

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MICHAEL with ST JOHN C of E (Controlled) PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Blackburn, Lancashire

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119356

Headteacher: Ms K Cant

Lead inspector: Dr B Blundell

Dates of inspection: 06 – 08 October 2003

Inspection number: 257867

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	428
School address:	Swallow Drive Blackburn
Postcode:	BB1 6LE
Telephone number:	01254 665190
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mohammed Hussain
Date of previous inspection:	23 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Michael and St John Primary school is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England school for boys and girls, aged three to 11, situated in Blackburn. There is an overall gender balance among the pupils, who are mainly Asian or Asian-British Indian or Asian or Asian-British Pakistani British, with very small minorities of mixed white and Asian backgrounds. All pupils have English as a second language. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school, other than at the normal times in the school year, is small. The proportion of pupils having special educational needs is above the national average. Pupils' special needs include specific learning difficulties, together with moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural problems, speech or communication difficulties and physical difficulties. The school, which is situated in a socially deprived area, has received the DfES Achievement Award in 2000. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average overall, and very low with regard to English.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23868	Dr B Blundell	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Educational inclusion Design and technology
19430	Mr T Hall	Lay inspector	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Geography History Music Foundation Stage
17907	Mr M Bowers	Team inspector	English
30023	Ms R Taylor	Team inspector	Art and design Physical education Religious education
17877	Mrs C Ingham	Team inspector	Science Special educational needs English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is **good**; the school provides a **good quality of education**. It provides **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is now very well led and very well managed by a recently created and very effective senior management team.
- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Standards by the age of eleven now match national expectations in English, mathematics and science; pupils achieve well.
- Links with parents are very good; provision for family learning is excellent.
- The support staff for pupils who have English as an additional language and for those who have special educational needs are very good.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good.
- In a minority of lessons, the degree of challenge is too low and the pace is too slow.
- Pupils' attendance is well below average; this is a direct result of some parents taking their children away from school for extended holidays during term time.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their library skills.

The effectiveness of the school has improved well since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is rising as a result of the rigorous systems put in place by the senior management team. National test results in 2003 were higher overall than in 2002; standards for eleven year olds who will take their tests in 2004 are on course for further improvement. The issues raised in the last inspection have been successfully tackled, although pupils' library skills are still under-developed. Boys' attainment has improved and standards are assessed well. The school is successfully tackling some under-achievement by some Pakistani heritage pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	D	E	C
mathematics	E	E	E	E
science	E	E*	E	E

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

Pupils are now **achieving well**. On entry to the school, standards are well below average overall and very low indeed in English language skills, with very few pupils speaking any English whatsoever. Pupils make good progress through the Foundation Stage, achieving well, but by the time they leave reception, the majority of children do not reach the Early Learning Goals, which are the nationally expected standard. Pupils currently in the infant phase make good progress and achieve well, with the seven year olds on course to meet national expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In the junior phase, pupils also make good progress overall and meeting national expectations in English, mathematics and science; their achievement is good.

Pupils' personal qualities are **very good** overall; they **behave very well** and their attitudes to work are **good**. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is good. **Pupils'**

attendance, overall, is well below the national average. In the last full academic year, approximately forty pupils were continuously absent for six weeks of term time whilst taking extended holidays. This figure is typical of previous years and is not helping pupils' learning at school. **Punctuality** is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The overall quality of **teaching** is good in the foundation stage, infant phase and junior phase. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Support staff play an integral part in pupils' education. Pupils' **learning** throughout the school is good, as a result of the good quality teaching. Occasionally, learning would be greater if more was expected of the pupils and the lessons were conducted at a brisker pace.

The curriculum is good and enriched, both in school time and afterwards, with a very good range of opportunities for learning; clubs abound, ranging from information and communication technology for the infants to netball for the seniors. **The care for pupils, and for their welfare, health and safety** are very good. Partnerships with parents and other schools are very good; family links are excellent. Links with the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management by the headteacher and senior management team are very good. The headteacher is a most dynamic and perceptive leader who manages the school very efficiently. She has created a most able senior management team comprising the deputy headteacher and senior leader. The governance of the school is **good**.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school. Pupils are pleased with the help that it provides for them and enjoy being at school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To ensure that lessons consistently provide all pupils with sufficient challenge and that they are conducted at a brisk pace.
- To seek to improve attendance levels.
- To give the pupils more opportunities to apply their library skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement throughout the school is now **good**. Girls and boys perform at a similar level overall. By the age of eleven, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT match national expectations; in religious education, standards meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT by the age of eleven are in line, overall.
- with those expected nationally; in religious education, standards meet the expectations of the local agreed syllabus.
- Pupils performed well in the end of Year 5 optional national tests in 2003.
- Achievement throughout the school in the core subjects is now good; children enter the school at well below average levels of attainment and with very low standards in English, yet they now meet national levels overall by the time they leave.
- In other subject areas, standards meet national expectations by the age of eleven.

Commentary

1. Table 1, below, shows that in the national tests in 2002 for pupils aged seven, standards were well below national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared with those from similar schools, pupils' performance was well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Over the three years from 2000 to 2002 averaged together, pupils left the infant phase two terms behind pupils nationally in reading, and around six months behind in writing and mathematics. Girls performed a little better than boys. Results in 2003, for which national comparative data is not yet available, show improvement.

Table 1 Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.8(12.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.6 (12.4)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	15.3 (12.8)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

** Please note that pupils are expected nationally to go up by one point every term. It may be helpful to the reader to think of the mathematics example in the table above. In 2002, pupils nationally averaged 16.5 points but at St Michael and St John's they averaged 15.3 points, and pupils were therefore just over one term behind pupils nationally.*

Table 2 Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (26.3)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	23.9 (24.5)	26.6 (26.7)
science	25.4 (25.2)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Table 2, above, shows that in the national tests in 2002 for pupils aged eleven, standards were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with those of

schools of a similar type, standards were average in English, but well below average in mathematics and science. Over the years 2000 to 2002 taken together, pupils have left the school six months behind pupils nationally in English, and well over two terms behind pupils nationally in mathematics and in science. Boys have performed less well than girls, most especially in English, Results for 2003, for which there is as yet no comparative data, were better than in 2002 overall.

