

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bacup

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119662

Headteacher: Mr M Kermath

Lead inspector: Mr J Heap

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 November 2003

Inspection number: 257850

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	138
School address:	Tong Lane Bacup Lancashire
Postcode:	OL13 9LJ
Telephone number:	01706 873 123
Fax number:	01706 872 421
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Fr M Twomey
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Roman Catholic primary school caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. It is situated on the outskirts of Bacup, in the Rossendale district of Lancashire. There are 138 pupils on the roll of the main school: 60 boys and 78 girls. This is a below average sized school in England. The roll has decreased in recent years. Pupils arrive at school reflecting the full range of attainment levels, but overall attainment on entry is very low. Pupils are organised into 7 classes, three of which have more than a single age group of pupils. The pupils come from a large, semi-rural catchment area which has areas showing significant signs of deprivation. Housing ranges from local authority estates to private individual dwellings. Over time, it is an area which has a high turnover of pupils. The vast majority of pupils are white and a small number come from a narrow range of ethnic heritages. No pupils have a first language other than English. There are 48 per cent entitled to free school meals: this is more than double the national average. Thirty-eight per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and this is well above average. The needs are varied with moderate learning difficulties and communication being the most prevalent. Six have a statement of special educational needs. The school has been involved in the following initiatives:

- Single Regeneration Budget;
- Sure Start;
- New Opportunities Fund.

The school received an Achievement Award in 2002 & 2003.

The school has an 18-place nursery. Children enter the nursery at the age of three years, and the children in the most recent intake have very low scores on the English, mathematics and social skills indicators.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18824	J Heap	Lead inspector	English Physical education English as an additional language
9649	J Smith	Lay inspector	
30724	D Hiscock	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
18146	M Onyon	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with very good features, and this judgement is supported by the views expressed by parents and pupils. The school achieves high standards in national tests and pupils' achievement across the school is very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and the management of the school is effective. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards in national tests at the age of 11 are very high (top five per cent of schools) when compared to similar schools;
- pupils' achievement is very good from the very low attainment they show on entering the school;
- pupils have very good attitudes and relationships and they behave well, due to the very good spiritual, moral and social development that they receive from the school;
- pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the effective support that they receive;
- this is a caring school that keeps a very good check on the many needs of its pupils;
- links with parents and the community are very good and boost pupils' learning;
- provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good;
- attendance is well below average and unsatisfactory;
- the outdoor provision for children in nursery and reception is unsatisfactory;
- subject coordinators have too little time to check on standards in teaching;
- the quality and use of assessment procedures and practices in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are inconsistent;
- there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn independently.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school has maintained most of the strengths identified in the last report and improved the key issues. For example there has been good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology. There has also been a good improvement in the standards the school reaches in national tests. However, there has been insufficient improvement in the provision for multicultural development.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Overall, pupils' achievement is **very good**. Throughout the school, pupils who are in the care of the local authority and those from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve at the same level as their peers. Children enter the school with very low standards, particularly in literacy, numeracy and social development. Achievement is good in nursery and reception, but standards are still well below average by the time pupils' enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well and by the age of seven standards are below average. By the end of Year 6, results in national tests are well above average and the pupils achieve very well. Current standards are **average** due to higher levels of special educational needs. Targets set by the school are challenging but achievable. In 2002 and 2003, the results of national tests at age seven showed no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. In the tests at 11, girls did better than boys in 2003. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, overall. The school puts a lot of emphasis on the teaching and learning of basic

skills and the standards are high enough. Standards in information and communication technology are average.

Overall, pupils' personal development is **very good** and this matches the overall judgement in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and study and their behaviour is good. Teachers work very hard and successfully to ensure that lessons are not disrupted. Pupils develop very good relationships with their peers and the adults in the school. Pupils like school and gain much from it. Attendance needs to be improved.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Across the school, the particular strengths include high expectations and challenge, the good use of learning resources and the insistence on high standards of behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to have a go and they enjoy their lessons as a result. In nursery and reception, the strongest teaching was seen with the very youngest children. A particular strength is the strong teamwork and the very effective way that teaching assistants are deployed. Throughout the school there is a need to provide the pupils with more opportunities to work independently. In Year 6, the teacher is doing a very good job of preparing the pupils for life at secondary school and last year six pupils passed the examination for entry to the local grammar school. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is good and plays a significant role in the raising of pupils' levels of attainment. However, in other subjects the quality and use of assessment is more variable and this leads to some pupils being given insufficient challenge, for instance, higher attaining pupils in information and communication technology.

Overall, the curriculum is good. It is strongest in Years 1 to 6 where there have been significant improvements since the last inspection. Pupils benefit from the very good programme of enrichment, such as visits and visitors. In nursery and reception, the provision for outdoor play is not good enough. Pupils with special educational needs are very well catered for and this is a major reason why they are doing increasingly well in national tests. The quality of care is good and pupils forge very good and trusting relationships with adults. Links with parents and the community are very effective. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He very clearly articulates his vision for the school and has successfully managed to bring about success in standards and in the caring aspects of the school. Although there is no deputy headteacher the senior staff provide good support in many areas. Subject coordinators work very hard and make an impression on the work in their subjects. However, they do not have enough time to check on standards and teaching in these subjects. The work of the governing body is satisfactory and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses owing to the detailed information they get from the headteacher on a regular basis.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have very positive views about the school. This is mainly because parents recognise that the staff work extremely hard for their children and that everything the school does is thought of as a way of improving provision for the pupils. Parents are particularly happy about the quality of teaching and leadership of the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve attendance;
- improve outdoor provision for children in nursery and reception so that they can engage in the full range of activities;
- increase the amount of time subject coordinators have to check on standards and teaching;
- improve the procedures and practices in the assessment of subjects other than English, mathematics and science;
- increase the opportunities for pupils to learn independently.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Main strengths and weaknesses

- At the age of 11, standards in the 2003 national tests were well above average.
- Across the school, pupils' achievement is very good, including those with special educational needs, those from ethnic minorities and those cared for by the local authority.
- The good development of the basic skills of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and number.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.7 (13.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (12.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.7 (14.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 1 Results in the 2003 national tests were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. However, the results do signal a big improvement on the year before and continue the above average trend of the last three years. Proportions of pupils attaining the higher Level 3, were well below average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics. Standards are well below average in the teacher assessment of science. Over three years, results in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (29.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.4 (29.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.0 (30.7)	28.6 (28.3)

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

- 2 The results from the 2003 national tests are that English, mathematics and science are well above average. When looking at the standards achieved by this group of pupils when they were seven year olds, improvement in English, mathematics and science is well above average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was well above average in English, mathematics and science. Over 3 years, results are above average in mathematics and average in English and science. The trend is consistently upwards and better than the national trend. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics and science. Girls do a little better than boys in English. Results in English and mathematics exceeded the targets set for the pupils in English and mathematics.
- 3 Early assessments of children's levels of attainment show standards that are very low in all the areas of learning. By the end of reception, most children meet the expectations for personal, social and emotional development and creative development. Standards are below expectations in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and

understanding of the world. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in physical development. Even though standards do not reach the expected level, pupils' achievement is very good.

