

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Penwortham, Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119293

Headteacher: Mr L Pimlott

Lead inspector: Mrs D Bell

Dates of inspection: 26th - 29th April 2004

Inspection number: 258406

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	396
School address:	Oaklands Drive Penwortham Preston Lancashire
Postcode:	PR1 0RH
Telephone number:	(01772) 744 449
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Edwards
Date of previous inspection:	27 th April 1996

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 396 pupils (219 boys and 177 girls) on its roll, Whitefield is a large primary school. The number on roll has increased significantly since the last inspection, enabling the pupils, aged four to 11, to be taught in 14 single-age classes, two classes per year group. Over two fifths of the pupils currently in Year 6 either did not start school in Reception or were not with the school when they were in Year 2. This very high level of mobility has now stabilised and movement in the rest of the school is much more in line with that found in most schools. Attainment on entry to the school is slightly above that found nationally for four-year-olds. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion with special educational needs (SEN). Ninety per cent of the pupils come from white British backgrounds. The remaining ten per cent come from a range of ethnic backgrounds covering: other white, mixed black/white Caribbean, mixed white/Asian, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds. Around three per cent of pupils are known to have English as an additional language, but all speak English fluently. The school has had a new headteacher since the previous inspection and is involved in a range of initiatives including the Leadership Development Programme in Primary Schools and a Staff Wellbeing Programme. It has achieved: the National Healthy Schools Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and the Partnership Plus Award for involvement in initial teacher training. It has close links with local high schools which benefit science and environmental education, and is part of a consortium of 17 schools in the area, focused on being a learning community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16413	Mrs D Bell	Lead inspector	English Music
9981	Mr S Hussain	Lay inspector	
27677	Mrs D Davenport	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education English as an additional language
24891	Mrs J Johnson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Information and communication technology
22967	Mrs M Griffiths	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective** school. The headteacher's clarity of vision has very successfully focused all staff on raising achievement and improving standards in all aspects of the school's work. Very good teaching ensures that the pupils achieve very well and reach good standards in their work. The school provides **very good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is very good overall. Pupils reach high standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards are above the national expectation in all other subjects except physical education, where they are satisfactory.
- Teaching is very good overall. However, very occasionally pupils are required to listen to the teacher for too long and are not fully challenged by what they are given to learn.
- The headteacher's excellent leadership provides a very clear educational direction for the school, to which governors and staff contribute very effectively.
- Assessment is very good in English, mathematics and science, but there are inconsistencies in the quality of assessment in other subjects.
- Very good provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception) gives children a very good start to their education. Overall, a very rich and very well-planned curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as are relationships throughout the school. All pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported in their personal and academic lives.
- The school has a very good partnership with parents and provides them with very good information about its work and about their children's progress.

The school has very significantly improved since its last inspection. It has very successfully addressed all of the issues identified at that time. Considerable improvements in information and communication technology (ICT), planning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation now ensure that the needs of all pupils are being met. The quality of teaching has improved and all agreed policies are being consistently implemented.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall achievement is **very good**. Children start school with levels of attainment above those expected for their age. They achieve well and generally regularly exceed the goals expected for the end of their Reception Year. In 2003, Year 2 pupils reached very good standards in the national tests for reading and mathematics, and put the school in the top five per cent of all schools for writing. The test results were well above those of similar schools for reading and writing, and above for mathematics. The teacher assessments for science placed the school in the top five per cent of all schools and similar schools. The trend in the results is above the national trend in this age group. Despite the large number of pupils who joined the school in their later years, pupils in Year 6 last year also did well in the national tests. The trend in the school's results for this age group is in line with the national trend, but the value added by the school is very good when compared with that in all schools and similar schools, and with pupils' prior attainment when they were in Year 2. The test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2003 are shown in the following table:

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

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.