3. **Pupils now achieve well** in all subject areas at this school by the time they leave at the age of eleven. Children enter the school with well below average attainment overall, and with very low levels of English. Indeed, all the children have English as an additional language. They are intensively supported by a team of effective bi-lingual assistants, and make good progress through the Foundation Stage. This represents good achievement. In the inspection, no difference in achievement between boys and girls was noticed, nor were differences noticed between the different ethnicities. Under-achievement by Pakistani-heritage pupils, most especially boys, has been addressed. A successful "lads and dads" club has been developed to involve fathers more in their sons' learning.
4. **Previous results** have shown pupils performing poorly, most especially in mathematics and science. The new senior management team has put in place very effective strategies to raise standards. 2003 results show 72 per cent of pupils obtaining level four (the nationally expected level) or higher in science, and 24 per cent obtaining level five. (Figures for 2002 were 63 per cent level four or higher and 12 per cent level five). 2003 results in mathematics show 22 per cent obtaining level five as against 12 per cent in 2002.
5. **In the end of Year 5 optional national tests in 2003**, for pupils who will take their national end of Year 6 tests in 2004, results were on track to meet the school's targets of three quarters of pupils obtaining level four or higher, with one quarter obtaining level five in English and one third obtaining level five in mathematics.
6. **Standards of attainment in English** have been maintained since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in the subject as a result of the good teaching and high quality leadership by the subject leader, who is a member of the senior management team. The issue highlighted at the last inspection, concerning pupils' independent learning skills, has been addressed, but their library skills are in need of further development. The newly planned library should make a real difference here. Literacy skills are taught well throughout the school.
7. **In the Foundation Stage, children's literacy skills**, which are so very low on entry, are particularly well developed as a result of good teaching. Nonetheless, the children who are currently in the Foundation Stage are not on course to meet the Early Learning Goals, despite making good progress.
8. **In the infant phase and junior phase, reading, writing, speaking and listening** are consistently developed; pupils are given the opportunities to extend their oral skills through school productions and in assemblies. Bi-lingual-assistants model reading and writing for the younger pupils.
9. **Standards of attainment in mathematics** for pupils currently aged 11 match those reported at the last inspection. The subject is taught well and numeracy is well developed across the curriculum.
10. **In the Foundation Stage, children's number work** is well developed as a result of the good quality resources and the teachers' high expectations, in both the nursery and reception classes.

11. **Through the infant phase and on into the juniors**, pupils make good progress overall in the development of their mathematics, as a result of the high quality leadership by the headteacher and newly appointed subject leader.
12. **Standards of attainment in science** match those reported at the last inspection. Pupils really enjoy their science; teachers have high expectations and the subject is well led and managed.
13. **In other subject areas**, standards meet national expectations and in the case of religious education, the requirements of the local agreed syllabus.
14. **Pupils with special educational needs.** There are presently 88 pupils on the special educational needs register, including nine pupils with statutory Statements. This is approximately a quarter of all pupils. It is to the school's credit that throughout the school, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good; they make good progress in relation to their abilities. This is due to the very good additional adult support they receive, and to the commitment shown by the staff in modifying activities to ensure these pupils have full access to the curriculum. Those with statutory Statements of their need often make good progress, and they are fully included in activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils are enthusiastic about their school. They generally try hard and respond well to good teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very poor, because some families withdraw their children from school for lengthy holidays.
- Attitudes are good. Behaviour is very good throughout all classes.
- Moral and social conduct is very good. The school successfully promotes high spiritual values.

Commentary

15. The high levels of authorised absence shown in Table 3 below are almost entirely due to a significant number of families returning to their country of origin for lengthy periods each year. Although the school provides creative learning packs, the holidays have a direct effect on standards and incur additional effort on the part of the teachers. Notwithstanding, the great majority of pupils attend regularly and punctually. Registration is prompt and effective, particularly in the early years, where there is a happy purposeful introduction to the day.

Table 3 Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.8	School data	1.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

16. Parents support the school and encourage their children's good attitudes and behaviour at all times. However, although pupils' attitudes are undoubtedly good overall, they could be better at times. Pupils start off with good intentions. They are very interested in what they have to do but, in a minority of lessons, learning objectives are sometimes achieved only by the hard work and skill of teachers in re-focusing pupils' restlessness and energy. However, pupils' behaviour overall is very good throughout the school day. Pupils are cheerful, smiling and eager to speak first on meeting. They are full of innocent fun at play. The school is one large family of friends.

There are no exclusions. Very rare occasions of bad behaviour and isolated cases of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively.

17. Pupils' moral and social development is good. Teachers set very high standards of self-discipline, to which pupils respond very well, particularly with regard to guidance in discussions at circle time. They show keen interest in the visitors who come to talk about such matters as drugs awareness or about charity work. As a result, pupils have a growing awareness of the world around them and care for one another's needs. They have very good relationships and wholeheartedly support the school rules. Teachers offer a widening range of monitoring roles as pupils move through the year groups. Consequently, pupils have a growing appreciation of responsibility and managing themselves. This reflects their sound knowledge of the home, school agreement, and a remarkably mature respect for their share in it. Spiritual and cultural development is enlightened through thoughtfully structured assemblies, when the pupils join in songs and prayers with respect and understanding. This was very evident in the expressive singing of the School Song, and at a Harvest Celebration when enthusiastic voices reflected African and Spanish traditions as well as their own.

OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

Pupils are proud of the many displays of their best work in class and about the school. An exceptional example of this is the **School Leavers' Diary**, prominently placed in the main entrance area for all visitors to examine. These Year 6 pupils show real appreciation of their time in school and of their teachers' support. Each pupil offers a personal recollection of treasured moments and events experienced in every class they have occupied. These contributions are delightfully illustrated by colourful, individual patterns and imaginative drawings. This is a wonderful record promoting the school.

18. The pupils with special educational needs generally behave well and have good attitudes to their learning. They work well with adults, individually and in groups, and generally form good relationships with them, and with other pupils. They develop confidence and high levels of self-esteem because the staff plan activities which challenge the pupils appropriately.

Table 4, below, shows that no pupils have been excluded in the latest reporting year.

Table 4 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
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	288	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	132	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Strengths include the effective teaching and good curriculum, coupled with the very wide range of opportunities available to pupils outside the school day. A current weakness is the accommodation, which is cramped.

Teaching and learning

- In the Foundation Stage, infant, and junior phases, teaching is good, with very good lessons seen in the reception class and Years 1, 4 and 6.
- The use of support staff is very good throughout the school.
- The school provides very well for equality of opportunity.
- Assessment is good throughout the school, except in science in Years 1 to 4.

