

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SABDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sabden, Clitheroe

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119165

Headteacher: Mrs S. Dundon

Lead inspector: Mrs M. R. Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 November 2003

Inspection number: 257381

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:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	101
School address:	Whalley Road Sabden Clitheroe
Postcode:	BB7 9DZ
Telephone number:	01282 771000
Fax number:	01282 775896
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J. Glenn
Date of previous inspection:	18 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sabden Primary School serves the village of Sabden as well as pupils from areas outside of the village. There is a wide range of housing, ranging from small terraced and rented accommodation to large privately-owned detached houses. There is also a mix of unskilled, semi-skilled and professional employment. There are 101 pupils on roll, which is smaller than average. There are 29 part-time places for the nursery. Some children come from neighbouring villages to the nursery and go back there for their primary education. Nursery children work in a separate building and reception children use these facilities twice a week. Over 3 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is well below average. There are no pupils with full statements of special educational needs, which is below average. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups. There is a small amount of movement in and out of the school and currently there is a higher level of mobility in Year 3 than usual. Pupils are organised in mixed-age classes. There are two classes with job share arrangements in the nursery and the Years 5 / 6 class. There are two specialist teachers for music and physical education who work in the school for one day each week. One of the teachers is in her first year of teaching. Standards on entry to the school are average overall and vary from year to year. There is a wide range of ability within each year group.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11328	Mrs. M. R. Shepherd	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education, Foundation Stage
9986	Mr. W. Twiss	Lay inspector	
22452	Mrs. M. Farman	Team inspector	English, science, religious education, art and design, geography, history, music, special educational needs, English as an additional language

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. The headteacher is a very good leader and manager. Together with the very effective governors she sets a very clear educational direction for the work of the school. This emphasises the importance of ensuring that each pupil's individual needs are met, and providing a curriculum that balances very carefully pupils' academic and personal development. This results in pupils achieving very well and reaching standards well above average in Year 6. The oldest pupils show high levels of maturity in their personal development. Teachers provide an excellent quality curriculum and their good quality teaching systematically supports pupils' learning. The very good links with parents and the community enhances the range of opportunities pupils receive to extend their understanding of the world in which they live. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards of Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics, science, music and gymnastics are well above average. Standards in all other subjects of the curriculum are above expectations. More able pupils and individuals with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school. They form very good relationships and behave very well.
- The school provides an excellent curriculum that is matched extremely carefully to individual pupils' needs.
- Leadership and management of the headteacher and governors are very good.
- The quality of teaching is good, and support staff provide valuable contributions to individual pupils' learning. Teachers use the very good assessment systems very effectively.
- The school creates very effective links with parents and the local community.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils.
- The outdoor learning area for Nursery and Reception and the school hall are too small and there is no access to the playground for disabled pupils or adults.

Improvement since the previous inspection is **very good**. The strong leadership has ensured that standards have risen significantly and that all the previous key issues have been addressed thoroughly.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 6 results

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

Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes and, by the end of Reception, standards are well above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development, and above expectations in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Pupils continue to achieve well in the infant classes. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in mathematics and reading and above average in writing, science, religious education, art and design, geography and music. Achievement accelerates in the junior classes because there are consistent systems to support individual learning set up across the two classes. By Year 6,

standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science, music and gymnastics, and above average in all other areas of the curriculum. More able pupils and pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. National tests show that the school is extremely successful in adding value to pupils' progress between Year 2 and Year 6.

Pupils' have very positive attitudes towards their work. They form very good quality relationships with each other and with adults. They behave very well. Their moral, social and cultural development is very good and their spiritual development is good. Rates of attendance are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **very good**.

The quality of teaching is **good**, with some very good features. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour. They are very effective in providing encouragement and pupils work hard to complete their tasks. Teachers work in close partnership with support assistants. This provides very good support for pupils in group work. There are some missed opportunities for support staff to play an active role in whole class sessions. The teachers of the junior pupils use homework very effectively to extend pupils' learning. The specialist part-time music and physical education teachers' work is very good quality. Teachers have a very good understanding of each pupil's level of development because they use the very good assessment systems so well.

The school provides an **excellent** quality curriculum and values each subject equally. Each curriculum subject is taught very thoroughly. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is very good. There are very good quality extra-curricular activities, which are very well attended. There is a very good balance of expertise across the teaching staff and a very good proportion of support staff. The outdoor learning area for the nursery and reception classes and the school hall are too small, and there is no access to the nursery and playground for disabled pupils or adults.

The school takes **very good** care of its pupils. Health and safety systems are very good and the school provides very effective support and guidance for pupils. Trusting relationships are built between adults and pupils. The school has very good quality induction systems both when children join the school in Nursery or when they join the school midway through their schooling.

Partnership with parents and the community is **very good**. The school provides very good quality information to parents. There is an active parents and friends association. Parents' views are valued. They play an important part in supporting pupils' learning, both in working with teachers in lessons and in encouraging their children's work at home. The school forms strong relationships with different parts of the local, regional and international community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the headteacher are **very good**. She provides a very clear direction for the work of the school and she sets up very effective systems to accelerate pupils' achievement. Her strategies for ensuring that every pupil is included in all aspects of the school's work are excellent. She organises staffing very effectively to provide a balance of expertise across the school. She combines very well her work as a class teacher and a headteacher. The governance of the school is very good. Governors play a very active part in the life of the school. The co-ordinators provide a valuable lead in managing developments in their subjects.

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

Parents judge that teaching is good and that staff expect their children to work hard, which results in good progress. They believe that the school ensures that their children become mature individuals. Pupils are proud of their school. They appreciate the help that they get when their work is difficult and

are confident that they could go to an adult if they were worried about anything. They enjoy learning new things in lessons.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- implement the plans to extend the outdoor learning area for the nursery and reception children;
- investigate ways of improving the amount of space in the hall and the access for disabled pupils and adults to the playground and the nursery.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement from nursery to Year 2 is good and from Year 3 to Year 6 is **very good**. Standards in Year 6 are **well above average** in English, mathematics, science, music and gymnastics. Standards in all other subjects are above expectations by Year 6.

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

- There are very effective systems through the school that result in standards being well above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6.
- The very good quality teaching of the part-time specialists in physical education and music results in standards that are well above expectations by Year 6.
- Standards in all other subjects are above expectations by Year 6 because the school values each subject equally.
- More able pupils and pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because there is a strong emphasis on assessment and supporting individual pupils.
- The different levels of attainment on entry to the school have a negative impact on the consistency of standards at the end of Year 2.
- Children in Nursery and Reception achieve well because of the high proportion of adult support and the use of some very effective teaching strategies.

#### **Commentary**

##### **Foundation Stage**

1. Children enter the school with standards that are broadly average, but with a wide range of ability. The headteacher's and governors' beliefs that pupils should reach their potential by the time they leave the school is implemented very effectively right from the start of children's schooling. Children achieve well because nursery staff provide them with a rich variety of experiences over time, combined with consistently good teaching. There are very good links between the nursery and reception classes, and the very well organised assessment systems help to ensure that children make a smooth transition in their learning between the two classes. In Reception, children continue to receive consistently good teaching. In both classes, teachers organise support staff very carefully to ensure that children receive precisely targeted individual and group support.
2. Both nursery and reception staff emphasise the importance of personal, social and emotional skills. This ensures that standards in Reception are well above expectations. The teacher in Reception uses a highly-structured teaching programme for recognising letter sounds and learning to write them correctly. She provides interesting mathematical games to extend children's counting skills. Together with a strong emphasis on individual discussions with children, these strategies ensure standards in Reception that are above expectations in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards in the other areas of learning. Lessons were seen in music and standards in this aspect are very high in Reception because of the high quality teaching they receive from the part-time specialist. All these standards are an improvement since the previous inspection.

## Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	* (18.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	* (16.0)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	* (18.2)	16.5 (16.2)

\* There were only 9 pupils in the year group, so these results are not published. Figures in brackets are for the previous year when there were more than 10 pupils in the year group.

- The trend in the national tests over the past four years is above average. However, it varies between different year groups because of some considerable differences between the different age groups on entry. This year's national tests show a drop in standards because of the larger number of pupils with special educational needs than usual and the higher rate of mobility in this year group. In reading and writing their standards were average and standards in mathematics were below average. In contrast, the previous two year groups' standards were well above average in all three national tests, with some very high achievement in reading and writing. The increase in pupil numbers has allowed the school to employ an additional teacher for the infants. This is having a positive impact on standards because class sizes are smaller.
- The inspection judges achievement as good, with standards well above average in reading and mathematics. This is due to the very good partnership with parents in supporting reading and in the very systematic teaching of mathematical skills in both Years 1 and 2. Standards in writing are above average, the content and grammar are well above average but children do not achieve a good quality joined handwriting style early enough. Standards in science, religious education, art and design, geography and music are all above the expected level. This is due to the systematic teaching of each aspect of these subjects over time. Standards in design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the previous inspection because the school has worked hard to improve their provision.

## Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	*(29.3)	28.7 (18.9)
mathematics	* (29.6)	28.1 (28.2)
science	* (30.4)	29.4 (28.9)

There were only 9 pupils in the year group, so these results are not published. Figures in brackets are for the previous year when there were more than 10 pupils in the year group.

- Standards over the past four years in the national tests have been consistently well above average. Standards this year were very high in all the tested subjects. Compared with similar schools the value added between Year 2 and Year 6 is in the top 5 per cent in the country. The inspection judges achievement as very good and standards are currently well above average in English, mathematics and science. This is due to the very effective systems set up throughout the junior year groups and the consistently good teaching. Both teachers have a very good understanding of each other's work and this ensures very smooth progress between classes. Pupils benefit greatly from being in these classes for two years because there is no fall in

achievement as they move to the higher age group, and they have a flying start at the beginning of the autumn term. Assessment is used very skilfully to identify specific individual needs. The school then supports individuals very thoroughly, whether they are more able, have special educational needs, or are girls or boys. The result is that all pupils fulfil their potential.

6. Standards in music and gymnastics are well above expectations by Year 6. This is due to the expertise and skills of the part-time teachers, who teach every year group through the school. They provide a finely-tuned programme of work in these subjects. The high standards are also due to the value placed on these subjects by the school, and to the staff's encouragement and celebration of pupils' achievements.
7. Standards in ICT are above expectations by Year 6 due to the careful organisation of this subject and the expertise and enthusiasm of the ICT classroom assistant. Standards in religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography and history are all above expectations. This is due to the excellent way in which teachers cover the full curriculum, celebrating each subject. The school works extremely hard to involve the community and parents in supporting learning in all subjects. This results in a high level of enthusiasm for pupils across all subjects. The school identifies a very wide range of opportunities to link learning across the different subjects, and pupils respond to this by working very hard and reaching high standards. Standards in music, design and technology, ICT and gymnastics have improved considerably since the previous inspection because of the employment of subject specialists and the introduction of very thorough programmes of work through the school. Standards have also risen in English, mathematics and science.

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

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to their learning, behave **very well** and form very good relationships with each other and adults. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is **very good** and their spiritual development is **good**. Attendance is **very good**.

### **Main strengths**

- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and work, which motivate them and help them to sustain high levels of achievement.
- Behaviour is very good and this creates a happy and secure school in which the pupils enjoy their learning.
- Opportunities for personal development are very good and they ensure that pupils become sensible and mature individuals.
- Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good and their spiritual development is good. These positive features help them to develop their appreciation of the wider world.
- Attendance is very good. Pupils like coming to school and their parents fully support the school's efforts to maintain consistently high levels of attendance.

### **Commentary**

8. The pupils enjoy coming to school. They have very positive attitudes to their work because the teachers make their lessons interesting and set exciting challenges for them. Pupils of all ages respond well to the school's very high expectations. They are eager to please the staff and constantly strive to achieve their best. The school provides many clubs and very stimulating activities for the pupils, such as visits to places of interest. Pupils look forward to them and talk enthusiastically about how they help them to learn about history and art, for example. In lessons throughout the school, the pupils settle down to their tasks well. Even the youngest children work together and like the help that they receive from staff. The pupils take pride in their work and enjoy seeing it displayed in the school. Pupils are willing to share resources and their ideas, and the older ones are adept at discussing and debating their views.

9. Behaviour throughout the school community is very good. The school sets clear expectations of acceptable behaviour and gains the pupils' respect for them. Pupils themselves are involved in developing class rules and see this sense of ownership as one of the significant factors that makes the standards of conduct so high. The teachers offer a very good programme of personal, health and social education and use this effectively to help the pupils understand the evils of all forms of oppressive or harassing behaviour. Consequently, the pupils behave well towards the peers and no-one can recall any serious incidents of negative behaviour. The very high standards of behaviour create a harmonious atmosphere in classes. There is no disruption and pupils' work diligently to achieve very high standards of work.

Ethnic background of pupils		Exclusions in the last school	
Categories used in the annual school census	No of pupils on roll	NUMBER OF FIXED PERIOD EXCLUSIONS	
White – British	101	0	

10. Staff encourage pupils to develop their personal skills and to become mature young people. Pupils are given very good opportunities to take responsibility and will, for example, often lead fund raising events. Through looking after their younger peers, they develop a strong sense of caring for others. Their work in the community is admirable and this not only develops a real sense of belonging to the locality but, through performances, it also brings cheer and enjoyment to parents, residents and the elderly. The pupils enjoy entering the many competitions and festivals that the area has to offer. They like to contribute and enjoy the recognition that this brings for them and their school.
11. The pupils have very strong values. They are able to distinguish between what is right and wrong and understand that a diverse society can lead to competing and conflicting views. In their lessons they take opportunities to discuss and reflect on deeply sensitive issues. For example, members of the Years 3 and 4 class discussed their feelings about the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. The pupils develop a very good range of social skills. They relate well to each other and adults who serve and visit the school. The pupils are polite and courteous and readily fit into different social settings, such as their bi-annual residential visit. They learn about the diverse society that comprises modern Britain. They understand their own cultures and have a very good grasp of other faiths, such as Judaism and Hinduism. Through their music, the pupils experience a calming and serene atmosphere in assemblies. They show appropriate respect whilst they are in assemblies and appreciate that these occasions give them time to consider and reflect on the world beyond school. Good use is made of religious education lessons to provide thought-provoking discussions on spiritual matters, for example the significance of light in faith.