Although last year's test results showed that Year 6 boys outperformed girls in mathematics and science, the school effectively ensures that all pupils achieve as well as they can, including those with SEN and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. No significant differences between groups were noted during the inspection. The school sets challenging targets and works hard to reach them. It tracks pupils' progress very effectively in English, mathematics and science, and takes swift action to tackle weaknesses. This has led, for example, to the improvements seen in science. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils behave very well. Relationships are very good throughout the school and, overall, pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education, including the quality of teaching, is **very good**. English and mathematics are very well taught, and very good attention is paid to developing literacy skills in other subjects. Mathematical skills are developed satisfactorily. Teachers assess pupils' learning well and use many different approaches to teaching to suit the pupils' different learning styles. However, assessment procedures are not yet fully formalised and consistent throughout the school, except in English, mathematics and science. Teachers plan very effectively, making sure that all pupils are fully included in all learning activities and have the same very good opportunities to achieve to the best of their capability. However, introductions are occasionally too long and pupils do not get onto their independent work quickly enough. This sometimes hinders their progress in lessons and causes some restlessness. A very rich, well-planned curriculum successfully ensures that all pupils make continuous progress and are very well prepared for life beyond school. Pupils receive very good academic and personal support and are very well cared for. The school has a very effective partnership with parents that contributes in great measure to pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. As a result of the headteacher's excellent leadership and clarity of vision, a very strong sense of purpose is evident in all of the school's work. This is brought about by the staff and governors' shared and very strong commitment to providing a high quality of education for all pupils.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The vast majority of parents and pupils are very satisfied with the school and what it does for them. They know that their views are valued and acted upon wherever possible. The inspection team found that the concerns raised by a minority of parents were unfounded.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Although overall a very effective school, minor points for development, on which the school is already working, are:

- To formalise assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics and science and link them to National Curriculum levels.
- To continue to do everything possible to improve provision and accommodation for physical education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

All groups of pupils achieve **very well**. Standards are well above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and Year 6. They are above the national expectation in all other subjects except physical education, where they meet the national expectation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage are given a very good start to their education. They achieve well and reach good standards overall, except in physical development, which is satisfactory.
- Pupils use their literacy skills very well in other subjects. They use ICT effectively to enhance their learning across the curriculum.
- A good proportion of Year 6 pupils are highly skilled in ICT.

Commentary

1. Children start school in the Reception Class with levels of attainment above those expected for their age and they achieve well overall. In meeting the children's needs, the staff place particular emphasis on personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy. Most children have already exceeded the goals expected for the end of Reception in these areas of learning and are on course to exceed them in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. They are most likely to meet the goals for physical development.
2. In the current Year 2 and Year 6, standards are well above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science. They match the national expectation for physical education and are above it in all other subjects. Overall, all pupils achieve very well throughout the school.
3. In 2003, Year 2 pupils reached well above average standards in the national tests for reading and mathematics, and put the school in the top five per cent of all schools for writing. The test results were well above those of similar schools for reading and writing, and above for mathematics. The teacher assessments for science placed the school in the top five per cent of all schools and similar schools. Although there was a dip in reading in 2003, the trend in the results is above the national trend in this age group.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.8 (18.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.3 (16.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.7 (18.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Last year's results for Year 6 show a small decline since the previous year, but the overall trend in the school's results for this age group is in line with the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.4 (30.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.1 (29.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.8 (30.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. A large number of pupils in last year's Year 6 only came to the school during Years 5 and 6. The school quickly analysed their attainment on entry and took action to address any weaknesses in their learning. As a result, the year group as a whole did well in the national tests. This is particularly evident in the value added by the school, which is very good when compared with that in all schools and similar schools, and with pupils' prior attainment when they were in Year 2.
6. Although last year's test results showed that Year 6 boys outperformed girls in mathematics and science, the school effectively ensures that all pupils achieve as well as they can. No significant differences between groups were noted during the inspection. Higher-average and lower-attaining pupils and those from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve equally well because their work is well matched to their levels of capability, and their progress is very effectively monitored. Pupils with SEN, including those with statements, make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and achieve very well because of the very good support they receive.
7. The school sets challenging targets and works hard to reach them. It rigorously analyses all test and assessment outcomes and is quick to take action when any weaknesses are found, as can be seen from the improvements in science. Pupils' progress is very effectively monitored and the school's records show that pupils achieve very well from whatever point they come to the school, and whatever their background or level of capability. The school is working hard to improve the pupils' overall satisfactory achievement in physical education. However, in this subject progress, though satisfactory, is restricted by the lack of suitable accommodation for indoor lessons for the increased number of classes now in the school.
8. Pupils use their literacy and ICT skills very well in other subjects and this enhances their learning very effectively, especially with regard to word processing, research and data handling. They use their mathematical skills satisfactorily in other subjects, but not yet as effectively as in the other two areas.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes to school and to work impact significantly on their achievement.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good.
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their personal qualities and they willingly take on responsibilities.
- Personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage is very good.