- Occasionally, lessons lack sufficient pace and challenge, and this does not help pupils' progress in learning.

Commentary

- The school has a good team of teachers and support staff who are committed to their pupils and work hard on their behalf. This is recognised by pupils and parents alike, who feel that teaching is good. Pupils feel that teachers are particularly effective in showing them how to work better and in making them work hard! The senior management team of the school includes the subject leader for literacy and the deputy headteacher, both of whom are skilled and effective teachers who promote good quality teaching in their sections of the school. The school has a happy working atmosphere.
- Table 5 below, shows the quality of teaching observed during the inspection. In nearly two thirds of the lessons seen, teaching was good or very good. Very good lessons were seen in the Foundation Stage and Years 1, 4 and 6.
- Strengths in teaching include the use of the bi-lingual support staff and special educational needs staff, who work well with teachers to promote pupils' learning, the degree of challenge in the majority of lessons, the manner in which teachers encourage their pupils, and the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Table 5 Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 58 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0(0%)	8(14%)	30(52%)	18(31%)	2(3%)	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 teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to learn effectively. The school gives a high profile to special educational needs. The staff know the needs of the pupils well, and they are skilful in planning activities to match individual needs. Pupils' needs and personal targets are well known to the teacher and other staff who work with the pupils. In the best lessons, the teachers target their questioning and support effectively, to encourage the pupils to feel included.
- The contribution of the learning support teachers and assistants is also effective in improving pupils' learning. They are involved in planning, supporting, assessing and monitoring pupils' progress.
- Assessment procedures are usually of a very high standard, and pupils' learning is monitored conscientiously. A strength in the procedures is the involvement of all those who work with the pupils, who are themselves appropriately involved in setting their own targets. Teachers assess pupils' work particularly well in English, mathematics and ICT; in all subjects, the information derived from assessment is used effectively in planning future work and in tracking pupils' progress.
- In a very good science lesson, using information and communication technology very effectively for pupils in the junior phase, the teacher used well-differentiated questioning to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding of the properties of a variety of micro-organisms. The use of ICT enabled pupils to plan their experiments, with particular awareness of the need to control variables.

26. In a minority of lessons, the pace was too slow, and the pupils were insufficiently challenged. The headteacher has placed members of the senior management team strategically in their roles as class teachers to promote greater uniformity of attainment.

27. Children learned very well indeed in a lesson in a reception class developing their speaking and listening skills. The learning environment really stimulated children's learning, as a (very realistic) "baby" doll was passed around. The teacher praised the children highly for being "so gentle". A 'magic touch' of friendship was passed round to make sure "everyone has a good day".
28. The school gives a high profile to special educational needs, and the teaching of pupils with special needs is good, enabling them to learn effectively. The staff know their pupils well, and they are skilful in planning activities to match individual needs. The pupils' personal targets are well known to their class teacher and other staff who work with the pupils. In the best lessons, the teachers target their questioning and support effectively, encouraging the pupils to feel included.
29. The contribution of the learning support teachers and assistants is also effective in improving pupils' learning. They are involved very effectively in planning, supporting, assessing and monitoring pupils' progress.

The curriculum

The curriculum planned by the school is **good**. A **very good** range of opportunities is provided to enrich pupils' learning activities. The accommodation, however, whilst well maintained is **barely satisfactory**. The available resources are **suitable and sufficient** to meet the pupils' needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum meets the statutory requirements fully, and provides a good range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of the pupils.
- There is very good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils readily accept responsibilities. The school council successfully involves pupils in decision-making and helps them to learn of democratic procedures.
- A very good range of extra curricular activities that embrace sports and support for the arts enriches the curriculum.
- There are good links with the local secondary school and effective procedures for passing information about pupils' progress from one year to another.
- There are good numbers of bilingual support staff.
- The accommodation is cramped; resources are both suitable and sufficient.

Commentary

30. The school has improved on the generally satisfactory curriculum noted in the last inspection report. Satisfactory progress has been made in the development of a library in order to improve pupils' independent learning skills. The very good planning for exciting and interesting learning opportunities, such as out-of-school visits, visits by experts to work with the pupils, and planned cross-curricular themes, makes the curriculum challenging and stimulating. All subjects are fully supported by clear and relevant documentation and schemes of work, ensuring that pupils of all abilities are fully challenged. There is very good continuity across parallel National Curriculum year classes, and statutory requirements are met in full. This makes a good contribution to the school's strategies to continue to raise standards.
31. The quality of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. There are good links between the nursery and the reception classes, and between reception and Years 1. Good links have been forged between Year 6 and the local secondary schools, including the practice of teachers and students from the secondary schools spending time in the Year 6 classes. This ensures that transfers within the school and between primary and secondary schools are efficient, and that pupils' progress is maintained.

32. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They have full access to the curriculum, and a high level of support in class enables them to participate in all lessons. The staff write clear and achievable plans for their individual progress. Detailed individual education plans, which describe the school's strategies for supporting pupils' progress towards the targets, are drafted for all pupils requiring them. This good provision has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Additional support is given in class to pupils in Years 5 and 6 to provide support with the literacy and numeracy strategies. In addition, small groups of pupils are withdrawn for short 'booster' sessions. The pupils attend these sessions eagerly, because the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the special needs support assistant plan interesting contexts for learning. The co-ordinator has organised a very attractive special needs room, known as 'The Jungle'. This is a very imaginative setting with extensive resources to support learning. The pupils very much enjoy working in this adventurous area, which makes a good contribution to their learning.
33. The school puts particular emphasis on its policy to develop personal, social and health education and awareness of citizenship, and the curriculum provides very well for this aspect of pupils' development. The agreed formal policy directs teachers' planning very successfully, and a formal scheme of work ensures that pupils receive appropriate teaching in respect of sex education, drugs awareness and inter-personal skills development. The older pupils have very good opportunities to take responsibilities for helping in the daily school routines. Pupils are able to put their names forward for service as class representatives on the school's council, writing a declaration stating why classmates should vote for them at the annual elections to this important group. These planned events and activities give pupils very good understanding of the nature of responsibility and the importance of citizenship.
34. The allocation of teaching time is above national levels and focuses on the teaching of English and mathematics. Good opportunities are identified to alternate the teaching of some foundation subjects over periods of half a term, and very good opportunities are planned to use people, places and events in the community to supplement the work done in school. These events enrich pupils' learning, as does the good range of after-school sports and 'other interest' clubs that include mathematics, information and communication technology and art. The very good provision for arts education includes pottery, music, dance and drama. These initiatives and such celebrations as those for Eid and the Harvest Festival are underpinning the school's current application for the Arts Charter Mark during the current academic year.
35. Currently the accommodation for the pupils is cramped, and the layout of the building makes it difficult for them to move around the school without passing through classrooms. A building project to rationalize the accommodation and provide extra classrooms will begin shortly.
36. There are appropriate numbers of teachers, who are suitably qualified and experienced. They are assisted well by enthusiastic and skilled support staff, who also work very effectively and have positive, friendly and firm relationships with the pupils.
37. Overall, learning resources are suitable and sufficient to support the curriculum. They are good in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are valued and very well cared for, in a secure, clean, warm and welcoming environment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is very happy school, where all staff contribute to the purposeful and supportive atmosphere.
- Guidance and support for each pupil is very well structured.
- The school council is enthusiastic, working very hard and responsibly to represent all pupils.