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

	Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence
School data	96.4	School data	0.0
National data	94.4	National data	0.5

12. The rates of attendance are consistently high and are well above average nationally. Both parents and pupils understand the importance of regular attendance at school and know that without it the pupils could not achieve nearly as well as they do.
13. The previous inspection reported that these aspects of the school's work were very good but that spiritual development was satisfactory. The very good picture remains and the pupils' spiritual development is now good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**. The curriculum is excellent, teaching is good with some very good features, care and welfare is very good and links with parents and the community are very good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** with very good features. Assessment is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in the junior classes organise very good systems to support every pupil's learning, which produces a very good capacity in pupils to work independently.
- Support staff work effectively in providing support for pupils in groupwork, but some opportunities are missed for using this support in whole class teaching.
- Teachers expect pupils to work hard, which ensures that pupils complete their work.
- Teachers give pupils great encouragement and insist on high standards of behaviour.
- The quality of teaching of the music and physical education specialists is very good.
- Teachers use the very good quality assessment systems very well.

### Commentary

14. Junior teachers set up very effective systems to support individual pupils' learning. These include carefully sequenced mathematics workcards and regular times for pupils to read independently. Both these strategies begin in Year 3 and by Year 6 pupils have made considerable progress in achieving these basic skills. Pupils have a very good understanding of how these systems work and rise to the challenge of completing tasks independently. These systems have a major impact on raising standards, particularly of more able pupils because every individual is working to their potential and making systematic progress across a range of skills. Pupils are keen to take these individual tasks home to complete because they want to finish each week's quota of work.
15. Throughout the school, teachers work closely with their support staff. This is particularly effective in ensuring that the different age groups in each class receive structured help during group work. Teachers plan a range of different levels of tasks to provide more challenging tasks for the more able pupils, and more straightforward tasks for less able pupils or pupils with special educational needs. The reception / Year 1 teacher provides a carefully balanced range of experiences for her two different age groups. This ensures that the learning matches the play-based needs of the reception children as well as the more formal work suited to the Year 1 pupils. Although some support staff play an active part in whole class discussions, this is not consistent and there are occasions when the time of these staff is not used efficiently. The school organises the use of the ICT classroom assistant very effectively and pupils benefit from her carefully targeted support. The teaching team in the Nursery work very well together. They all have a very good understanding of the organisation of each session and of the key learning expected. This provides a consistent programme of work for the children.
16. Teachers have high expectations for pupils to work hard throughout lessons. Pupils expect to settle quickly to their work and to complete the tasks by the end of the session. This ensures that pupils get used to producing a large volume of work across different subjects. Teachers regularly collect pieces of work from all the class in particular lessons and put it in special books for the rest of the school to look at. This produces a great sense of pride from the pupils, who take care in their presentation because they know there will be a wide audience for their finished product.

17. There are very good standards of behaviour in lessons because teachers insist on pupils acting sensibly, with consideration for others. Staff provide very good role models for pupils because they are unfailingly courteous to each other. Each member of staff gives individual and groups of pupils great encouragement to do their best, both verbally in lessons and in the good quality marking. Pupils value this encouragement and try harder as a result.
18. The music and physical education specialists use their very good subject knowledge very skilfully. Their programme of teaching throughout the school ensures that they have a very good understanding of every pupil's achievement as they progress up the different classes. They both teach at a fast pace and use a wealth of different tasks that build systematically on each other. This sustains pupils' concentration very well. The very good quality of this teaching has a significant impact on the high standards in these subjects.
19. Teachers all use the very good assessment systems very well to identify the particular needs of each pupil. They all use the well-organised systems to make sure that pupils sustain good progress as they move through the school because they carefully tailor their teaching to match these individual needs. Teachers use the benefits of teaching pupils over a two-year period to ensure that there is no drop in standards as they move into the higher age group.

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	4 (13%)	24 (78%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

#### The curriculum

The school provides its pupils with an **excellent** quality curriculum. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very well matched to individual pupils' needs.
- There is a very good quality programme for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs and those with particular gifts and talents is very good.
- The school places equal value on all subjects and there are very strong links across different subjects.
- The school has excellent strategies to ensure all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, including all out-of-school activities.
- There is outstandingly good curriculum enhancement through participation in the arts, sport, visits and visitors to the school.
- The accommodation has limitations in the available space in the hall; the lack of access for disabled pupils or adults to the nursery and the playground; the outdoor learning area for nursery and reception children is too small.

#### Commentary

20. The quality of the curriculum has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is having a very positive effect on pupils' standards and achievements. Each curriculum subject is covered very thoroughly in a manner that stimulates and feeds pupils' enthusiasm for

learning. The use of ICT to support learning is impressive and very effective. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

21. The nursery and reception curriculum is very well organised. Teachers balance each Area of Learning very carefully to ensure equal coverage over the week. There is a wide range of exciting and interesting activities for children to experience over the term. The teaching teams ensure that they use visits out and visitors in to widen children's understanding of their local community.
22. The very rich, varied and exciting curriculum includes out-of-the-school clubs for sporting and creative activities. There is a very well attended band that helps pupils develop their creative, performing and social skills. Parents give a very good level of support to all the activities the school provides. Visits to places of interest, such as Manchester Jewish Museum, and visitors to the school make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers make extremely good use of the area around Sabden to support work in subjects such as history, geography and science. This gives pupils direct information and increases their understanding of how places change over time. For example, pupils use old records to track the rise and decline of the calico industry. The school uses the expertise of visiting artists and musicians very effectively to promote interest in the arts. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' creative development and cultural awareness.
23. The school has exceptionally clear values and reflects them in the conduct of staff and pupils. It ensures the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs very effectively. All these pupils have full access to the National Curriculum, religious education and the extra activities the school provides. The very good provision ensures that the school takes account of pupils' needs and the Code of Practice in planning their work.
24. The school develops pupils' personal and social skills very well. This contributes to the very positive relationships in lessons. It ensures that pupils have a very strong understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community. The programme for sex education and relationships makes a significant contribution to pupils' moral and social development. It is very carefully structured to take account of pupils' varying stages of maturity. There is a very good programme to make pupils aware of the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse. This is part of their science lessons and teachers build up information and knowledge throughout the school.
25. There is very good provision for gifted and talented pupils. The school has clear procedures for identifying these pupils and provides a wide range of activities for them. These include master classes at a neighbouring secondary school. This is showing increased success across the curriculum. It contributes very effectively to the excellent strategies for inclusion. The school checks test results for achievement by gender and ability, and treats boys and girls equally. It identifies strengths and areas for improvement and takes carefully thought out steps to address any perceived weaknesses. This ensures that work in lessons matches the needs of all pupils.
26. There is a very good match of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. An example of the school addressing weaknesses is the employment of specialists to teach music and physical education. This is having a very significant effect on pupils' standards in these subjects. Well-trained teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and achievements. The school makes the best possible use of its accommodation to ensure pupils learn and achieve well. There are limitations because of the space in the hall, the size of the outdoor learning area for children in the Foundation Stage and the access by steep steps to the nursery and playground. This means that disabled pupils and adults cannot reach the playground or go into the nursery. The school already has plans to improve the provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage. Learning resources are interesting, well-organised and good quality. They make pupils want to use and learn from them. All members of staff use them very effectively to stimulate and promote learning. The library is attractive and inviting and

all books, fiction and non-fiction, are good in range, number and quality. Pupils appreciate the wide range of interest they provide and enjoy using them.