Commentary

9. Pupils' very good attitudes to school and to their work contribute very positively to the warm, harmonious and friendly atmosphere within the school, as well as to their personal

development and overall achievement. Pupils like their school very much, take advantage of all that it has to offer and enjoy the sense of belonging that it gives them. They enjoy learning and are very enthusiastic about their work because it is 'interesting and fun'. These very positive attitudes are encouraged as soon as pupils start school and are promoted very effectively through the wide range of very well-planned activities during and outside of the normal school day.

10. Attendance and punctuality are very good. The school has very good systems in place to promote good attendance, and parents and carers ensure that pupils attend regularly and arrive in school on time. This has a significant impact on the pupils' learning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

11. Children in the Foundation Stage quickly settle into school life, and the very good emphasis placed on learning to share, co-operate and relate to adults and to each other has a very positive impact on their personal and social development. From an early age pupils willingly take on responsibilities, which are increased as they get older and effectively involve them in the life of the school. Through the very well-organised school council, pupils use their initiative very effectively to tackle issues that affect their learning and personal development. They feel that their views are listened to, valued and acted upon whenever possible. Many opportunities are provided for them to plan, organise and take responsibility for their own learning. This makes a very positive impact on their achievement.
12. The school's very caring ethos enables all pupils to feel personally valued and to gain in confidence and self-esteem. As a result they become caring, mature and responsible young people. They are very successfully encouraged to reflect on a wide range of issues during assemblies and at different times in the school day as they participate in activities within the very good programme for personal, social, health and citizenship development. The very good range of captions around the school, for example, 'You are special because you are you' and 'Be someone you'd be proud to know', the attractive displays and the recently created sensory garden are particularly effective in promoting spiritual development.
13. Pupils feel that school is a happy and safe place to be. They play very well together, with older pupils showing care and consideration for younger ones in their roles as playground 'buddies'. Instances of bullying are rare. They are minor and are quickly dealt with by the staff. The pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong because the school's guidelines are very clear, the teachers have very high expectations of the pupils, and all staff present good role models in this area. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection. Pupils form very good relationships with staff and with each other, and pupils with SEN are very well integrated into the life of this very inclusive school. Pupils articulate their ideas and opinions very clearly and confidently, and are polite, friendly and well mannered when talking to adults. In lessons they listen attentively, answer questions eagerly and respect the feelings, beliefs and values of others.
14. Pupils develop their social and collaborative skills well both inside and outside the normal school day; for example, through after-school clubs, sporting and musical activities and residential experiences. Visits out of school and visitors to the school very effectively enhance pupils' personal development and understanding of their own and other cultures. Cultural awareness is promoted very well through many areas of the curriculum and through special themed weeks. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of culture that

exists in Britain and in other parts of the world, and are very well prepared for life beyond school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **very good**. The quality of teaching, the breadth and balance in the curriculum, care for the pupils and the school's partnership with parents are all equally very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **very good** overall. It is never less than satisfactory, and one excellent lesson was observed. Assessment is very good in English, mathematics and science but it is not yet fully formalised and consistent in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage. English, mathematics, science and religious education are all very well taught throughout the school.
- Lessons are very well planned and the very good use of a wide range of teaching methods and activities result in the full inclusion of all pupils in all learning activities.
- Literacy and ICT skills are very effectively fostered throughout the curriculum.
- Time is usually used very well in lessons. However, sometimes introductions to lessons are too long.
- Very well briefed teaching assistants provide very good support for all groups of pupils and particularly for those with SEN.
- Teachers assess and mark pupils' work very well in English, mathematics and science, and use the information very effectively in planning and to set targets.
- Although pupils' work is marked effectively in all other subjects, overall assessment is not yet consistently related to the National Curriculum levels.