Commentary

38. All adults in school have had training in Child Protection and behaviour management. They are kindly and supportive. As a result, pupils feel very well looked after. Even the newest in school feel confident and secure in their new surroundings. A few minor health and safety matters have been discussed with governors, and accepted for their prompt attention.
39. Staff work very hard to build up the pupils' self esteem. They enjoy the pupils' company and understand their bubbly enthusiasm. Consequently an inclusive atmosphere is evident where pupils are seen to enjoy free conversation, sharing any thoughts or concerns. Good work, endeavour and improvement are praised in lessons or during assemblies. Teachers encourage pupils to achieve their best, guiding them individually throughout the year. Any emerging problems or weaknesses are discussed with pupils and thoroughly shared with parents to bring about improvement at an early stage. Pupils enjoy personal targets for learning throughout the term. Pupils especially value end-of-year reports, which the teachers share with them before they are sent home.
40. The school council is well established and very efficiently organised. Just as staff listen to them, the pupils listen to one another's suggestions, making decisions on all sorts of matters. For example, there are proposals for a school council newsletter and, for fund raising, a drawing competition, a fun day with a bouncy castle and a Christmas competition. The school encourages these activities wholeheartedly.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents are very pleased with all the school provides and achieves for their children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents view the school very highly and appreciate all the school does for their children.
- The school puts great emphasis on parental co-operation, and runs an exceptional range of high quality courses for parents.
- The school has strong and fruitful links within the community, particularly with the local mosque.
- Arrangements for Year 6 pupils' move to their next school are very well organised.

Commentary

41. Parents know this school sets out to involve them at every opportunity. As a result, parents support the Home, School agreement, which is constructively reviewed at the beginning of each year. Parents look forward to coming into school, and attend in large numbers every time they are invited, because the consultation sessions to discuss their children's reports, achievement and targets for further development are very helpful. Parents are very confident in approaching staff with any concerns. They feel that they are listened to, and know that their views are taken into account. Any small issues are dealt with sensitively. Open days, when parents can observe their children in lessons, are viewed with enthusiasm and are helpful with homework in areas such as literacy or information and communication technology.
42. Parents value the exceptional range of courses to involve them in their children's learning. These have been made possible as result of bids for outside funding and by the dedication of staff. They give parents immeasurable help and confidence in assisting their children.

OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

The whole **Family Learning Programme** is visionary. It is excellently thought out and put into action to the distinct advantage of families and the school. It is greatly enjoyed by a large numbers of parents. The Foundation Course for Parents, Top Tots and Share Projects are all having a direct impact on improved standards in the early years, where few pupils join the school speaking English. The Lifelong Learning Team running the ICT Club, out of school hours, has an enthusiastic attendance, resulting in some parents moving on to higher levels.

43. The school has strong ties in the community, particularly within the parish and with the local mosque. Clergy regularly share in assemblies, broadening the spiritual and cultural views of the pupils. Sometimes all work together. For example, the school, the families, the mosque and the local church co-operated to raise funds for the recent Indian earthquake disaster.
44. Links with partner institutions are broad and varied, assisting the school in professional development. The transfer of pupils to their next stage of education is managed with great thoroughness. Teachers of both schools teach the Year 6 students in both premises. Some of this time is spent with pupils from other schools who will be in their new class, so pupils form a very settled view of their future school. The school takes in students both for work experience and as part of their training. The students spoken to about their time at St. Michael and St John said it had been a valuable experience, because of the opportunities they had been given to share in all activities, including planning. The school values effective links with other local primary schools, and also a very fruitful interchange with a school in a rural area, which gives pupils a useful comparison of traditions and cultures.
45. The school is committed to involving parents in the learning of pupils with special educational needs, and they do so successfully. A significant aspect in this area is the provision of 'courses' for parents designed to develop their understanding and attitudes towards special educational needs, and to give ideas as to how they can best support their children's learning at home. Also, the special needs co-ordinator has led effective training on behaviour management through the 'Super Parents Group'. Through this support, relationships with parents have 'blossomed'.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has created a most effective and committed senior management team and is driving the school forward; she leads by example.
- Management by the headteacher is very effective and she is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The governing body is fully involved in the school's initiatives, and fulfils its statutory duties well.
- The management of special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

46. The headteacher is an enthusiastic and able leader. She has re-structured the senior management team completely since her appointment just over three years ago. The new senior management team, in place for two years, is providing very good quality leadership for the school and its pupils. The headteacher leads by example in all areas. A particularly effective innovation in leadership is that the two other members of the senior management team have been positioned in classes in the lower infants and lower juniors, so that, without the imminent pressure of examination classes, they can monitor and assist the other teachers in their phases of the school as needed. This is a very effective tool in the pursuit of improved achievement.
47. The headteacher manages the school's budget very efficiently. The large surplus shown in the Table 6 below is being held to help finance the new building. The school improvement plan is a most effective working document.