### Care, guidance and support

The care and guidance offered to the pupils is **very good**. There are very good procedures for child protection and health and safety.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff's personal knowledge of the pupils in their care is very good and they use this well to provide individual guidance and support.
- The procedures for promoting good behaviour are effective and help to maintain an orderly school community.
- The school's procedures for ensuring health and safety and child protection are very good and are clearly understood.

### Commentary

27. The staff work hard to gain the trust and confidence of the pupils. Starting in the nursery, they get to know the children well as they are eased into their formal education. The parents are encouraged to stay with their children until they settle and this gives staff a clear picture of the children's needs. As the children develop and progress through the school they continue to be very well supported. In classes, the teachers are alert to each pupil's needs and will, for example, provide additional and exciting work for them. The pupils who find learning difficult are given high quality help from the teachers and classroom assistants to enable them achieve the targets that are set for them. The school cares for all its children very well. Those who are gifted and talented are given opportunities to take challenging master classes at a local secondary school, such as those on forensic science.
28. The school's procedures and systems for maintaining consistently high standards of behaviour are very effective. Parents are well aware of the high expectations that the school sets, and support its work. The pupils, too, subscribe to the rules and fully appreciate that they are there for their benefit and are central to the aims of the school. The pupils like the rewards that they are given for good conduct and their personal and academic achievements. They value their weekly achievement assemblies and feel that they help to create an ethos that values and recognises high standards of behaviour and achievement as a normal function of the school.
29. The staff and governors carefully assess any risks and safety hazards. They act quickly and decisively to rectify any shortcomings. As a result, the school provides a safe working environment for the pupils and staff. Well-established procedures ensure that all staff know and understand how to deal with any child protection issues. The school has rarely needed to use these procedures. The school has clear systems in place to ensure that medicines and first aid are administered properly. The very good programme of personal, social and health education offers guidance on the dangers of substance abuse and deals with such matters as healthy eating, a subject on which the pupils have recently produced their own healthy eating recipe book.
30. The previous inspection recorded a positive picture of the support and guidance given to the pupils. This is still the case today.



## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **very good** relationships with the parents. The partnerships with other schools and the community are very good.

### Main strengths

- The quality and range of information for the parents is very good and provides them with a clear picture of the achievements of their children.
- Links with the community are very good and greatly enrich the pupils' learning.
- The school enjoys the strong support of the parents and they are actively involved in its life.

### Commentary

31. The school provides the parents with an interesting and well-presented range of information. This clearly informs them about what their children are learning each term. Regular newsletters tell the parents about the school's successes and events that are planned. Consultation sessions with the teachers are very well attended. It is not uncommon for all of the parents to come along to these meetings to discuss the achievements of their children. Annual reports to the parents are clear. They provide a detailed picture of what has been achieved and of how the pupils can do even better. The openness of the school and the accessibility of the staff enable the parents to talk informally to them about any concerns.
32. The very good relationships with the community give the pupils many opportunities for them to enhance their learning. They enjoy taking part in the range of arts events and the local competitions, and like the sense of pride and achievement that this gives them. The locality is used well to help the pupils to learn about interesting topics, like ancient settlements. The pupils positively welcome visitors to their school and they enjoy learning about the role of the police in the community, for example. The new local vicar, who is already active in the school community, is making a powerful contribution to the school's assemblies. Parents and friends of the school enjoy seeing the pupils' performances. The pupils take seriously the responsibility of showing off their acting and musical talents. Very good links with the local secondary school enable the pupils to move on smoothly to their next stage of education.
33. Parents are very satisfied with all that the school does for their children. Consequently, they support the school very well and are keen to become involved with it. Parents support learning at home and help with things like reading and research for the pupils' topic work. Volunteers come into school and help with work in the classes. Those with special interests or expertise offer this to help with learning about computers, for example. The parents and friends association is very active and attracts considerable support. It is successful in organising social events and in raising funds for the school.
34. The previous inspection concluded that there were positive relationships with the parents. Links with the parents and community are now very good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. Both the leadership and management of the headteacher are **very good**. The governance of the school is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher sets a very clear direction for all the work of the school and leads by example.
- The headteacher sets up very effective systems to ensure very good achievement through the school, and she manages staffing very skilfully.
- The governors play a very active part in the life of the school.

## Commentary

35. The headteacher has a very clear vision of the importance of every pupil fulfilling her or his potential both in academic and personal development. This has a major impact on the excellent levels of inclusion throughout the school as well as the high standards achieved by Year 6. She views the school as an integral part of the community and strives to create very positive partnerships with parents. She very successfully shares this philosophy with her staff, who are clearly committed to fulfilling the school aims. The headteacher also greatly values the role of every member of the school. This results in both pupils and staff feeling trusted and creates a very positive ethos throughout the school. The headteacher leads by example, by working very hard both within her own classroom and in her responsibilities as headteacher. She tackles weaknesses in the school's work very successfully and identifies ways to raise standards. This has a considerable impact on standards. The strategy to employ specialist teachers for music and physical education has produced standards well above expectations in these subjects.
36. The headteacher is a very effective manager. She creates a wide range of different systems throughout the school. These ensure that pupils make consistently very good progress as they move through the school because they are used to the expectations and pace of the work. It is the cumulative affect of these systems that has such a major impact in producing standards that are consistently well above average by Year 6. She also manages the curriculum extremely effectively. She delegates responsibility to teachers to lead different subjects and ensures that they have time to track the development of their subjects through the school. All co-ordinators take their subject responsibilities very seriously and expect to be used as a source of expertise. When teachers identify weaknesses the whole school team tackles them to improve provision. Once systems are in place they are carefully monitored to ensure that standards and provision are sustained. In this way the school systematically builds on its successes and provides an extremely well balanced curriculum. The headteacher also manages staff extremely well. She organises job share arrangements very effectively. Due to her very well organised systems, combined with great care in allocating responsibilities, pupils greatly benefit from the diversity of approaches of these different teachers. The headteacher also organises support staff very effectively, which overcomes the disadvantages of mixed-age classes.
37. The governance of the school is very good. Governors have a great commitment to the school and many have been serving on the governing body for a considerable length of time. They work in very close partnership with the headteacher and take their monitoring role very seriously. The curriculum committee is very effective and considers every subject at each of its meetings. Several governors monitor teaching and produce high quality reports for the governing body. The finance committee tracks spending very carefully and ensures that, in this situation as a small school, the governors do not become vulnerable to the impact of changes in pupil numbers over time. The headteacher and governors together ensure that the school uses the principles of best value very effectively. The chair skilfully manages meetings that allow every governor to voice their opinion, whilst getting through agenda efficiently. There is a broad range of expertise across the governing body and governors use this very effectively to extend the work of the school. A governor produces a high quality website for the school, which celebrates pupils' work and keeps parents well informed. The vicar provides high quality assemblies, which extend pupils' religious knowledge very effectively and provide very good support for spiritual development.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	329,052	Balance from previous year	50,231 <sup>1</sup>
Total expenditure	310,611	Balance carried forward to the next	18,440
Expenditure per pupil	3,603		

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<sup>1</sup> This amount included the spending for the new building for the nursery accommodation.