Commentary

15. The quality of teaching is a major strength of the school and, along with pupils' learning, is rigorously checked by subject leaders and senior managers who act promptly to tackle any weaknesses. As can be seen from the table below, the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was never less than satisfactory. It has improved considerably since the last inspection. The impact of the headteacher's monitoring is evident in the increased range of teaching styles that effectively reach all pupils and contribute in great measure to their overall very good achievement. The impact of the headteacher's excellent vision for the school is evident in the very good deployment of staff which has included the introduction of some specialist subject teaching to address some teachers' lack of confidence, for example, in music, religious education and physical education.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 59 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	28 (47%)	24 (41%)	6 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. Very good teaching occurs in all age groups, including the Foundation Stage, and excellent teaching was observed in literacy in Year 5. English, mathematics, science and religious education are very well taught throughout the school. Teaching is good in all other subjects where it was possible to make a judgement, except for physical education, where it is satisfactory.

17. Lively, engaging teaching through very well-planned practical experiences provides a good balance between teacher-directed and pupil-initiated learning activities in the Foundation Stage. Throughout the school, teachers of classes in the same year groups plan together and very effectively ensure equality of opportunity for, and the full inclusion of, all pupils in all aspects of learning. Teachers skilfully draw all pupils into whole-class sessions through adapting questions to the pupils' different levels of understanding. Teachers use their good and sometimes very good subject knowledge to plan challenging work for all groups of pupils. They organise and manage pupils and their learning very well. As a result, relationships are very good throughout the school, and pupils behave very well in lessons because they want to learn. The teachers' high expectations of pupils' work rate and behaviour mean that pupils work very productively most of the time and take pride in their achievements. In most lessons, pupils' thinking skills are very effectively challenged as they are required to ask and respond to questions, and make decisions, as they or their teachers assume the roles of characters from books. This very effectively extends their learning and causes them to think carefully and consider all possible answers.

Example of outstanding practice

An excellent literacy lesson in which role play was used very effectively to promote pupils' understanding of the decisions the characters in 'The Mouth Organ Boys' – a Jamaican tale - had to make.

Pupils used their whiteboards to record their thoughts as the consciences of the characters (Delroy and Wildo), showing a very good understanding of the concept of 'listening to your conscience,' which had been the subject of the lesson introduction. The teacher's very effective intervention, support and encouragement ensured that they thought very carefully about what they were writing and stated their thoughts clearly, using a very good range of expressive and emotive vocabulary. Each character's 'conscience' then lined up in turn to urge the character to take their advice as he passed through their lines. When the final decision was given, the rest of the class discussed very maturely with the teacher the rights and wrongs of it, reaching a very good understanding of the concepts of positive and negative conscience. The teacher's very effective questioning really pushed the limits of the pupils' thinking. They were literally on the edge of their seats as they wrestled with the pros and cons of physically fighting or reaching a solution by peaceful means. Throughout the role play the teacher's very high expectations of the pupils' ability to speak clearly and listen carefully to each other's opinions ensured that they all had a wide range of information on which to base their decisions. The very high level of engagement in the discussions also made an excellent contribution to the pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development.