48. All members of the senior management team regularly monitor and evaluate teaching effectively through the school, in their roles as team leaders in performance management. The effectiveness of the role of subject leader has been improved since the last inspection.
49. Governors fulfil their duties well. The chair of governors keeps well abreast of pupils' progress at the school, and meets with the headteacher each week. Governors liaise well with subject leaders, who report to the governing body annually. They act well as critical friends of the school.
50. The management of special educational needs is very good because the co-ordinator is a highly experienced, hard-working teacher, who has a profound understanding of how these pupils learn best. The guidance given to teachers and support assistants is consistently good, evidence of strong and effective leadership that seeks to achieve the very best practice for the pupils. The co-ordinator ensures that individual education plans are carefully written, followed and reviewed, and the quality of her work has made a significant contribution to the pupils' good achievements. Outside agencies are involved when necessary to guide the teaching and learning programme of some special needs pupils.

Table 6 Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	987,883	Balance from previous year	139,037
Total expenditure	1,038,127	Balance carried forward to the next	69,961
Expenditure per pupil	2,294		

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

English as an additional language

The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high quality of support from the bilingual teaching assistants.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Good standards are achieved by the pupils.
- There is good provision in the Foundation Stage.
- The quality and range of bilingual resources are good.
- Communication with parents is very effective.

Commentary

51. The overall quality of support from the bilingual teaching assistants is very good. The majority of support is targeted on the Foundation Stage and Year 1, a successful strategy that ensures that most children can speak English by Year 2, with growing confidence. The school adopts a variety of approaches to the teaching of English as an additional language, from team teaching with class teachers to working with groups of pupils who speak the same language, including Punjabi, Urdu and Gujarati. Bilingual assistants plan together and with teachers. They have developed good relationships as a team, and work hard together to ensure a high level of support is available for the pupils.
52. The teaching for children who speak English as an additional language is good. The staff provide good visual clues and demonstrations to ensure that pupils understand and join in activities. Teachers almost intuitively use gesture to aid explanations, and the pupils'

responses show how helpful this practice is. However, the pupils' inability to move beyond the literal translation is sometimes a barrier to their learning. The learning support teachers and other support staff work alongside pupils in the junior classes to develop their comprehension skills, and as a result, pupils' learning is improved.

53. The pupils do well because the staff focus on explaining new terms in literacy and numeracy lessons, and adopt a practical emphasis in other subjects.
54. Extensive support is provided for children in the Foundation Stage, which significantly contributes to the children's acquisition of English. The high quality support from the bilingual assistants ensures the children are soon integrated into language activities, and the pupils benefit from well-organised dual language sessions, when they are helped to sort out their ideas and get a clear understanding of what is being taught.
55. Bilingual resources such as dual language books, games and pictures are of a high quality, and used to good effect to support learning. Good attention is also paid to writing labels in other languages, so that the pupils can begin to recognise words in their own language.
56. The school has established effective links with parents and this has a positive effect on the children's learning. Bilingual staff ensure that parents can sort out problems and have a clear picture of what is going on in school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of provision is good.

57. Pupils' overall attainment when they start nursery is well below average. Most communicate in their mother tongue, but the children's ability to speak and understand English is particularly low. Overall achievement is good. However, because of the low starting points, children are unlikely to reach the nationally expected standards in each of the areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress.
58. Leadership and management are good. The high quality of teamwork ensures the best use of the individual talents of all staff. All support staff provide particularly good support and make an especially significant contribution to learning in all areas. A coherent curriculum, based on relevant first-hand experiences with a good balance of teacher-directed activities and opportunities for child-selected play, meets children's needs well.
59. Links between home and school are very well established. Well-organised workshops provide advice for parents on helping their children at home.
60. High standards in the provision for the Foundation Stage have been maintained since the previous inspection, and curricular links with Year 1 have been strengthened.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good. Children achieve very well.
- Caring and supportive relationships successfully promote children's confidence and self-esteem.
- Children are developing positive attitudes to learning.
- The provision of a discussion session, called Circle Time, provides a good opportunity for children to express their feelings and listen to others.

Commentary

61. Staff use praise effectively to encourage children and promote good behaviour. They value children's ideas sensitively and communicate respect for their work by displaying it attractively. As a result, children show increasing confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Reception children are adept at selecting tasks for themselves and maintaining concentration for a short spell. Routines and rules are clearly and positively established, so that children know what is expected and respond accordingly. Circle Time sessions are very well organised and provide good opportunities for individuals to share thoughts and feelings, to respond to others, and to take turns and share. Children learn successfully about traditions through taking part in celebrations like the harvest festival.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good. Children achieve well.
- High priority is rightly given to the teaching of speaking and listening skills in English.
- Bilingual assistants provide particularly good support.
- The curriculum and resources are adapted specifically to promote children's understanding.
- Assessment is used successfully to inform teachers' plans.

Commentary

62. Teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding to plan small steps of learning, which help children achieve well. Emphasis is given to promoting speaking and listening skills in English through well-planned, formal lessons, and through focused play activities in all areas of learning. Teachers intervene particularly successfully to encourage language development in imaginative play. Stories and songs are carefully adapted; for instance, the Gingerbread Man becomes the Chapatti Man, reflecting the children's interests and experience effectively so that they become confident learners. Bilingual assistants provide clear translations, which ensure reception children understand and enjoy stories. They continually demonstrate speaking skills in English and, through skilled questioning, engage children in purposeful conversation. Consequently, children communicate in English with growing expertise. Reception children are just beginning to recognise letter sounds, and higher attaining children use random letter shapes when making appointments at the 'clinic'. Staff use their careful observations of children at work to plan new learning, which builds effectively on what children can already do.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Standards in some aspects of number work are average.
- Lively practical activities are well planned and support learning successfully.
- Tasks are carefully graded to meet children's needs.

Commentary

63. Children join enthusiastically in counting songs and games in their mother tongue, with increasing use of English. They copy the teacher accurately to display the correct number of fingers. In the reception class, most children recognise numerals from 1 to 5, whilst higher attaining children know numbers 1 to 10. They are becoming confident in ordering numbers correctly. They identify, for instance, 'one more than four' accurately, although language difficulties sometimes cause confusion between the words 'before' and 'after'. Attractive sorting and matching activities are carefully organised to challenge children of differing attainment. Play activities, like weighing the 'baby' in the 'clinic', provide interesting opportunities to develop mathematical skills. Children are careful in counting out the number of bricks needed, and watch the scales closely to balance the doll.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good. Children achieve well.
- Tasks are clearly focused.
- Children are encouraged to learn through their senses.
- Resources are well prepared.