- 4 By the age of seven, standards of work seen are still below the expected level. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well and the quality of their work improves. The main reasons for this are:
 - a very good ethos, that supports learning and pastoral concerns and removes barriers to learning;
 - good teaching, particularly of basic skills;
 - pupils' very good attitudes to learning.
- 5 In English, standards in speaking and listening are well below average and this represents good achievement from the low standards on entry. Reading and writing standards are also below average. Higher attaining pupils, although relatively few in number, are accurate and fluent readers who write lengthy stories. They are developing good basic skills of handwriting, spelling and, more lately, punctuation. Standards in mathematics are average and achievement is very good. Pupils show a good grasp of basic numeracy, shape and data handling.
- 6 By the age of 11, standards are average in English and pupils have continued to achieve very well. These standards are lower than those achieved in recent years because the proportion of pupils with special needs is higher and this is rightly reflected in the targets set by the school. Most pupils make effective verbal contributions to lessons and they are getting used to the formality of standard English. Higher attaining pupils are developing a rich vocabulary. In reading, most pupils have good basic skills which they use effectively. Higher attaining pupils are highly expressive readers who bring the text to life. Similarly, writing skills are strong. Higher attaining pupils are taking the richness of the spoken vocabulary into their writing. Writing for a range of audiences is evident and most pupils are comfortable in using a range of techniques. Lower attaining pupils have weak basic skills, but they are improving as a result of good target-setting and perseverance. In mathematics, pupils have successfully built on the standards developed in younger years and by the age of 11 they are above average and achievement is very good. Pupils manipulate numbers well, including percentages and factors. They present information in a variety of graphs and interpret the information well.
- 7 Standards in science at the age of seven are average and pupils achieve well. Pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of electricity and plant life. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to answer questions, such as 'Can you find things that you didn't know already?' By the age of 11, standards are broadly average and pupils achieve very well. Pupils conduct their own experiments such as using a sieve to separate constituent parts of a mixture. In this work higher attaining pupils are set challenging questions that help them to achieve well. For example, they know what is meant by an irreversible change.
- 8 Standards in information and communication technology are average at ages seven and 11. This is an improvement on the last inspection. The school puts a great deal of emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills and this is paying dividends, with most pupils achieving satisfactorily. Seven year olds have sound mouse skills and are beginning to use more complex functions, such as making labels. By the age of 11, most pupils use the machines as tools for learning, either through information finding or developing presentations. Further achievement will require a greater emphasis on areas such as sensing and control which are under-represented at present.
- 9 In other subjects, standards in design and technology, geography and history are average at ages seven and 11 and pupils achieve soundly. No judgement was possible in art and design, music and physical education.

- 10 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards targets set for them. Teachers use the assessments and objectives in very clear individual and group education plans for these pupils to adapt work to their needs, and learning support assistants provide effective support and guidance when working with them. Most higher attaining pupils achieve appropriately in their literacy and numeracy when tasks are accurately matched to their level of attainment. The school is in the initial stages of identifying the particular gifts and talents of pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very positive** attitudes to learning and they behave **well**. Overall pupils' personal development is **very good**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic learners.
- The school does outstanding work in helping pupils to become caring, mature and responsible members of the community.
- Pupils respond well to teachers' consistently high expectations of good behaviour.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good but cultural development is only satisfactory because the school does insufficient to promote the appreciation of other cultures.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and the school promotes attendance effectively, but a minority of parents fail to ensure their children's regular attendance.

Commentary

- 11 Pupils are very happy at school. They are made to feel valued members of a caring school community and they appreciate everything the school does for them. They enjoy the stimulating and varied experiences provided by the school, including the many visits, themed days and special events; as one pupil said "there is always something going on". They are enthusiastic learners who respond very well to teachers' high expectations and regular praise and encouragement by trying to do their best. The school shows its pride in pupils' achievements through celebration assemblies and the annual prize giving event.
- 12 The school is a very orderly community. Discipline is caring but firm and pupils respond well to teachers' consistently high expectations of good behaviour. The headteacher and all the staff provide excellent role models in the care and consideration they show to pupils, and pupils respond by showing similar care and consideration for each other. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are very well integrated. Bullying incidents are infrequent and are firmly dealt with. There were no exclusions last year. The school's success in promoting good behaviour is particularly significant as a number of pupils have behaviour difficulties when they join the school.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	152	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

- 13 A strong moral and spiritual ethos permeates all aspects of school life. The school provides many good opportunities in lessons, assemblies and through regular charitable giving to encourage pupils to empathise with the feelings of others. In the daily act of worship pupils are given very good opportunities to reflect on important issues and to develop a firm set of moral values. Pupils are keen to exercise responsibility and the school provides some very good opportunities for them to do this. Year 6 playground ‘buddies’ are a credit to the school. It is clear from watching them playing with younger children and from reading accounts from previous ‘buddies’ about how much they have learnt that this is a successful and well organised scheme.
- 14 The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own cultural tradition. Visits from representatives of other faiths and the school’s charitable connections abroad provide some opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and beliefs but overall this is an area which is under developed. The school is not sufficiently pro-active in providing experiences for pupils to learn about the rich multicultural life of Britain today.
- 15 Attendance is well below the national average. One reason for this is the high mobility of pupils which means that pupils moving between schools are usually marked as absent for some time before a transfer is finalised. The school is particularly concerned about the minority of parents who do not insist on the regular attendance of their children. The school works hard to promote good attendance by frequently reminding parents of the importance of regular attendance, by rewards for good attendance, by the assistance of the educational welfare officer and by ringing up parents on the first day of an unexplained absence. Overall punctuality is satisfactory; the “Early Bird Scheme” reward system is a very effective way of promoting punctuality.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, provision is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. The curriculum is **good**. The school **effectively** takes care of its pupils. The links between the school and parents, and with the community are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	11 (29%)	21 (55%)	5 (13%)	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.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Correctly, much of the emphasis in the teaching is given to developing basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.
- Almost nine-tenths of the lessons observed were good and better.
- Throughout the school the management of pupils is very good.