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. Provision for the reception and nursery is **very good**. There is a high proportion of support staff for these two classes and teachers organise them very effectively to support individuals and groups. Teachers plan a rich and stimulating curriculum, which is very well balanced across each area of learning every week. Teaching is consistently good. The nursery and reception teachers communicate well, despite being in different buildings. When children move up to Reception their needs are carefully met in the mixed-age class. The teacher ensures that the reception children have good quality opportunities to learn through play alongside the Year 1 pupils' activities. Reception children benefit from the interaction with the Year 1 children because they are interested in the different work that the older pupils are doing. There is a very effective system set up where reception children return to the nursery twice a week to use the nursery equipment. This has a very positive impact both on the younger children who benefit from the older children's confidence and in extending the range of opportunities for reception children's learning. The nursery teaching team have very detailed assessment systems that allow them to target very effectively children's individual needs. The part-time specialist in music works with both the reception and nursery children, which provides high quality opportunities for learning in this area.

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and standards in Reception are well above the expected level.
- There is a high emphasis in both classes on this aspect of children's learning.

#### Commentary

39. Teaching is good in this area of learning with some very good features. Standards of reception children have improved since the previous inspection. Nursery children have a very good understanding of the importance of following simple rules because the teaching team explain these carefully and then reinforce them regularly. Staff set up very good quality systems for children to develop these skills, such as lining up behind a special spotted line ready to go outside. Staff consistently emphasise the importance of personal qualities, such as sharing, and children soon learn to take their turn, whether this is driving a vehicle around the outdoor play area or waiting for the bowl of fruit to come round to them at snack time. Most children carry out independent tasks with confidence because staff support them in understanding what they are expected to do. When children are unsure of themselves, staff remain with them to encourage them to complete the task, which extends children's self-esteem very effectively. In Reception, the teacher organises her classroom very carefully to offer play experiences to extend children's independent learning. Children carry out these activities so well that they do not disturb the Year 1 pupils in their more formal tasks. The teacher also uses space very effectively, such as the hall, the library and the staff room, to extend children's development in this Area of Learning<sup>2</sup>. She plans very interesting play activities, such as going on a journey in a pretend bus, which allows children to develop the skills in working harmoniously together as an age group.

40. The teaching teams take every opportunity to extend children's learning in this area. The teachers organise the mornings and afternoons very carefully to provide a balance of

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<sup>2</sup> The Areas of Learning are the different aspects of the curriculum for reception children as recommended by the government.

opportunities across the sessions. These include formal whole class sessions, small group activities and individual tasks. Children respond well to this variety because each session is carefully timed to ensure that concentration levels are sustained. All staff have a very good understanding of the particular needs of each child and ensure that the individual support they provide matches their needs very carefully. Confident children are given extra responsibilities and timid children receive very gentle persuasion to try new tasks. This sensitive support ensures that all children achieve well.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well because reception teaching builds very carefully on nursery teaching.
- The nursery teaching team develops children's skills through regular individual discussions with children and the use of key stories.
- The reception teaching team provides very carefully structured opportunities for the development of skills in reading and writing development.
- Teachers provide a rich variety of experiences to extend children's skills.

### **Commentary**

41. Teaching is consistently good in the nursery. Staff seize opportunities to talk to children individually during group work and in independent play. The high proportion of staff to children ensures that each child receives this interaction very regularly. All staff have a very good understanding of both each pupils' level of development and of their personal circumstances. They use this knowledge well to encourage children to respond to their questions. Staff speak slowly and clearly, which provides a good model for the children to copy. The teaching team effectively uses key stories that are told during the week to extend children's vocabulary. This varies from the least confident children using simple words of the main characters, to the more able children using terms such as 'gallant prince'. The nursery children greatly benefit from the informal discussions with the reception children when they work together in the afternoon sessions.
42. Teaching is consistently good in Reception. A particularly good feature is the use of a highly structured programme of work every day to extend children's skills in writing and recognising different letter sounds. This scheme ensures that children systematically build on previous knowledge and gain great confidence in reading and writing. This strategy is combined with children working regularly in small groups to read a story together. The high level of skill of the classroom assistant ensures that children independently tackle reading simple sentences, which is above the expected standard for this age. Children develop confidence in talking to each other and to adults because the teacher organises staff time carefully to provide regular opportunities for children to interact with adults.
43. In both the Nursery and Reception, teachers provide a rich variety of experiences for children. They organise interesting activities each day and organise exciting whole-day projects such as 'green day'. They make very good use of these experiences to extend children's communication, language and literacy development. Standards have been sustained since the previous inspection.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Nursery staff provide a good balance between formal and informal mathematical learning, and children achieve well.
- The reception teacher organises support staff very effectively to extend children's mathematical learning.

### **Commentary**

44. Teaching is good in the nursery and children receive systematic opportunities to develop curiosity about numbers. Staff carefully plan this work each week. Teachers provide exciting activities to stimulate children to ask simple mathematical questions, such as counting the number of bugs in different coloured boxes. Staff have a very clear idea of the key mathematical language that they expect children to learn in these formal settings, and they use careful questions to support this development. The teaching team uses a wide range of opportunities to support children in simple counting. They do this across activities, such as playing in the sand or counting the number of steps as they walk around a large rubber tyre.
45. Teaching is good in Reception, with some very good features. Reception children greatly benefit from the high proportion of support staff in their mixed-age class. The teacher plans a wide range of interesting activities and staff take turns in supporting reception children. The group work is particularly good when the support assistant uses simple games to reinforce children's learning. More able children achieve very well. These children handle simple sums up to ten, read these sums correctly when they are written formally and some even write out the sum correctly themselves. This is a very high standard of work for their age and is an improvement since the previous inspection.

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

46. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards. However, one lesson was observed where reception children were designing and making vehicles alongside the Year 1 pupils. Children were achieving well because the support assistant provided a careful sequence of questions to take the children through the design process. Children thoroughly enjoyed deciding on which vehicle they would make. They handle terms such as 'axles' and 'wheels' confidently because the adult used these words regularly during the task. In the Nursery, children were seen using the computers. They worked well, with adult support, and some managed to follow through simple instructions independently because the adult had given them clear instructions of which keys to press.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

47. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards overall. However, part of a lesson in the nursery was seen where children were playing on the outdoor equipment. Children were working at the expected level, with some children very confident in handling the large equipment, but some children only tackling it with support from adults. Some of the children's movements in outdoor play were restricted due to the lack of space for the different activities. The school has already identified this and plans are in place to extend this space. Observations of children handling tools and materials showed standards above the expected level because staff support children so effectively in these tasks.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

48. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards except in music, where two lessons were seen, and art, where a scrutiny of children's work was carried out. Children achieve a very high standard in the nursery in music because the music specialist sets very high challenges, to which children thoroughly enjoy responding. They have a very good repertoire of songs because the specialist teaches them systematically over time. The teacher combines very good subject knowledge with an understanding of the needs of nursery children. This foundation is extended very effectively in Reception. These children work with the Years 1 and 2 pupils and strive to match the older pupils' work. The teacher ensures that reception children take their turn, and the presence of the reception teacher ensures that they have the confidence to carry out the challenging tasks. Standards of reception children are very high in music. Standards are above the expected level in art. Children experience a wide range of different ways of handling art materials and produce sensitive pictures, paintings and collages, combining different colours and materials with imagination.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

#### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent curriculum stimulates pupils to achieve well above average standards by Year 6.
- Pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good with many strengths.
- The systems for checking pupils' progress and achievements, and for increasing learning, are very good.
- There are very good arrangements for pupils with special educational needs.
- The very good leadership and management ensure the maintenance of high standards.
- There is not enough emphasis on the introduction of neat and joined handwriting.