Commentary

64. Group investigative activities are well organised and clearly focused. Children are becoming independent in selecting from the good range of resources, and all staff work with clear purpose. When making chapattis, children are prompted to use their senses consciously, to observe, touch, smell and taste. Adults focus on key vocabulary, and use language precisely in their questions to help children describe the changes they experience. Children use the computer competently to reinforce skills such as counting and pattern making.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is good.

No direct teaching was seen.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children have access to a secure outdoor play area.
- Reception children use the hall for physical education lessons.

Commentary

65. Children control large wheeled toys with awareness of space, but little consideration of others. They manipulate tools like pencils and paintbrushes to fulfil their own purposes satisfactorily. Staff manage children successfully in the outdoor area.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good. Children achieve well.
- There is a clear focus on skill development.
- Resources are carefully chosen and well prepared. Imaginative play areas are particularly well organised.
- Creative activities are used well to provide opportunities for fostering pupils' language skills.
- Questioning does not always extend children's ideas successfully.

Commentary

66. Children explore paint and collage thoughtfully in their own free-choice activities. They experiment carefully to make colours darker or lighter, and work purposefully to mix a colour, which accurately matches that of a real orange. Children successfully link the orange circles they paint to the letter 'O', for orange. Children build successfully on their own experience in a

familiar situation when playing in the 'clinic'. They imitate the teacher's actions and carry on the pretence spontaneously after the teacher has left. Sometimes the teacher's questions require only a single word response and do not challenge children as well as they might.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**. Pupils achieve well to obtain National Standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good throughout the school and, consequently, pupils achieve well. Bilingual support assistants make good contributions in lessons.
- Boys, particularly those in Year 6, show high levels of interest and confidence, and are keen to learn.
- The subject is very well led and effectively managed.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their library skills.

Commentary

67. Standards in reading are average in Year 2. Pupils sound out unfamiliar words and understand what they read. Higher attaining pupils read confidently and independently, and talk about the characters and main events in the story. Average and lower attaining pupils are less expressive. Standards in reading have improved since the 2002 national test results, with more pupils beginning to read at the higher level.
68. Good teaching of phonics in the infant phase helps pupils to learn letter sounds effectively. The provision of a word rich environment successfully promotes the acquisition of reading and spelling skills, and is particularly useful because English is being taught as a second language.
69. In the junior phase, pupils reach standards appropriate for their age. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and accurately. They hold a conversation about the books they are reading, identifying passages that they really enjoyed and explaining why. Pupils still experience some difficulty in establishing meaning, because they have some problems understanding more complex vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, such as "pull your socks up." Year 6 boys have very good attitudes to reading. They are aware of the differences between fact and fiction and, when asked about space travel, they trawled the reference section of the library, locating information books to research knowledge about 'space stations' and 'sputniks'. Some very good resourcing has ensured that recently purchased books include titles and topics that are relevant to boys' interests. These books have been situated close to Year 6 classrooms. Their availability and proximity has fired the boys' interests and imaginations, and has led to an improvement in their levels of reading. Nonetheless, pupils could be given more opportunities to develop their library skills further. The school has worked hard to respond to the key issue relating to boys' attainment highlighted in the last inspection report.
70. Standards in writing are average for both Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement on the findings of the last report and represents good achievement, since almost all pupils commenced their compulsory education learning English as an additional language, and having lower than average skills. In the infant phase, a high level of importance is given to writing and pupils are challenged to write independently, using sentences, and to develop their punctuation skills. Their letters are well formed and handwriting is clear and legible. Year 6 pupils write well. Their work is grammatically correct and spelling is accurate. Usually handwriting and presentation are neat. Pupils plan, draft and produce interesting and imaginative pieces of work. The higher attaining pupils write at length, sustaining their ideas.

71. Standards in speaking and listening are slightly below average by the end of Year 2. Teaching is good throughout the school, with an appropriate emphasis on extending pupils' skills through the introduction of new vocabulary, and providing opportunities in lessons, often through questioning, for pupils to express themselves. Consequently, in Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills are average.
72. The overall quality of teaching is good across the school. The new procedures for assessing pupils' achievement are very well designed, and throughout the school, teachers generally use the assessment information effectively for planning their work for different groups of pupils. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned, indicating good knowledge of the Literacy Strategy. Teachers continually challenge pupils through their stimulating and interesting explanations. They encourage and engage the pupils, ensuring that they are fully attentive and contributing to discussions. Adults use common words from pupils' first language to ensure that they gain full understanding of the learning task. In this way, the well-trained bilingual support assistants make good contributions to pupils' learning. Other learning support assistants effectively support those pupils with special educational needs. Teachers model examples of extended writing most successfully, thereby helping the higher attaining pupils to achieve the higher levels of writing. These strategies ensure that pupils make good progress. Occasionally, where teaching is satisfactory, too much time is taken to explain the tasks, so pupils are rushed to complete their work. Sometimes the lesson planning does not fully consider the needs of pupils who complete their tasks quickly.
73. Information and communication technology is used well for word processing. A library has been established in a small room, which is organised effectively and administered by pupils, who check books in and out confidently using an ICT barcode programme. Classes are timetabled to use this resource, and parents help their children to choose books. The library is colour coded and satisfactorily stocked. Whilst some pupils have acquired knowledge and retrieval skills using 'contents' pages and the index effectively, pupils are not given sufficient time to further develop their independent learning skills in the library.
74. The subject leaders provide very good role models for the staff, and very good procedures have been set up for monitoring pupils' work and lesson planning, and the evaluation of national test results. Findings are acted upon and, consequently, the school provides a language-rich environment in which pupils flourish.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

75. The development of literacy across the curriculum is strong, and glossaries of key words are provided in subjects such as science, mathematics and ICT before pupils begin their learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics **is good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall by the age of eleven, and attainment now matches national expectations.
- Teaching and learning are good overall throughout the school.
- Multiplication tables could be practised in school more regularly.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