- Teaching in the nursery and reception classes was never less than good and a significant reason for this is the good assessment.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Commentary

- 16 The three main challenges facing the school are:
- breaking down the barriers to learning that pupils face, such as very low attainment on entry;
 - harnessing the energy and high spirits shown by the pupils so that they can properly concentrate on learning;
 - teaching pupils the basic skills they will need to achieve very well and overcome the barriers to learning.
- The school, through the strong vision of the headteacher, the support of the Catholic faith and the good, hard-working skills of staff is managing to succeed. There is ample evidence that the pupils are competently:
- acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding through the effective teaching methods and the school's supportive ethos;
 - learning self-control that enables them to apply their energies to producing good work. This is due, in no small part, to the teachers having very high standards for behaviour;
 - working collaboratively to good effect and learning from each other. An area for development is the increasing of the capacity to work independently. This needs sensitive handling if the impetus for improving basic skills is not to be lost. For instance, by setting clear targets so that pupils maintain standards whilst giving them more opportunities to pursue their own interests.
- 17 Teaching and learning in nursery and reception are good and adults use assessment data very well to respond to individual pupils' needs. The strongest teaching was seen in the nursery where almost all the lessons were very good and one lesson was excellent. The excellent creative development lesson provoked and excited these young children to make stories and music that are not normally parts of their lives. In both the nursery and reception, teachers' expectations in relation to learning and behaviour are high, and clearly set out for the children. This mixing of excitement and basic skills work is having the desired effect on standards. Children enjoy their lessons and their learning develops at a quick pace.
- 18 In Years 1 to 6, teaching and learning are good, and the particular strengths are:
- the encouragement of pupils to work hard and achieve;
 - the very good use of resources;
 - the high expectations of behaviour;
 - the promotion of each member of the group as equally important and deserving of special treatment.
- Throughout these years, pupils are acquiring and using a very good range of basic skills, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The improving trend in results is clear evidence of pupils' progress and their ability to use the skills at the right time. Furthermore, analysis of books shows that pupils are refining their work and good progress can be seen in many books since September.
- 19 In Years 1 and 2, a lot of emphasis is placed on using drama to help pupils understand. For example, in a very good Year 1 and 2 history lesson about Remembrance Day, the drama of going to the Cenotaph helped pupils understand and empathise with people who have lost family in wartime. The opportunity was not missed to encourage pupils' spirituality through reflecting on events. In a Year 2 reading session, pupils were challenged to read poetry with an emphasis on important words and developing expression. Other evidence on reading is showing that this approach is increasingly successful.
- 20 In Years 3 to 6, the best work is seen in Years 5 and 6. The headteacher is a crucial figure here because he teaches literacy to the Year 5 pupils. This means the groups are small and of one age group. Particularly strong work was observed in a very good Year 6 literacy lesson. A poetry lesson that contained significant messages about personal, social and health education because the theme was bullying. Teachers are willing to take a chance and

this was never more obvious than in the physical education lessons for older pupils. Pupils are learning yoga and boys dance with girls in an uninhibited way. Pupils enjoy the peace, calm and challenge of yoga.

- 21 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall, because:
- most teachers have an appropriate understanding of the curriculum needs for pupils who have individual difficulties, especially in English and mathematics;
 - teachers plan activities to take account of pupils' identified needs;
 - lesson planning identifies and includes specific activities for pupils with special educational needs;
 - learning support assistants are supported through very close planning procedures and this leads to most classes receiving very good support;
 - individual education plans are in place and pupils' progress towards their targets are diligently monitored on a termly basis.
- As a result of this strong work, pupils make good progress and the strong position recorded in the previous inspection has been maintained.
- 22 The assessment of pupils' academic performance in English, mathematics and science is good. The effective strategies to check on pupils' progress and achievement include the analysis of the results of pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. These practices have had a major influence on the improving standards by:
- identifying what is done well and areas in need of particular development in the future;
 - providing evidence for the making up of groups of pupils in English based on pupils' prior levels of attainment,
 - highlighting the need to modify teaching strategies. For instance, more time is now being spent on the development of problem solving skills.
- 23 However, the quality of assessment is inconsistent in other subjects, notably in information and communication technology. For example, in the information and communication lessons seen all pupils undertook the same task because their skills had not been judged. This resulted in the higher attaining pupils not being challenged sufficiently or extending their learning. Some teachers keep careful records of how well pupils are acquiring key knowledge, understanding and skills within each subject but there is inconsistent practice in this. Overall there is not a clear enough view in subjects other than English, mathematics and science of how skills are being built up through the school. The school has recently made some improvements to its assessment procedures for these other subjects. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority assessment materials have been introduced to bring greater consistency in assessment and record- keeping, but it is too early for these yet to have had a significant impact.

The curriculum

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils **well**. Opportunities provided to enrich pupils' learning are **very good**. Accommodation is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality and range of learning opportunities are particularly relevant to the needs of the pupils.
- The enrichment of the curriculum through visits, visitors and activities outside lessons is very good.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are supported very well.
- The school is hugely successful in its efforts to include all pupils equally.
- The school is very successful in its efforts to develop the personal, social and health education of its pupils.
- Support staff provide valuable skills that help pupils to achieve.

- Inadequate outdoor space for children in nursery and reception reduces the stamina and range of physical development that children might achieve as well as outdoor opportunities in other areas of the curriculum.
- The resources for learning in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are too few.

Commentary

- 24 Curriculum provision has improved substantially since the previous inspection. Planning and relevant programmes of work are now all in place for all subjects. The supportive atmosphere of this distinctive school contributes so very well to the quality of relationships and in turn, to the very good provision for personal, social and health education. This success is evident in the ambitions of pupils in Years 5 and 6 who know what they want to do in their secondary education and have considered the options open to them.
- 25 Children in nursery and reception are well provided for. In the nursery, children make very rapid gains in their development. This is a measure of the richly linked learning activities planned for them. Children are well challenged as they move into reception and the small number of children benefit from their work with adults. This is evident in their skills in art and their personal and social skills where many children meet the expectations of the early learning goals. Staff work hard to compensate for the physical distance between nursery and reception and new plans are afoot to ensure that when children move to reception, there is a seamless transition in planning to benefit the very youngest children in the school.
- 26 For pupils in infant classes and in Years 5 and 6 there is challenge to lessons. As a result of this, at the point of transfer to secondary school many of the pupils want to achieve as a result of this focused curriculum. They know how to deal with problems in mathematics, design an investigation in science and they collaborate very well with classmates. In a science lesson, for example, pupils in Year 6 tested an idea in small groups to prove the statement that light travels in a straight line. Higher attaining pupils deduced more than this and reported their conclusions at the end of the lesson. The tailoring of teaching plans to meet the needs of these pupils challenged their ability to understand complex scientific ideas and to explain them succinctly to others. This is one of the ways by which pupils perform so well in national tests when compared to similar schools.
- 27 All pupils are nurtured in the life of the school. Staff value what each child brings to the school family and more than this; adults strive to overcome any difficulties a child might have. The school expects that each one of them should achieve as much as possible in the basic skills of English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is tailored towards pupils attaining “the highest possible standards.” It works. Pupils who have additional learning needs are supported very well and make good progress. All the pupils develop confidence and show pleasure in their achievements.
- 28 Opportunities to extend learning and fire pupils’ imagination are provided through the many rich activities which broaden their lives. For example:
- visits they undertake include houses of historical interest;
 - participation in sporting events;
 - visitors to school;
 - the opportunity to learn another language.
- Pupils rise to these opportunities and show a thirst for more.
- 29 The newly refurbished computer suite and re-organised library space has enhanced the quality of both and refreshed the opportunities for pupils to develop their computer and study skills. Good use is made of the space in the school and make efforts to ensure that the poor quality of the fabric of the accommodation does not limit the range of experiences provided. For example, in physical development staff in nursery and reception compensate as much as they can for the inadequacy of outdoor space. However, the full range of activities for the nursery and reception curriculum cannot be planned as fully as staff would wish and so the

children miss out on vital experiences. The school is aware of this and is exploring ways of dealing with these gaps in provision.