#### Commentary

49. The current Year 6 pupils are achieving higher standards than at the previous inspection. This is because of the consistently good quality teaching, which has many very good features. Significant amongst these are the very good systems of support for individual pupils in the junior part of the school. Teachers use these very effectively to enable pupils to reach high standards. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, achieve very well across the school. This is because the very rich, varied and exciting curriculum stimulates pupils and makes them want to learn.
50. All teachers expect pupils to listen carefully and speak clearly. This ensures that pupils increase their ability to come to reasoned decisions through discussions with each other and adults. For instance, pupils in Years 5 and 6 discussed the use of powerful verbs to create effect. The reflective teaching enabled them to put their ideas forward confidently. This makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development.
51. Pupils across the school achieve very well in reading. The development of their reading skills goes hand in hand with their enjoyment of books. Support from home and carefully structured reading sessions play a significant part in pupils' achievement and enthusiasm. As pupils move through the school they become clear about the strategies they need to use to work out words and their meaning. They tackle new reading material very confidently and have firm

preferences for favourite books and authors, such as Jacqueline Wilson, Terry Deary and J R Tolkien. A pupil reading *The Return of the King* said, 'You really get into a book and become part of it'. Pupils enjoy, appreciate and regularly use the range of books in the well-stocked library for pleasure and research. Teachers organise independent reading books very effectively to ensure that pupils read a variety of different genre over time. All pupils use computers as an integral part of their research work.

52. Pupils' standards in writing are above average by Year 2 and very high by Year 6. Most pupils write neatly and fluently by Year 6 and produce lively and interesting pieces of work. For instance, pupils write thoughtful and reflective poems and use vocabulary imaginatively. They have a very clear understanding of how to use similes and metaphors, and use computers well to enhance and present their work. Year 2 pupils use grammar confidently and write interesting stories. However, standards of handwriting are not as high because joined writing is not introduced early enough. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement. By Year 6 pupils have compensated for their late start in developing a joined style and their handwriting is neat and well presented.
53. The consistently good quality of teaching has a positive effect on pupils' achievement. All teachers use the literacy strategy well and are confident in their teaching. They enrich the curriculum very effectively by using the expertise of visiting poets and authors. This increases pupils' awareness of different uses of writing as well as their interest and enthusiasm. All teachers aim questions carefully at different pupils to check understanding and to move learning forward. Pupils are eager to answer and keen to join in these sessions. The teachers use classroom assistants very well to help pupils who need extra support. This makes sure that all pupils have equal chances to succeed. Pupils behave very well in lessons and they work with purpose and very high levels of concentration. They respond very well to the teachers' high expectations of behaviour and achievement and the demanding work. All pupils have regular homework and receive an effective level of support from their parents. This contributes significantly to the high standards they achieve. The school makes very good use of specialist support for pupils it identifies as being gifted and talented. As a result, these pupils achieve very well and their specific needs are fully met. The systems to measure pupils' progress and achievement are very thorough. All teachers use them to set targets for individual pupils to achieve. They discuss the targets with pupils and their parents and celebrate achievements. These steps contribute to pupils' high standards and increase their self-esteem.
54. The very good quality co-ordinator regularly checks pupils' work to ensure they reach suitably high standards. She shares her findings with all members of staff. This gives the school a very clear view of what needs improving. For example, the school is already taking steps to improve pupils' handwriting in Years 2 and 3. Previous improvements include steps to increase boys' interest and skills in writing. This is having a very significant effect on achievement because there is no noticeable difference between the performance of boys and girls.

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

55. Pupils make extremely good use of their English skills in all other subjects. This is evident in the quality of their report writing in subjects such as science, design and technology, history and geography. Their poetry and narrative writing is of very high quality. The school makes very good use of performances to increase pupils' speaking and listening. Throughout the school pupils make very effective use of their reading skills to find out about the past and current events.
56. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. There is an increase in standards across the school, the curriculum is exceptionally rich and stimulating, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, there is regular monitoring of teaching and learning and there are systematic systems for checking pupils' standards and progress.

### **MATHEMATICS**



Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths**

- Pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average, both in Year 2 and Year 6.
  - There are very effective systems for ensuring each pupil achieves their potential.
  - Teachers provide a very well balanced curriculum.
  - Teaching is consistently good through the school.
  - The school exploits the benefits of mixed-age classes.
  - Standards have risen since the previous inspection.
57. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics because the school works very hard to provide systematic opportunities for them to build on previous learning. This ensures that pupils gain confidence in developing mathematical skills and understanding, and produces very positive attitudes to their work. By Year 2, pupils tackle mathematical problems with enthusiasm, handling numbers at a higher level than expected. They tackle new work with great confidence, supporting each other in working out problems, such as how sets of addition can be related across to multiplication. They have a very good understanding of measurements and shapes because they get regular opportunities to extend their learning in these areas. Year 6 pupils have lost none of this enthusiasm, and a much larger proportion of pupils than average are working at higher levels expected for their age across all the aspects of the mathematics curriculum. Gifted pupils justify their accurate problem solving very skilfully and pupils devise their own methods to work out sums because teachers expect them to work this way.
58. The headteacher, who is the very good quality mathematics co-ordinator, has set up very effective systems throughout the school. They provide a very comprehensive basis for supporting the specific needs of every pupil. There is a wide range of very good quality assessment strategies that teachers analyse carefully. The most effective teaching system is the organisation of individual work cards that pupils complete each week in the junior classes. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these cards and are keen to complete them. Pupils are eager to complete them for homework. The very high levels of consistency in the use of these cards provide a very firm framework for individual learning. Pupils develop high levels of independence because they are so familiar with the system. Teachers mark them assiduously and pupils value this feedback. The long-term use of these cards is having a very positive impact on standards, particularly the high proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 by Year 6. They provide excellent opportunities for gifted pupils to work at levels usually expected well into secondary education.
59. Throughout the school, teachers provide a very carefully balanced curriculum, with a firm emphasis on mathematical problem solving. Teachers are very careful to select the best parts of the different workbooks and text books in use to ensure that the work matches the pupils' needs. They provide a very good variety of different ways for pupils to record their work, which extends their mathematical skills very effectively.
60. Teaching is consistently good. Lessons are well organised and the group work is very carefully planned to ensure that pupils receive different work that closely matches their needs. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work rate and pupils settle quickly to their tasks and work hard to complete their work. Teachers are very effective in encouraging pupils to explain how they have solved different problems. They place a high value on the diversity of different ways of finding the answer. In whole class discussions, teachers ensure that pupils have the time to explain their thinking in full. They then use these explanations well as teaching points for the rest of the class. The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils gain confidence because teachers give them special support during lessons. Teachers also work very closely with parents to provide a close partnership in supporting each pupil with special educational needs.

