field easily. The full curriculum is offered to pupils, and additional opportunities to play netball, football, or to engage in line dancing are available each week and support the development of skills positively. Team games and competitions in these sports are shared with other local schools as part of the school's sporting tradition. Very high quality swimming provision ensures that by Year 6 most pupils will have achieved the national curriculum requirement to swim 25 metres. Pupils also take part in swimming competitions with other local schools.
94. Lessons have to be managed carefully because of the small size of hall and stored equipment around the edge. The hall is the only way for Year 2 pupils to access the rest of the school and the start of lessons can be affected by the hall's use as a thoroughfare. The small space available does limit the pace at which lessons proceed. Good attention is paid to warm up and cool downs and to ensuring that pupils are dressed properly for the activities. Very good attention is paid to health and safety aspects. Teachers work well to overcome the limitations of the accommodation.
95. In a Year 2 lesson, most pupils developed accuracy in passing and trapping a ball as part of their skills development to a satisfactory level for their age. The pupils showed positive attitudes to the subject and worked hard to improve their own personal performance. The higher attainers with

good ball skills were unable to be challenged to the full because of the space limitation which prevented them from passing with accuracy over a greater distance for example. In a lesson in Year 3, pupils worked in pairs to produce a sequence of movements incorporating a roll and a balance to a sound standard. They enjoyed performing their work in front of their peers and responded well to the teacher's suggestions for improvements. However, only limited opportunities were made available for pupils to assess their own or others' achievements or to be involved in organising resources for themselves. Pupils in Year 6 reached a good standard because of the strong focus given to self-evaluation and in promoting independence and responsibility for improving on personal best. Good teaching enabled the pupils to refine their skills, for example when vaulting onto the box or doing handsprings. The pupils put together a sequence of movements travelling at different speeds and heights across a mat, combining well to finish with the forming of a balanced motif.

96. The subject leader is new to the post and offers sound leadership and management. He has a clear view for developing the subject further and in raising standards. Since the previous inspection the scheme of work has been updated and some new resources acquired. The subject leader has been allocated time to monitor teaching and learning but due to the short time he has been in post this is not yet having an impact upon standards.

### **Personal, social and health education and citizenship**

The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good** and fosters the very high standards of personal development demonstrated by the pupils.

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

- The school is a happy, well-ordered community in which all pupils are valued, encouraged to feel special, and given the chance to develop into sociable young people who care about their community.
- Pupils and their families are well known to teachers and support staff, and the needs of each child are the focus of all initiatives designed to promote self-esteem and confidence.
- The behaviour code is very successful at promoting and rewarding positive attitudes and effort.
- The rich curriculum provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- The school has begun working towards the Healthy Schools accreditation and is actively promoting healthy lifestyles.

#### **Commentary**

97. The school is successful in meeting the aims of its mission statement to *provide a caring, happy and safe learning environment in which all children are encouraged to develop confidence and self-discipline whilst being helped towards achieving their full potential*. The personal development of pupils is promoted very well through a cross-curricular, multi-faceted approach which is based on consistent messages and very good role models. Planned lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship are supplemented by a programme of visits and visitors, and daily assemblies which focus on the more thought-provoking, intangible elements of human nature. These acts of worship are also used well to promote cultural, moral and social awareness.
98. Very good, trusting relationships between pupils and all the adults who work in the school underpin the caring support and advice which helps individuals to become confident, considerate young people. In a Year 1 assembly the confidence of pupils speaking to the whole school was a real credit to their teacher. In a Year 5 circle time the teacher had developed an atmosphere in which classmates had come to trust one another, and they had the confidence to share their feelings honestly in a climate free from prejudice or ridicule.

99. The behaviour code is designed to promote and reward positive attitudes and effort. It is based on good manners and consideration for others. Pupils were very involved in writing their school and classroom rules, and this level of ownership is demonstrated by the way pupils know and abide by their rules. Sanctions are understood and respected. Bullying or anti-social behaviour is discussed and addressed, and the school has installed a listening box for pupils with concerns. Pupils are very aware of the issues, and nip any potential problems in the bud.
100. The school has begun working towards the Healthy Schools accreditation and is successfully promoting healthy eating by regulating pupils' snacks at break-time and by providing well-balanced school meals. It emphasises the importance of a healthy life style, and encourages physical exercise to promote mental alertness. Skipping ropes are very popular at playtime. The school nurse and the life education van visit the school to address issues like drugs awareness and healthy choices.
101. In their social development, pupils are encouraged to think about the impact of their actions on not only the school, but further afield. They actively support charities like Barnados and the NSPCC and links with a local special school give pupils first hand knowledge of physical and mental disability. The school council and system of prefects and house captains, increases pupils awareness of democracy, peer counselling and living with authority and is very successful in producing pupils who are self-controlled and willing to take responsibility.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). When judging standards- 1 is very high, 2 - well above average; 3 - above average; 4 - average; 5 - below average; 6 - well below average; 7-very low*