- 30 Overall, the school is adequately resourced. However, in music the richness of the full curriculum is adversely affected by there being too few resources. There are only nominal resources to prepare pupils to live in a diverse and multi-cultural society beyond Bacup.
- 31 Provision for special educational needs is very good. Pupils are identified as early as possible and appropriate steps are taken to assess their needs, write individual educational plans and provide support. Individual educational plans are reviewed each term, involving the special needs co-ordinator, class teachers and parents. The school strongly promotes educational and social equality, and is very committed to raising the achievements of all pupils. To this end there are helpful initiatives to support minority groups such as those cared for by the local authority.

Care, guidance and support

Overall, the provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. The provision for guidance and support is **very good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of caring support provided for pupils is outstanding.
- There is a high level of awareness of pupils' needs and support is very sensitive and well directed.

Commentary

- 32 Everyone in the school community is united in making all pupils feel valued, cared for and loved and this gives them confidence and a firm bedrock for learning and achievement. Staff are very sensitive to the needs of all children facing particular difficulties and provide them with very good support and counselling. For example:
- pupils with special educational needs;
 - pupils cared for by the local authority;
 - pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Where this support relates to achievement, the school takes into account the useful information provided by assessment and record-keeping. Furthermore, staff have a good knowledge of the pupils and how to meet their needs. This leads to good levels of satisfaction from parents and pupils.
- 33 The very good links between the school and parents and carers make a significant contribution to the quality of care provided. The school promotes healthy living well and there are good arrangements in place for child protection. The school works closely in liaison with external support agencies. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are good and risk assessments are carried out carefully. During the inspection a small number of health and safety issues were raised with the school. The school has identified them and has plans to resolve them.
- 34 The school is very effective in the way it raises pupils' self esteem. Pupils gain in confidence because of teachers' praise and encouragement as well as the good reward system. Arrangements for helping pupils settle in nursery and reception are very good. Parents speak very positively about the externally funded "Getting Ready for School" project; visits made to children's homes in the term before they join the reception class enable parents to talk over any concerns they have. Pupils joining the school from other schools are warmly welcomed and well integrated. There are appropriate transition arrangements with the six secondary schools to which pupils transfer.

- 35 The school values pupils' views. School council members have had a number of good ideas on how the playgrounds can be improved. The school provides £200 each year for the school council to spend and last year school council members chose to spend this on play equipment and litter bins.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents and the local community and **good** links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The extremely strong partnership between school and parents.
 - Parents are kept very well informed about the school.
 - Parents and the school have both benefited from the provision of parents' courses.
 - Parents are very supportive of the school but not enough parents support their children's progress by helping them with their learning at home.
 - The school plays a key role in the local community.
- 36 The extremely strong partnership between school and parents has a very positive impact on pupils' education. The school knows local families well; it is very approachable and is always ready to sort out parents' concerns and problems. Parents have great confidence in the school and value everything that the school does for their children. Parents of children in the nursery and in the reception class have regular informal contact with staff and find teachers very helpful both in matters concerning their children's work and other matters. The "Getting Ready for School" project also provides good support and information for parents as well as things to do for children due to join the reception class.
- 37 Parents are kept very well informed about the school through regular informative newsletters, a good prospectus and annual governors' report and also other useful information and notices. Annual reports on pupils' progress are based on teachers' good knowledge of pupils. Reports generally, but not consistently, include targets for mathematics and English showing how pupils can improve their work in these subjects. Parents' evenings are well attended and the school makes arrangements to accommodate any parents unable to attend. The school seeks out parents' views about the school through questionnaires and acts on the findings.
- 38 Parental involvement projects such as the "Parents as Educators Course" and "Keeping up with the Children" are very successful. Many parents who have done these courses now work as parent volunteers in the school and find they are better able to support the learning both of pupils in the school and their own children at home. Participation in accredited courses also opens up avenues of employment for parents. The school benefits greatly from the small band of parents and grandparents who help in school. However, not enough parents help by supporting their children's learning at home. Teachers work hard to encourage parents; homework and reading diaries are sent home and stickers provide an incentive. Teachers comment that when parents help their children at home they make faster progress. The school is currently running a "Lads and Dads" course which links sport and reading.
- 39 The school makes its biggest contribution to the community through its total commitment to the education and welfare of local children and the support it provides to parents. The headteacher is on the committees of all the important local community agencies in order to ensure that any local initiatives are responsive to the school's needs and can benefit from his knowledge. The school works very closely with two charities, who work with local families in need. Community workers from these charities have done very valuable work in supporting children and raising their self-esteem. This work included a very successful circus skills course for pupils. Funding problems mean that the school is not currently benefiting from the

work of these charities but the school expects that they will again support the school in the future.

- 40 There are many other good community links which benefit the school. There are close links with the church and the parish priest is a frequent visitor in school. Visits which pupils make within the local community and the regular visits from people working in the community, all greatly help to enrich pupils' learning. Pupils also benefit from the coaching provided by Burnley football club.
- 41 The school has some good links with the six secondary schools to which pupils transfer. Links are particularly strong with the specialist language college to which the majority of pupils transfer and pupils in Year 5 and 6 benefit from specialist lessons in French and German. The arrangements which the school makes to ease the transition of children joining the nursery and the reception class are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good** and he is **well** supported by key staff. The work of the governing body is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
 - Financial management is good.
 - The school is highly effective at raising pupils' standards from very low beginnings.
 - Overall, the strengths identified in the last report have been maintained and parents consider that the school is very well run and consider the headteacher to be very effective.
 - There is insufficient time for coordinators to observe teaching.
- 42 The headteacher has a very strong vision which, with its emphasis on standards and care, is a driving force. The school has a strong mission statement, clear aims and policies which provide positive direction for all in the school. The headteacher maintains the high quality of leadership that has been the hallmark of his work for many years. The very strong areas are:
- his commitment to improve pupils' academic knowledge and skills from a very low base on entry to the school;
 - his promotion of a very strong pastoral system that caters for all pupils and leads to an orderly, sensitive and effective school;
 - the example he gives to all staff, governors and pupils is a very high standard.
- 43 Although there is no deputy headteacher, presently, senior staff provide the headteacher with good support. They work extremely hard and make a positive impact on all areas of school life. The management role of curriculum coordinators is developing, although they have insufficient experience of managing a budget or checking on the quality of teaching in their curriculum area. For instance, by observing colleagues and making judgements on the quality of teaching. Consequently, there are inconsistencies in important areas such as assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- 44 The effective school improvement plan has a yearly cycle of review, sensible priorities and targets, realistic costings and the action required for implementation. Methods and criteria for monitoring and evaluating the school's intentions are taken seriously. There is an impressive range of strategies in place, including parental questionnaires, interviews with curricular coordinators and the analysis of test results. Action plans for curriculum and teaching policy areas are having a positive influence on improving pupils' standards of attainment.
- 45 Financial and performance management are effective. In 2002/3, the school had a budget surplus of almost £47,000, but this has been reduced in this financial year to £9,000 because of:

- the employment of an additional teacher;
- extra funding for the nursery and reception classes;
- increases in the cost of teachers' superannuation.