61. Teachers have a very good understanding of the standards of each pupil in the older age group in their class because they have taught them the previous year. This ensures that, over the two years that pupils are in each class, they make consistently good progress. The partnership between classroom assistants and teachers is very effective in supporting the needs of the different ages in group work because teachers organise this support very carefully. However, some opportunities are missed for classroom assistants to directly support pupils during whole class sessions.
62. Standards have risen since the previous inspection because the staff are determined to keep improving their provision. They do this by sustaining the methods that are working, whilst introducing new systems to further support each pupil's learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

63. Staff work hard to identify different ways of extending mathematical development across different subjects. This is particularly good in ICT. Pupils develop very good problem-solving skills when programming computers to control different objects, such as machines or light sources.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in all elements of science are well above average.
- Pupils achieve well because of the consistency of the good teaching.
- The school has a clear focus on scientific enquiry and investigation and on the use of specific technical language.
- The curriculum is rich and very stimulating.
- There is very good use of ICT to support learning in science.
- The thorough and systematic assessment systems meet the needs of individual pupils very well.

### **Commentary**

64. There has been a very significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' standards throughout the school are well above average. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work, the systems for assessment of progress and achievement are very thorough and the co-ordinator monitors teaching, learning and standards regularly. The school makes very effective use of the local area and secondary schools to give pupils a varied, interesting and very exciting curriculum.
65. Teachers place great emphasis on the investigation element of science. This makes a very significant contribution to the standards pupils achieve. Throughout the school, teachers ensure that pupils produce carefully labelled drawings and accurate diagrams. They write concise and clear summaries of their findings. These strategies ensure that pupils' understanding is well above the expected level across the school. The tasks for pupils with special educational needs are planned to support their individual needs. This and the sensitive support from adults ensure they make very good progress in science. For instance, all pupils with special educational needs achieved the expected Level 4 in the 2003 national tests.
66. There is very thorough coverage of the science of living things and teachers make very effective use of computers to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 use computers confidently and accurately to record their findings about food. The school has a very well structured programme of health education that forms part of their work on living

things. This ensures that pupils have a very clear moral understanding of relationships and issues such as alcohol abuse and drug misuse.

67. By Year 6, pupils have well above average knowledge of the properties of solids, liquids and gases and are eager to share their learning. They use the correct technical formula for gases such as oxygen and carbon dioxide, investigate properties enthusiastically and record their findings accurately. For example, pupils in a Year 6 lesson worked very well together to experiment with the gas given off by yeast as it reacts with sugar and water. Skilful questioning led to pupils increasing their understanding of the properties of carbon dioxide.
68. Teachers make work in science interesting and exciting for all pupils. This makes sure that girls are as enthusiastic as boys and achieve equally well. The co-ordinator is very clear about what needs to be done to raise standards further. She has put a range of effective strategies in place already. These are making positive contributions to pupils' achievements, and include an emphasis from Year 1 on the use of investigation and correct scientific language.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and standards in Year 6 are above the expected level.
- The school uses the expertise of the very good quality ICT classroom assistant very effectively.
- The school covers the full curriculum systematically.
- There is some inefficient use of computers in lessons.
- The after-school computer club provides very good opportunities to extend learning.

### **Commentary**

69. The school has been very successful in raising standards from below expectations in Year 6 at the previous inspection to above expectations currently. Staff have achieved this through careful planning of the opportunities needed to develop skills systematically, providing better quality hardware and software throughout the school and appointing a high quality classroom assistant to support pupils' learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this subject and are keen to show their expertise. By Year 6, pupils produce high quality *PowerPoint* presentations, which includes their own voices, interesting graphics and text that carefully matches the needs of the audience. This is particularly good in history, where the classroom assistant provides imaginative resources such as a bank of pictures and data, which allows pupils to produce high quality presentations that compare the past with the present. Year 6 pupils handle control very effectively, producing complex programs for projects such as burglar alarms or sequences of movements for mechanical toys. This is a result of careful teaching of the skills needed and then varied opportunities across the school week for pupils to experiment with the equipment. Pupils word process their work regularly, consider the final product carefully and compare the commercial use of computers with their own efforts, such as when they produced birthday cards.
70. The classroom assistant has very good subject knowledge. The school organises her time very carefully to ensure that her expertise is used directly to extend pupils' learning. She works systematically across classes, teaching pupils new skills in small groups. This ensures that each pupil has individual time to support the learning of every new skill. Careful records are kept to ensure that each pupil has their turn.
71. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that each of the aspects of the curriculum is taught systematically over time. The co-ordinator monitors work carefully and keeps a well-organised

portfolio to show the steady development of skills through the school. This allows teachers to identify the learning that has taken place in the previous class.

72. In the majority of lessons, teachers ensure that computers are in use. However, in a minority of lessons in Year 1, computers are not fully in use and some pupils have difficulty in using the programs because they are not given enough support to understand how they work.
73. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the well organised computer club which operates after school each week. It is well attended and pupils enjoy consolidating their learning from their lessons and extending the work to carry out more complicated tasks. The use of the classroom assistant in this club ensures that her knowledge of the work carried out during the teaching day is used to the full.

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

74. This is very good throughout the school because the headteacher has led the staff in planning a wide range of different opportunities across each subject to develop pupils' skills.

### **HUMANITIES**

75. No lessons were seen in **history** and **geography**. This means it is not possible to make a secure judgement about provision. The evidence base consists of discussions with pupils, subject portfolios and pupils' work.
76. Work in pupils' books, teachers' planning and pupils' work on walls around the school show that work in **history** is varied and stimulating. Pupils' work is considerably enhanced by visits to local places of historical interest and photographs of old Sabden. It is clear that standards exceed those expected for most pupils by the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils write lively and interesting accounts of life in the Blitz. A noticeable feature of work by the older pupils is the carefully considered writing about working children in Victorian times. This shows above average ability to relate to the feelings of people from the past.
77. The collection of work in **geography** shows that pupils use a very wide range of first-hand experiences as they move through the school. It is evident that teachers build carefully on pupils' earlier learning and encourage them to use computer programs as well as books for research. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy their work in geography and make full use of the stimulating local area. They have above average awareness of the effect climate has on people's lives and occupations. For instance, pupils explain clearly how water shortages in hot countries adversely affect life.
78. There are well-structured assessment systems in place for both subjects that give a clear picture of standards and achievement across the school.

### **Religious education**

Provision in the subject is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good links with other subjects, particularly the use of ICT for multi-media presentations.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to work in religious education.
- The consistently good quality teaching ensures pupils learn to value and respect other people's beliefs.
- There are thorough and careful assessment systems that measure pupils' understanding and achievement.