76. Children currently enter the school with standards that are well below average in mathematics, but are on course to leave in 2004 with standards that broadly match those of pupils nationally. Over the years from 2000 to 2002 taken together, pupils have left the school with attainment well over two terms behind that of pupils nationally. Results in 2003, for which there is no national comparative data, show some improvement, with nearly double the proportion of pupils obtaining the higher level five. The school is on course to meet its target for 2004, with one third of pupils leaving the school at level five and three quarters reaching at least level four. Girls have performed a little better than boys; in particular, there has been some under-achievement by Pakistani-heritage boys, which has been addressed. Pupils' achievement is now good.
77. Pupils' learning is good as a result of the good quality teaching. In the nine lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was very good in two lessons, good in four and satisfactory in the other three. No differences were observed between the learning of boys and girls.
78. In the best lessons, the pace was very brisk, with pupils given very short but appropriate time slots to complete each task. Expectations were high, and the pupils were very well managed. For example, in a very good lesson for Year 4 pupils on measurement, pupils were given short periods to complete each problem. Pupils rose to the challenge, remained focused on the task and worked both speedily and accurately. No time was wasted, and pupils' learning was maximised.
79. In the lessons that were judged to be satisfactory, the pace flagged at times and pupils were not always sufficiently challenged.
80. The school has, appropriately, been putting great emphasis on improving standards in mathematics. However, pupils are sometimes still hindered in their problem solving by not having sufficient instant recall of their multiplication tables. The subject is well led and managed by a newly appointed and enthusiastic subject leader.
81. Standards now match those reported at the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

82. Mathematics is developed well across the curriculum in subjects such as geography, information and communication technology, and design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs.
- The quality of pupils' recorded work in Year 6 is good.
- Teaching is mainly good, and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning.
- The management of the subject is good.
- Insufficient attention is given to ensuring progression in the pupils' enquiry skills.
- There is a lack of challenge and pace in some lessons.

Commentary

83. By the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils are on course to achieve the expected standard, and most achieve well in lessons. National test results over the last three years have shown that standards are improving by the end of Year 6. The 2003 results show that a quarter of all pupils attained above average standards by the end of Year 6 which reflects the continuing improvement, which is due to the implementation of a detailed school scheme of work. This has enabled teachers to plan more effectively, and to match work well to pupils' prior attainment. Pupils who are now in Year 2 explained their work, recorded from Year 1, and demonstrated their sound knowledge of scientific facts and an understanding of different aspects of science, such as various types of forces. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the pupils used their knowledge of micro-organisms to investigate the best place to store bread.
84. The pupils in Year 6 make good progress in their recording because teachers give them increasing levels of responsibility and expect high standards. Good use is made of the pupils' literacy skills. The pupils' work shows their ability to use scientific language accurately to describe their activities. They record their methods, predict the outcomes of their investigations, and the higher-attaining pupils compare and evaluate their findings.
85. The quality of teaching is mainly good with a number of strengths. It is very good in Years 1 and 6. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, and much attention is given to making sure that the pupils are clear about what they are expected to do and what this will help them to learn. In a good Year 1 lesson, the teacher inspired an enthusiastic response from the pupils by actively involving them in tasting activities. By the end of the lesson, most pupils confidently sorted foods into 'sweet', 'sour' and 'salty' categories. Teaching is less successful when lessons lack pace and challenge, and the content of the lesson does not build upon previous learning.
86. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are fully engaged in lessons. Teachers are good at asking questions to ensure these pupils are brought into discussions, and showing that their ideas are valued. The very good bilingual support available plays a crucial part in enabling the pupils to take part fully in the lessons, and gain an understanding of the key vocabulary and concepts. The learning support teachers make a significant contribution to helping pupils understand scientific terminology, working alongside the pupils and giving further explanations.
87. Increasing use is being made of ICT to support the pupils' learning. In a lesson of high quality in Year 6, the use of an interactive whiteboard to demonstrate an experiment about yeast engaged the pupils' interest very successfully, and informed their learning about micro-organisms.
88. The leader has a good knowledge of the subject and has supported teachers effectively with planning and with assessing the pupils' learning. Close monitoring of the science curriculum planning has ensured that all elements of the subject are covered.
89. Although the attention to learning through scientific enquiry is satisfactory, in Years 1 to 4, assessment is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that there is progression in pupils' learning. Targets for learning have been recently introduced, but they frequently refer to knowledge and understanding rather than the skills required to develop scientific enquiry.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school benefits from a set of mobile lap top computers, for use by all classes twice every week.
- There are inter-active white-boards, strategically placed in learning areas, to which all classes have access.
- Standards of attainment match national expectations; pupils' achievement is good.
- The subject leader is very committed and capable.
- There is currently no dedicated ICT suite.

Commentary

90. Standards in all areas of ICT match national expectations. The lack of an ICT suite does not help in raising standards further.
91. Pupils take part in two ICT lessons each week. One of these involves the direct teaching of ICT skills, whilst the other is used to support other subjects across the curriculum; this represents good practice.
92. Teaching and learning are both good. Pupils want to learn because they really enjoy their ICT lessons. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils worked diligently, creating buttons and adding hyperlinks to their presentations. The classroom was very well organised, with the laptops strategically placed. The teacher ensured that pupils were "on task" and that they evaluated their own work. The learning built well on previous work. Year 6 pupils routinely use ICT to produce animations, involving both text and images.
93. In a well taught lesson in Year 2, pupils worked competently using a word-processing package to produce high quality presentations. They are able to load, save and retrieve their work. They use ICT to add spellings to their "words to learn" lists for their spelling tests.
94. The subject is very well led and managed by a most dedicated subject leader. Assessment procedures, devised by the subject leader, are effective and are leading to the successful tracking of pupils' skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

95. ICT is used well to support pupils' work across the curriculum in areas such as science and English.

HUMANITIES

Geography and History

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is efficiently organised to promote steady progress in skills and knowledge.
- Bilingual support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- In some lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough and the pace of learning is too slow.

- The subjects make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

96. Standards are average in both subjects. In Year 2, pupils have sound knowledge of physical features in the locality. They make relevant comparisons between the townscape they know and features of life in a more rural area. They are developing a sound sense of chronology and of change, when comparing old and new toys. Year 6 pupils talk knowledgeably about the Amazon Rain Forest and about tourism around Blackburn. They show good appreciation of the benefits and drawbacks of human activity on the environment and on people's lives. They are successfully developing a sense of responsibility for the world around them. They use their sound knowledge of ancient civilisations, including that of the Egyptians and of the Aztecs, to reflect on society today. Pupils achieve satisfactorily because the curriculum provides small steps of learning which meet their needs. Bilingual support of high quality is well directed and successful in helping pupils overcome the difficulties caused by their lack of skills in the English language. Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, in some lessons, teachers do not challenge pupils to do as well as they can. Group tasks are not always well planned to build on what pupils have already learnt, and this slows the pace of learning for a minority of pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The curriculum co-ordinators monitor standards by checking teachers' assessments efficiently, but does not monitor teaching and learning in class. Since the last inspection, standards in geography have improved as a result of the implementation of a revised curriculum with greater emphasis on the development of skills.