Money is well allocated to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan and grants are used effectively for their purpose. The school has good procedures and practices for ensuring that value for money is achieved in the buying of services and learning resources.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	515670	Balance from previous year	34440
Total expenditure	468907	Balance carried forward to the next	46662
Expenditure per pupil	2056		

- 46 The governors are keen, enthusiastic and supportive. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, mainly because they receive detailed and thorough reports from the headteacher. The governing body has a sound influence over the direction the school is taking and it fosters the clear and unequivocal aims about achieving the highest possible standards of academic achievement and care. An area for development is an increase in the amount of time governors spend in school and particularly in classrooms and with teachers. However, the Chair of Governors, who is the local priest, spends a lot of time in the school and often takes part in collective worship.
- 47 The quality of leadership in Special Educational Needs is very good. The co-ordinator has a very good overview of the needs and the progress of pupils with special needs and works effectively with class teachers, support assistants and a specialist teacher employed by the school, to ensure that there is good information available and that the needs of pupils are met in lessons. Reviews are held each term, to consider each individual education plan and there are good links with the parents of the pupils. The co-ordinator works extremely hard and is very committed to ensuring that the needs of pupils with special educational needs are established as early as possible, the needs are assessed and staff are deployed to support the pupils.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **good** overall in the Foundation Stage.

The school has sustained the valuable start to education for the children in nursery and reception classes seen at the time of the previous inspection. Changes in staffing and in the curriculum for children in this stage of their education does not deter this small team from working together as a Foundation Stage to improve the planning for reception to that of the very best in the nursery. Big swings in the numbers of children from year to year in both nursery and reception and the considerable physical distance between the two classes make planning challenging. The two teachers are good practitioners who benefit much from the effective contribution of the experienced assistants. The team adds much to the quality of children's learning. Particularly strong are:

- the very good teaching in the nursery;
 - the very effective procedures and practices for judging the levels of attainment of the children.
- Children achieve **very well** from low starting points in their personal and social skills and creative development. Achievement is good in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. There was insufficient evidence to judge achievement in physical development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high expectations of staff.
- The shared emphasis on developing the quality of children's talk and the skills of listening brings an evident sense of self esteem and confidence.
- The calm yet stimulating rooms are places where children want to be.
- The very good planning links many areas of learning and creates routine and order in both nursery and reception.

Commentary

- 48 No direct teaching was seen in this area of the curriculum but the expectations of the school for its children have a marked impact on their early and very good achievement. Both nursery and reception give a very high priority to this area and make sure that opportunities for development are woven into all other areas of learning.
- 49 In the nursery, the very small numbers of children mean that they have very rich opportunities to develop early relationships in this warm and trusted environment. For example, when children have their snacks, there is the chance to chat with others across the table, to make choices about their likes and dislikes and to familiarise themselves with the daily conventions and simple courtesies of life.
- 50 Children in reception are well versed in the classroom routines and they rise to the expectations of them. These are made clear by staff and through regular contact with older pupils as they move about the school. These young children see the required standards of behaviour expected and come to know that the care and encouragement children received is part and parcel of their school. Very good relationships at all levels ensure that children quickly become confident young learners whose positive views about school life promote a "want to learn" culture from early on in their school life. There is good provision for children with English as an additional language to their mother tongue. The time spent in nursery is geared to the needs of the child and family.

- 51 By the time they start Year 1, most children meet the expectations for this area of the curriculum. They organize their personal belongings well, they work together in harmony around a shared activity and most of them take turns and listen to others. They know that this is expected of them. They know too that what they say is as important as any other child.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality teaching.
- The consistent focus on developing children's talk and the skills for early reading and writing.
- An exciting curriculum, tailored to meet children's needs.
- Very good support from classroom assistants.

Commentary

- 52 Good teaching ensures that children have the opportunities to talk and to develop their confidence and use of language so that they can be understood clearly and to help them in learning. This vital approach is very successful. Children are eager to talk, ask questions and begin role play with others. They develop a love for story and enjoy the opportunities for writing. In nursery, staff model the processes of reading and writing in exciting ways and this enables children to see the links between them. For example, they act out the antics of the "Rainbow Fish" skilfully guided by the teacher. The introduction of letter sounds helps them to begin to recognize some words in familiar stories.
- 53 By the time children leave reception a very few higher attaining children meet the early learning goals. In reception, children listen carefully to others and build closely on the gains made in their spoken language. For example, the "Art Gallery" features a fascinating array of illustrations to prompt questions and ideas to widen children's ideas as well as building basic skills of forming letters. They make good progress in reading and writing and extensive progress in their use of language and their speaking skills. By the time they start Year 1, standards are below the expectations for their age and children have achieved well.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching that results in effective learning.
- The focus on the language of mathematics.
- Classroom assistants give very strong support.
- An interesting range of practical activities is provided, hampered only by the limited opportunity for work on space and measure outdoors.

Commentary

- 54 Children achieve well overall. They make very good progress in the nursery in their mathematical experiences and this is built on well in reception. Children are provided with hands-on experiences to develop their mathematical understanding and staff focus rightly on mathematical words such as "one more" and "one less" and use good methods to encourage children to use numbers in relation to each other and in a variety of ways. For example children in sand play count the pebbles and at snack time, others count the pears given out. This consolidates their understanding of these concepts of number in real life. Pupils are likely to be below the expectations for the area by the end of the reception year.

The opportunity for mathematical play outdoors in big spaces would enrich the range of experiences and give children the chance to achieve even more, especially in reception. Classroom assistants are very skilful and give strong support to children's development in many aspect of play in which the language of mathematics might be used.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned and linked with other areas of learning.
- A wide range of stimulating experiences is provided.
- Topics have features from many of the areas of learning so that children make connections in their learning.
- Planning in reception builds on that of the nursery but is not as robust yet.

Commentary

55 Teaching is good overall. Staff have high expectations in this area of learning and strive to give children a wide variety of cultural examples to open their eyes to new experiences. For example, in nursery, a rich array of objects from the past gives children the opportunity to touch and explore "old" things. Teaching in the nursery is very good. These children achieve a great deal because there are highly effective methods that guide children to big steps forward. For example, the very youngest three year old observed the weather, chose the relevant weather symbol from attractive hanging mobiles and described what it meant to others in the small group. In addition, children are given plenty of opportunities to explore their environment, for example, as "Percy the Park Keeper" on a 'walk' around the school grounds and examine the colours and texture of leaves. Reception children build on the ideas and skills gained through observation and from using computers. They build imaginatively using wooden blocks that are transformed into a house, a car, then a boat from which everyone tips out into a sea of thrills and delight. They make good progress towards the early learning goals because they are skilfully guided by adults. All pupils are likely to be below expectations in this area by the end of the reception year but they have achieved well.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area of learning is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff make good efforts to use the unsatisfactory outdoor area to develop children's physical skills.
- Activities planned to develop manipulative skills are good.
- There is too little balance between children exploring for themselves and activities that are directed and supported by adults, in the outdoor area, for children in nursery.
- Provision for children in reception is too narrow because it is mainly indoors.