## Commentary

79. Standards of attainment by the ages of seven and eleven are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. It was possible to see only two lessons, both in the junior part of the school. However, the work in pupils' books and their response during assemblies indicate that achievement is good throughout the school.
80. The consistently good quality of teaching in the lessons seen makes a positive contribution to the standards pupils achieve. They respond very well to interesting work and, by Year 3, understand the significance of light in different religions. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm continues as they move into the upper junior class because of the calm and reflective teaching. They link religious concepts effectively with their own lives. For example, pupils thought about the meaning of Karma and one pupil wrote: 'I want to try and stop talking too much. Apart from that, I appreciate and like the way I am'. This shows high levels of achievement in looking inwards and examining themselves. There are very effective links with other subjects. For instance, pupils research Hinduism to make multi-media presentations.
81. The good quality co-ordinator takes a strong lead in ensuring that the teaching of religious education is consistent throughout the school. She tracks pupils' achievement very carefully and ensures that the work meets pupils' needs. Visits to different places of worship and visitors to the school help increase pupils' awareness of the rich diversity of Britain. This prepares them well for life in a wider community.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

82. No lessons were seen in **art and design**. It is not, therefore, possible to make a judgement about provision. However, curriculum plans, the collection of pupils' work, displays of work around the school, work in pupils' sketchbooks and discussions with the very good quality subject co-ordinators and pupils show that standards are above expectations. Work planned in art and design is varied, exciting and interesting. This stimulating approach is evident in the display of figure drawings by pupils in Years 5 and 6. They clearly depict movement and show well developed skills of observation and pencil technique. Pupils of all abilities and ages use sketchbooks very effectively to explore and experiment with different media and styles. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. They increase their ability to use brushes and paint very well. Work in art makes a very positive contribution to pupils' cultural development. For instance, the younger pupils have made a wall hanging in the style of Russian geometric felt work.
83. Only one lesson was seen in **design and technology**. However, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that the school has worked very hard to raise standards, from below expectations in Years 2 and 6 in the previous inspection to above expectations currently. The school has achieved this by working hard to ensure that all aspects of the design process is taught thoroughly across each project. Teachers provide a very good balance across the different aspects of this subject and ensure that there is a good range of different formats for pupils to develop planning and evaluating skills. Pupils use digital photographs very effectively to record their work. Systematic monitoring of pupils' work by the co-ordinator ensures that pupils steadily build on previous skills as they move through the school.

## Music

Provision is **very good**

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards are well above expectations throughout the school.

- Consistently very good specialist teaching ensures very high levels of interest and enthusiasm.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and behave very well in lessons.
- The curriculum is very rich, varied and stimulating.
- There is an extremely strong emphasis on inclusion.
- Pupils' work in music makes a very strong contribution to their personal, cultural and social development.

## Commentary

84. The consistently very good quality teaching makes pupils enthusiastic and eager to learn, and they achieve very well. Standards exceed those expected for most pupils by Year 2, and are well above the expected levels by Year 6. The very high level of motivation and interest from the older pupils is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection. This is a direct result of the lively teaching and the very rich and varied curriculum. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 play an instrument in the school band. The school treats this as an essential part of the curriculum because it firmly believes that developing pupils' creative and personal skills is as important as their academic development. This very effective inclusion strategy continues in the lower part of the juniors where all pupils have the opportunity to play a range of recorders. The systematic teaching of skills and techniques contributes significantly to pupils' high standards.
85. By Year 2, pupils confidently perform to each other and say how their performance could be improved. They sing sweetly and rhythmically, and thoroughly enjoy making music. The teacher builds on these skills as pupils move through the school. This ensures that, by Year 6, pupils have very well developed skills in performing together and individually. They co-operate very effectively in small and large groups, listen carefully to each other's performance and make helpful suggestions about how to improve. Pupils concentrate very hard throughout the school and work with a strong sense of purpose. The teacher includes pupils with special educational needs in all musical activities. This ensures they enjoy making and listening to music. The school places a very strong emphasis on the creative and performing arts. This increases pupils' confidence and expertise in singing, instrumental playing and performing. For instance, a pupil played her flute confidently and accurately as pupils sat down to lunch. This deepened pupils' appreciation of other's talents and increased the flautist's self-esteem.
86. The very effective specialist teacher ensures that planning is consistent and builds effectively on pupils' previous learning. He leads singing practices and teaches all classes, from the reception class to Year 6. This contributes significantly to the pupils' high standards. The instrumental teachers and the specialist teacher carefully record pupils' achievements and progress. They use the findings to plan future work that meets individual needs and abilities. All pupils take part in a wide range of musical activities outside school. These include playing in competitions and giving concerts to people in the community. This makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal, cultural and social development. There is a very good level of improvement to the quality of teaching, curriculum and pupils' standards since the previous inspection.
87. Only two lessons were seen in **physical education**. Standards have risen since the previous inspection because the school identified teachers' lack of expertise and employed a high quality part-time specialist to work through the school. One of the lessons observed was for Years 5 and 6 pupils. It was evidence of the culmination of the very thorough programme of work in gymnastics operating through the school. Standards in Year 6 are well above the expected level in gymnastics. All pupils produce a great variety of complex sequences of movements, combining features such as rolls, vaults, jumps and landings because they have consistently developed their skills over time. However, all these routines are carried out in a hall that is too small for the size and number of pupils. It is only through extremely careful organisation that they manage to complete their work. Teaching is excellent, with an extremely fast pace and very high expectation of pupils' performance, which pupils respond to very well.

The school uses local expertise skilfully to raise standards in physical education. In Year 2, pupils benefit from the skill of a local Blackburn Rovers team member, who increases pupils' level of skill in this aspect of games. The use of male external support provides a good role model for the boys and encourages them to work harder. The school provides a wealth of different sporting activities outside of the normal school day that also supports development very effectively in this subject. The school uses its lottery funding very well, providing very good quality opportunities for any pupil or member of the community to develop dance, aerobics or football after school each week.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

#### **Outstanding teaching of gymnastics by a part-time specialist in a small school hall**

This small school identified the need for additional teaching expertise in physical education. The headteacher and governors solved this by employing a high quality specialist to teach in the school for one day a week, to work with each class. This arrangement allows him to set up highly organised systems throughout the school. By Year 6, pupils understand all of his key phrases and instructions and respond immediately. So, when he says, 'Zig, zag, zig,' the pupils immediately move into a quick routine, with three different widths of jumps. He has very high expectations of every pupil and works at an amazing pace as he gives instructions, watches the responses, gives encouragement, teases pupils into working harder, and identifies interesting movements that he shares with the class. Not a second is wasted, and pupils expect to listen, work, identify improvements, practise and then move straight on to another task. With the simple command of 'Apparatus out', pupils move in teams to their allocated equipment and everything is set out in a trice. Because the hall is so small, pupils create small teams to work on the apparatus, with never-ending chains working round their own small area. The scarcity of space is seen as a challenge and pupils have a very high level of awareness of where other pupils are moving. Every pupil produces complex sequences of movements, which flow smoothly between jumps, rolls, vaults and balances with a variety of speeds and levels. They finish the session flushed with exhaustion from the efforts they have made, but thrilled with the praise they have received from their teacher.

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

88. Only one lesson was observed in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision. However, scrutiny of pupils' written contributions show that by Year 6 pupils discuss these issues with confidence and subtlety above the expected level. The co-ordinator monitors this subject very thoroughly and ensures that there is a carefully balanced programme of work provided consistently throughout the school. A careful record of pupils' experiences is kept to ensure that teachers understand what pupils have learnt in previous years. Teachers use the community very effectively to extend pupils' learning in this area. Staff use assemblies well to extend pupils' understanding of personal issues, such as when the headteacher identified the value of sustaining friendship over time.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<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	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
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>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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