Religious education

Provision in Religious Education is **satisfactory**, and pupils' achievement is in line with the expectations of the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the meaning of what they are learning.
- Pupils are taught to respect the religious beliefs of others.

Commentary

97. Standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, are in line with the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The very effective use of the bi-lingual support teachers ensures that all pupils are included. Boys and girls attain similar standards.
98. Islam is the faith background for all the pupils in the school. Lessons in religious education cover all the main faiths, so that by the time they leave school, pupils have satisfactory background knowledge of Christianity and other world religions. Pupils learn well that there are people who belong to other faiths and who celebrate special days such as Easter, Christmas, Diwali, Eid and Shabbat.
99. During the inspection, it was possible to see lessons with every group of children from Year 2 to Year 6, and the quality of teaching and learning was good overall. Good planning ensures that pupils achieve the required standard. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and their comments and contributions are valued. In all the lessons seen, behaviour was good, with teachers having high expectations. In a Year 6 lesson looking at 'Life as a Journey', pupils showed sensitivity when discussing how making choices can impact on their lives, and listened attentively to others' points of view.
100. Additional evidence was gained through discussion with the subject leader, and the scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. There is little recorded evidence in pupils' books in the early years,

as much of their work is based on discussion. In a Year 2 lesson comparing Muslim places of worship with Christian and Hindu places of worship, the teacher made good use of photographs to stimulate discussion, and to reinforce the message of respect for others' beliefs. In the books of Year 6 pupils, there was a range of work to be seen, covering a range of carefully prepared topics.

101. The subject leader has a good knowledge and has worked hard in providing the school with clear guidelines which link well with the locally Agreed Syllabus. Assessment sheets ensure that continuity and progression are monitored. There is a satisfactory range of resources for the subject, which includes books, jigsaws, posters and artefacts. These resources are supplemented with loan boxes of religious artefacts. The effective use of visits and visitors from other faiths supports and enhances the pupils' learning. Parents and members of the local community are invited to join in special assemblies, such as the harvest celebration, which took place during the inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology

There was insufficient evidence during the inspection to report on design and technology, but the subject is very well led and managed.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy the subject and are enthusiastic to perform for others.
- Teachers give clear demonstrations and instructions so that pupils know how to succeed.
- The pace of learning in some lessons is too slow, and insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate their own compositions.
- Pupils' knowledge of the work of a range of composers is weak.
- There are good cross-curricular links with art, and the subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

Commentary

102. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, as do pupils with special educational needs. Pupils throughout the school sing with gusto for an audience of parents in the harvest festival. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 perform a range of songs from different cultures, achieving an echo effect successfully and maintaining their parts with care. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are enthusiastic, but their singing sometimes lacks sufficient attention to dynamics. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers set relevant objectives and provide clear demonstrations. In some lessons, too much time is spent on explanations and repeating instructions, so not enough time is left for pupils to be active in developing their skills. This slows the pace of learning in some lessons. Pupils listen to each other's compositions, but are given insufficient opportunities to analyse and evaluate their performance. As a result, pupils are not confident about suggesting ways to improve their own work or that of others. Pupils in Year 6 recall an enthusiastic response to the Planets Suite, by Gustav Holst, in effective paint, pastel and collage. Their knowledge of the works of other composers is weak. The curriculum co-ordinator has a clear view of standards, by monitoring teachers' assessments, but does not monitor teaching and learning in class.

Art and design

The provision for art is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are good.
 - The subject is well led by an enthusiastic coordinator.
103. Creativity in art was a key issue from the last inspection. Owing to the timetabling during the inspection, only one art lesson was observed. However, discussion with the very enthusiastic subject leader and scrutiny of the work displayed around the school contributed to the evidence that pupils make satisfactory progress by the age of 11. Teaching and learning in the subject is good.
104. Pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities to explore all aspects of art and design. In the lesson observed, the teacher's skilful questioning regularly intervened to challenge the pupils about what they were actually seeing, and prompted them to make their 'still life' drawings accurately. Pupils were encouraged to try different techniques for shading, to try to achieve a 3-dimensional quality to their sketches. Sensitive and constructive comments were invited from pupils about others' work.
105. The scheme of work provides an effective structure to the programme of art being offered throughout the school. Resources are good, and used effectively to enhance the pupils' skills. The recent Arts Week raised the awareness of art in the curriculum, and the visiting artists inspired pupils, staff and parents to further their skills.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**. It contributes well to pupils' personal and social development.

106. All aspects of the subject are provided in line with National Curriculum requirements. Pupils across the age and ability groups attain standards that are at least in line with national expectations.
107. Teaching and learning were good in all the lessons observed. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and prepare, plan and deliver their lessons well, ensuring pupils know what is expected of them and that they work collaboratively. Teachers are aware of what pupils can do, and extend their attainment through good teaching of basic skills. There are no gender issues, with all pupils keen to succeed. In a Year 6 class, the boys were joining in and enjoying the dance lesson as much as the girls. Pupils listen attentively to what is required, concentrate on the given tasks and develop their skills and quality of movement. Behaviour is good, and pupils are aware of health and safety issues.
108. The subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The scheme of work for physical education covers all areas of activity in the National Curriculum. The well-equipped hall and outdoor areas are valuable assets, providing effective facilities and space for the wide range of activities offered to the pupils. Resources are good and easily accessible.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

109. The school puts a special emphasis on its policy to develop personal, social and health education and awareness of citizenship, and the curriculum provides very well for this aspect of pupils' development. The agreed formal policy directs teachers' planning very successfully, and a formal scheme of work ensures that pupils receive appropriate teaching in respect of sex education, drugs awareness and inter-personal skills development. The older pupils have very good opportunities to take responsibilities for helping in the daily school routines. Pupils are able to put their names forward for service as class representatives on the school's council, writing a declaration stating why classmates should vote for them at the annual elections to this important group. These planned events and activities give pupils very good understanding of the nature of responsibility and the importance of citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
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	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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).