Commentary

56 Children are provided with a satisfactory range of opportunities to develop their physical skills overall. Indoors children make good progress within the range of skills and stamina that can be developed. The dedicated nursery play area provides a small space to play with wheeled toys, develop some control and awareness of others but this is a poorly designed area that curtails the amount of experiences that can be planned. As a result, the children have less opportunity than most at this age to refine their skills by exploring for themselves. Moreover the opportunity to develop important skills of climbing, balancing, scrambling and jumping are not as good as they could be, even though staff work especially hard to compensate through

regular timetabled playtimes and lessons in the school hall. Fortunately, children in both nursery and reception benefit as a result. They develop their skills of throwing, catching and kicking appropriately. Good teaching enables children to make good progress in relation to their various abilities. There is insufficient evidence to judge the standards achievement by the time they leave reception year. However, in the skills seen, many of the children have close to typical manipulative skills, for their age. These are developed very well through the many opportunities they are given to work with tools, such as scissors, glue sticks and paint brushes.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Rich learning experiences are well planned to develop skills and link with other areas of learning
- Children achieve very well.
- There is a very good balance achieved between children exploring for themselves and activities directed and supported by adults for children in nursery and for those in reception.

Commentary

57 There is a very wide range of exciting experiences planned for the children to give them the chance to work with music, media and materials not encountered before. They are also given good opportunities to select their own from a good selection of materials. A strength of this area of learning is the rich exposure to the work of many different artists that lend a visual stimulus and promote a delicacy to the work of children in both nursery and reception. As a result, children make very good progress, particularly with their painting, drawing and observational skills. Most are on course to meet the standard expected at the end of the reception year overall and many of the children exceed the expectations in their use of brushes and media. Work on display shows that children learn different techniques, such as printing, and painting in the style of an artist's work they observe. Work produced is of a high standard for children of this age. They use everyday materials, such as paper, feathers and wood shavings for example, to represent their ideas. Pleasingly, they are taught how to use glue to join different parts together. They also use a 'paint ' software increasingly confidently on the computer to develop their drawing on screen. They enjoy singing and listening to the guitar in reception and have opportunities to explore the sounds of different instruments.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in national tests at the age of 11 are well above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The range of activities is good.
- The judging of pupils' levels of attainment is good.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

58 Overall, pupils' achievement is very good. This is because:

- the quality of teaching is good;

- there is a strong emphasis on teaching basic skills;
- pupils want to do well, particularly in reading.

- 59 Standards in speaking and listening are well below average by the age of seven. Pupils come to the school with very low levels of knowledge and skills. They achieve very well in Years 1 and 2. Most speak clearly and use whole sentences to ask and answer questions. They are beginning to offer further details in their answers. By the age of 11, standards are in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils make effective contributions to group discussions. They use an increasingly wide vocabulary. Most pupils are developing a strong awareness of how and when to use standard English.
- 60 Standards in reading are below average. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils are accurate and fluent readers who understand the books they read. Lower attaining pupils have problems with basic skills and knowledge, such as knowing the sounds of individual letters. The school rightly puts great emphasis on improving this aspect of pupils' work. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils have sound skills and the higher attaining pupils a little better than this. Most pupils read expressively and use punctuation well to give rhythm to their reading. Throughout the school pupils achieve very well and this has much to do with the good attitudes they show.
- 61 By the age of seven, standards in writing are below average. However, pupils achieve well from the very low standards when they enter the school. Higher attaining pupils have good basic skills, with neat, joined-up handwriting, mainly accurate spelling and sound punctuation skills. The teacher has successfully targeted the improvement of punctuation. Most pupils write interesting stories and diary entries. By the age of 11, standards are average and achievement is very good. Most pupils have sound basic skills and they write for a range of purposes and audiences. Higher attaining pupils are developing a rich vocabulary and highly readable style:
 "The gory, terrifying setting and the scabby, raggy characters make the play 'Macbeth', drag you into the world of William Shakespeare."
 Lower attaining pupils have clear difficulties with basic skills, but they are being improved and pupils make a lot of effort.
- 62 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Work is well matched to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. Work in English is well organised and an appropriate balance is achieved between direct teaching and time to work on relevant tasks. Management of lessons is very good and this means that little time is lost and a good working ethos is established. The best teaching was seen in Year 6. The strengths were:
- very clear planning that catered for all pupils and provided a varied lesson. As a result, all pupils had opportunities to participate, either through reading their poem or discussing aspects of bullying;
 - the teacher's good subject knowledge and understanding. This means that the resources were highly relevant and challenging;
 - high expectations that were well matched with pupils' prior attainment. Pupils' confidence and commitment were well nurtured by careful feedback.
- 63 Leadership and management are good. To be better than this, time will have to be found for the coordinator to observe more lessons. The judging of pupils' levels of attainment is highly focused and accurate. Pupils have targets to meet and these are informed by the good marking. The programme of work is good and varied and most pupils find it interesting.

Language and literacy across the curriculum.

- 64 Overall, there is a satisfactory range of opportunities to use literacy across the curriculum. Particularly useful work is done in personal, social and health education, such as the work on bullying in Year 6.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership in the subject is good.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6.
- The outcomes of assessments are used well to analyse pupils' progress and to inform teachers' planning of lessons.
- Teachers do not consistently encourage pupils to become independent learners, often offering too much direction to their learning.

Commentary

- 65 Since the previous inspection the school has made good progress. Curriculum leadership and management are good because the co-ordinator works closely with the headteacher, and is a good practitioner. There is effective monitoring and evaluating of provision for mathematics in the school. There have been improvements in assessment procedures since the previous inspection, in particular the analysis of national test results and the optional tests undertaken at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. In consequence standards are high and have improved since the previous inspection. They are now average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6, with pupils likely to reach the demanding targets set by the governors. As a result achievement is very good because they enter the school with levels of attainment well below average.
- 66 The scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that most pupils in Year 2 are confident with place value to 1000, can add and subtract two digit numbers and apply simple division and multiplication accurately. Their awareness of properties of shapes is good. They can construct and interpret bar charts. Similarly, in Year 6, the more able pupils efficiently calculated multiplication and division of decimals by 1000 and 10000. They show a good understanding of percentages and factors. They gather and interpret data and present their findings using the correct type of graph and appropriate scale.
- 67 The quality of teaching is good and particularly effective in Years 5 and 6. In lessons observed teachers had a good knowledge of how well pupils had mastered the previous work and structure the lesson towards what they want individuals and groups to be able to do. This provides a clear focus. Skilful questioning challenges pupils to respond at their own level. An improvement since the previous inspection is a much clearer focus upon those areas of learning identified as weaknesses, by the analysis of test outcomes, resulting in pupils improving their understanding of mathematics. In a Year 5/6 lesson pupils were very effectively guided through the process of adding and subtracting decimals to two places, with the lesson moving at a good pace as the result of clear planning and good knowledge of what pupils could and could not do. Class management is very good. A supportive, positive atmosphere is created and teachers use praise well to motivate the learning and reinforce good behaviour. The final part of the more effective lessons is used well to summarise key learning objectives, check understanding and point up future learning. Occasionally, opportunities were missed for pupils to express their own opinions on what they thought they achieved in the lesson.
- 68 The progress of pupils is carefully tracked, and end of year tests, along with assessments of units of work undertaken, provide useful information for teachers to check how well their pupils are learning. In addition, these judgements enable any particular weaknesses in areas of the mathematics curriculum to be highlighted and pupils' progress further checked to ensure that there are improvements. For example, the school has developed a clear policy for teachers in the teaching of calculations and has effectively targeted mental mathematics sessions and the teaching of problem solving techniques. The mental mathematics sessions

are mainly effective, particularly when they include solving problems, as in Years 4 to 6. Shortcomings within some lessons are where the sessions do not have a sharp enough focus and questioning does not encourage pupils to explain their strategies for calculating.

- 69 Pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well as the result of good class management techniques employed by teachers, supported well by learning assistants. Many pupils enter the school with very low levels of mathematical understanding and most lessons use a very structured approach to guide pupils through the areas of the curriculum to effectively improve their knowledge and understanding. Teachers effectively model how to undertake tasks. For example, in a Year 2 lesson constructing a pictogram, pupils were able to add their favourite food pictures on to a whiteboard, using the terms 'horizontal' and 'vertical axis' accurately. However, as a result of such direction, many pupils rely upon teachers and support assistants to reassure them about their responses to questions and are reluctant to offer their own opinions and to explain their strategies for successfully completing calculations and solving problems. There are few opportunities to develop independent learning. Information and communication technology is not used consistently as an aid to raising standards and supporting learning in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 70 Although there are some good applications of mathematics in science and geography, for example, not enough opportunities are currently taken to practise and extend pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum, despite the fact that pupils are competent in the subject.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well from the low starting point.
- Standards have improved to the average at ages seven and 11.
- Teaching and learning are good; there are strengths in the teaching of knowledge that help pupils to understand very well.
- Pupils' views and their enthusiasm for work are very positive.
- Pupils are very reliant on teachers and develop a narrow range of skills for independent learning.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of writing their findings independently when they could do.

Commentary

- 71 The curriculum has a strong focus on the understanding of scientific ideas and it demands that pupils explain them. This has led to much improved standards since the last inspection. At the point of transfer to secondary school pupils now perform very well in national tests in comparison to similar schools and to schools nationally. However, results this year will not be as high because of increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Science topics are covered well and consolidated in mixed aged classes. This pattern of organisation helps pupils to gain a deeper understanding of the subject by working with older pupils. There are relevant links with other curriculum areas, such as personal, social and health education which ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the use and misuse of drugs. Mathematical and speaking and listening skills are also promoted well in lessons and when pupils record their work.
- 72 The quality of teaching is good. Most lessons are sharply focused with a quality of teacher guidance that challenges all pupils and expects them to learn irrespective of any personal problems that sometimes impede their day-to-day lives. The quality of relationships and the care for each child forms a springboard for pupils to achieve. In the infant class, for example,

children had to organise their thoughts to record an electrical circuit. The quality of discussion and the rigorous focus on “what happens” meant that pupils understood very well what happens when electrical connections are made correctly. Significantly, teaching plans took pupils straight to the heart of learning by planning very well for any literacy problems that pupils might encounter. By the time pupils transfer to secondary school, they are used to explaining scientific ideas because the teaching ensures that pupils understand as much as possible at the end of this stage of their education. For example, pupils can describe the connections between materials, how they are used in different situations and what might happen under different conditions. There are, however, few opportunities for them to investigate and write their findings for themselves and as a result, they look to teachers to direct their work much more than do most pupils of this age. Pupils want to learn and some of them could do even better than they do now. This is partly because, where lessons are just satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and for some pupils in Year 5, pupils are not familiar with methods of investigation. They are not required to design a “fair test” and as a result, they find it difficult to work independently.

- 73 Leadership and management are sound. However, the checking of provision and standards is at a very early stage of introduction and does not include the observing of teaching. The major difficulties here are related to constraints of time and financial resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring basic skills but more able and talented pupils are not achieving enough.
- Teachers are more confident in planning opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication skills in subjects like English and science but the opportunities are insufficiently developed in other subjects.
- Pupils throughout the school have had limited experience of the controlling and monitoring elements of information and communication technology.

Commentary

- 74 Standards overall, by the end of both Years 2 and 6 are in line with those found in most schools. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection, where standards were found to be below average and progress unsatisfactory. However, there are few opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to learn how to use sensors, to monitor events or control devices and this means that some higher attaining pupils could achieve more. Whilst special educational needs pupils receive good support from other pupils in their class and benefit from being taught as members of a smaller group and thus make satisfactory progress.
- 75 The school’s information and communication technology facilities are used well to teach and develop pupils’ basic skills. For example, pupils in Year 1 were able to access a word program, to select their own label, choose the size and type of font and to successfully produce labels for use in their classroom. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 successfully used a graphics package to create geometric shapes. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils, with confidence and competence, use the internet as a research tool and are able to use a variety of programs creatively, to enhance the presentation of their work in a wide range of subjects. Some pupils have used a digital camera effectively to enhance their texts and the school has recently completed the basic structure of its own web page and plans to offer pupils the opportunity to contribute.
- 76 Teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory, an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers now have a better knowledge and understanding of the subject. For example, in a

Year 4/5 lesson to develop pupils' understanding of using a 'textease' program the teacher instructed the pupils in well-organised sequenced steps. She used precise technical language whilst expecting the pupils to respond accurately using the correct vocabulary. Throughout the lesson she carefully evaluated pupils' progress. Planning is appropriately related to national guidance and lessons are organised efficiently, with each class allocated time in the recently furnished computer suite. Teachers make good use of the available resources and support staff. A feature of the teaching is that pupils are encouraged to try things out and accept disappointments. So, they show good application and persevere with tasks. Pupils are well motivated and behaviour is good. Pupils' work is monitored in lessons; however, their knowledge and skills are not consistently assessed, although a framework for doing this has been recently adopted. The school has acquired an inter-active projector but a lack of training has prevented some teachers from exploring fully its use in improving teaching and learning across subjects.

- 77 The headteacher leads co-ordination of the subject and is skilled and knowledgeable, providing sound leadership. Teachers have benefited from basic training to improve their confidence and skills but some need more. The co-ordinator is aware of what needs to be done and a good action plan is in place, in particular to address the need to improve opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in the controlling and monitoring elements of information and communication technology.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 78 The school is beginning to make use of programs to promote early reading, writing and mathematical skills, for example Year 1 pupils used computers to develop their reading and writing skills when constructing labels to use for display in their classroom. However, the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is inconsistent and teachers' confidence varies. More use could be made of computers within other subjects and to enable pupils to develop independence in their learning.

HUMANITIES

In **geography** and **history**, only two lessons were observed. In addition, samples of pupils' work in books and on display were analysed and discussions were held with the coordinator and pupils.

- 79 From the sample of pupils' work seen there is every indication that standards are broadly average, in Years 2 and 6, and are similar to those seen at the previous inspection. Consequently pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In the one geography lesson observed the quality of teaching was good, with materials prepared well and work based on a good understanding of what pupils had done before. As a result pupils in Years 3 and 4 were able to accurately locate places on a map of the world and to relate their own experiences from holidays in this country and other countries of the world. Teachers' planning clearly indicates that appropriate areas of the curriculum are covered and taught to pupils at appropriate times.
- 80 In both subjects it is clear that a range of visits and visitors play an important part in making work interesting and relevant. In geography, for example, younger pupils have explored the environment close to school and have studied the geography of Bacup, successfully classifying how land is used for different purposes such as houses, fields and work places. Classroom displays illustrate a comparison of local geography with life in the Isle of Struay. In history, pupils have looked at local people's ways of life in the past, incorporating their studies with a visit to the cenotaph in the town. Older pupils, In Years 4 and 5 have studied how people's lives were different in Egyptian times, with pupils in Years 5 and 6 looking at life in Victorian times. A visit to Townley Hall enabled Year 3/4 pupils to dress in character and to experience life as it was lived, in the hall, in the Tudor period. From discussions with pupils in Year 6 many have a good understanding of the lives of 'Great People', for example Louis

Pasteur and Martin Luther King, offering their opinions about the issue they were involved in and their impact upon other people.

- 81 Subject co-ordinators check the teachers' planning for the subjects but have not had the opportunity to observe lessons. The assessment of pupils' progress is not consistent amongst teachers. In consequence it has not been possible for the co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and provision effectively. Resources for the subjects, whilst adequate, could be of better quality.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons in music were seen and only one in art and design and therefore, no judgement on teaching or provision can be made for these subjects. However, some pupils' work was seen and teachers' planning was scrutinised. Three lessons in design and technology were observed.

- 82 **In art and design**, the good quality of work seen on display indicates good achievement in drawing with pupils in Year 6 reaching high standards in the detail of line and tone evident in their observational drawing. The good quality of this work demonstrates clearly the impact of the focus on using the work of artists, such as Escher, to enable pupils to expand their knowledge and refine their use of pencil marks.
- 83 The subject has been aptly managed and is supported by "theme weeks" planned into the curriculum. Pupils benefit from the expertise brought into the classrooms by visiting artists and from very relevant use of illustrations of the work of artists to extend pupils' ideas about the world. For example in Years 3 and 4, these pictures contribute a great deal to the spiritual development of pupils. They see how an artist interprets and represents people in his family in powerful images.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good achievement in Years 1 and 2.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good.

Commentary

- 84 By the end of Year 2, pupils work is broadly typical of that seen of pupils the same age. Pupils' models, designs and skills of co-operation in their work show that pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2 and reach standards in designing patterns which are often much better than usually seen. This is an improvement since the last inspection, because new leadership and management have ensured that the curriculum is more effectively planned. As a result, pupils are now beginning to build more on their skills as they move from year-to-year. The impact of these improvements has led to pupils in Years 4 and 5 producing work of a broadly average standard. Pupils have steadily developing knowledge of how components can be included to organise a cam mechanism so that a rotary motion will change into a linear one. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards and achievement at the age of 11.
- 85 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Two of the three lessons observed were good, in Year 2 and Years 4 and 5. The main strengths were:
- very good planning and organisation enable all pupils to be fully engaged and productive;
 - the level of challenge is realistic and most pupils develop their ideas well;
 - management and control are effective and this fosters hard work and good relationships.

It is too early to judge the quality of leadership and management because the coordinator has been in post for such a short period. Nevertheless, the coordinator is enthusiastic and sets a good example for colleagues. The curriculum is sound.

- 86 In **music**, resources for learning are minimal. A new programme to support the curriculum is in place that ensures that the breadth and skills of the curriculum build from earlier lessons. Teachers are pleased with the pleasure this brings to pupils and staff alike. The quality of singing of the choir is sweet, demonstrates a growing sense of rhythm and provides these junior pupils with the opportunity to practise and perform in front of the whole school during assemblies. Pupils in year 6 talk of their past experience of music-making with pleasure but with a lower level of knowledge about the subject than most pupils the same age. They could name no composers other than one or two in the contemporary “pop” culture.
- 87 In **physical education** only a small portion of the overall range of the subject was observed. Consequently, it is not possible to make secure judgements relating to provision, standards and achievement. Four lessons were observed and the overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- 88 Two of the lessons were very good; one had a mixture of Years 4, 5 and 6 and the other had Years 5 and 6. In the dance lesson, the strengths were:
- high expectations and good management that led to the good learning of new steps and a total lack of any inhibitions, particularly amongst the boys;
 - the very good relationships and the high level of teacher enthusiasm. Pupils’ responded by concentrating hard and by putting all of their effort into the dances;
 - the introduction of evaluation by pupils led to good, sensible and mature comments.
- In the gymnastics/yoga lesson the teacher showed very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. The level of challenge was high and she provides a good exemplar for the pupils. Other very strong facets include:
- an excellent warm-up that ensures the thorough preparation of all joints and muscles;
 - very good management that is achieved with quiet authority and sensitivity to pupils having difficulties;
 - the very good links between calmness, control and challenging the body. These led to:
 - good concentration for long periods;
 - good control over muscles and breathing;
 - the production of good, strong balances and stretches that extend pupils’ limits.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school effectively promotes pupils’ personal development and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- The school has well-planned provision for health, drug awareness and road safety and these issues are supported by visiting professionals.

Commentary

- 89 The school sees the development of pupils' self-esteem as a central part of its work. Much that is done in the school promotes this work, from the emphasis on improving basic academic skills to taking pupils on visits to places they have never seen before. Pupils looked after by the local authority have become a successful and particular focus for the local group of schools' emotional health and well-being coordinator. Again, the school is trying to ensure that all pupils receive equal opportunities and that there are minimal barriers to learning.
- 90 The school participates in the local authority's scheme to make pupils aware of the dangers of drug abuse. There is a regular visit by the 'Life caravan' which provides lots of information in a variety of ways. Sex education is dealt with informally, as matters arise, and the school is supported by the nurse. The headteacher and governors are aware that this area needs greater planning and further policy-making.
- 91 Citizenship is fostered by productive links with a range of local professionals and groups. For example:-
- the police and fire brigade provide helpful insights into safety in the home and outside;
 - anti-racism is promoted through 'Give racism the red card' and Burnley Football Club supports this and coaching the school;
 - civic pride is fostered through the 'Bacup wall of history' that has a couple of plaques hanging that were made in the school.
- 92 Health education plays a large part in the work of several curriculum areas. For instance:
- work in physical education includes yoga and advice into the benefits of exercise;
 - in science the human body is a central theme;
 - the healthy school initiative has led to:
 - healthy snacks at breaktime;
 - a supply of mineral water in school;
 - the breakfast club run by two nursery nurses.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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