18. Occasionally, introductions are too long and pupils become restless because they have had to sit still for too long before getting onto their independent work. This sometimes limits the opportunities more-able pupils have to use and apply their learning, and consequently limits their progress in lessons. The very effective deployment of the few but very well-briefed teaching assistants ensures that additional support is targeted on the areas of most need. This helps pupils with SEN in particular. However, teachers also cater very well in their planning for those pupils who are able, gifted or talented, and in most lessons ensure that their learning is appropriately challenging and is moved on at a much faster pace.
19. Teachers assess and mark pupils' work very well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. They meticulously record pupils' progress and track it throughout the school, successfully adapting work to set targets and to close gaps in the pupils' learning. Because pupils are involved in this, they have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. This applies also to most other subjects. However, the school has rightly identified the need to refine assessment further in the non-core subjects to ensure that the systems always provide good information for teachers to use in their planning. Assessment in these subjects is not yet consistently linked to the levels set down in the National Curriculum programmes of study. A good range of homework is set regularly. It consolidates and extends pupils' learning in class and contributes effectively to their overall very good achievement.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is **very good**. Resources for learning, and opportunities for enrichment are also very good. The accommodation overall is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good monitoring and development of the curriculum enables the school to respond very well to the needs of the pupils and ensure equality of opportunity.
- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very effective; pupils benefit from what the school has to offer.
- Visits, visitors and special focus weeks support learning very well.
- The limited accommodation restricts learning in physical education.
- The range and number of extra-curricular activities is limited by the non-availability of the hall.

Commentary

20. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection, when the curriculum was judged to be good, and areas of weakness identified then have been successfully addressed. Lesson plans now include clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils, and the dangers of substance abuse are included in the PSHE syllabus. Work in English, mathematics and science is now well matched to pupils' individual needs. The monitoring and development of the curriculum are carried out very effectively, with formal input from the senior management team, subject co-ordinators and class teachers together with a clear awareness of current national initiatives. Subject development plans are displayed in the staffroom and aspects achieved are highlighted for all to see. This has resulted in a heightened awareness and improved provision in speaking and listening skills, ICT, and planning for able pupils. It has had a very positive effect on pupils' overall very good achievement.
21. The provision for pupils' PHSE has been developed very well since the last inspection and is now very good. A comprehensive syllabus has been established and circle time has been introduced. Other aspects of school life also contribute very effectively to pupils' personal development, for example, the school council and the 'buddy scheme'. These provide pupils with opportunities to make decisions and consider the good of the whole school community as well as other individuals. Interviews with pupils indicate vividly the positive impact that the wide range of visits, residential visits, visitors and special focus weeks have on their learning. Special focus weeks, such as the 'multicultural week', as well as being memorable, are very effective in linking areas of learning for the pupils.
22. The provision for pupils with SEN is very good. They are fully included in all aspects of school life and have equal access to all learning activities. The curriculum also caters very effectively for pupils identified as able, gifted or talented. Pupils are prepared very well for secondary education because there are well-established curriculum links with partner secondary schools. Examples of this are the input into the sex education programme for Year 6, support for the establishment of an environmental sensory area and the 'high fives' netball activities.
23. The school is well resourced and all resources are used effectively to promote learning. Staffing is satisfactory overall, although budget constraints mean that the school has few support assistants. Nevertheless, it makes very good use of those it does have, targeting the support where it is most needed at any given time. It also benefits from the good support it receives from a number of parents and other volunteers. Although the accommodation is satisfactory overall, the heavy use of the school hall during the day and its use for lunches and for daily breakfast and after-school care clubs, restrict learning and progress in physical education. Often if the weather is inclement and a class cannot go outside for games or athletics the hall is already in use and teachers have to find alternatives for their classes. They do their best to overcome this through, for example, a series of exercises that can be done in classrooms. The heavy daily use of the hall has also restricted the number and range of after-

school clubs, although the school has devised a suitable range of activities that can take place in a small area.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for **very well**. They are given **very good** advice and support, and the school has very good systems in place to seek and act on their views. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements are very good.
- The school has very strong arrangements for child protection, health and safety.
- Pupils have very good, trusting relationships with adults in school.
- The school has very strong arrangements to seek, value and act on pupils' views.

Commentary

24. The school very effectively ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides them with very good support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of their academic and personal progress, and involves them very well in aspects of the school's work and development. Consequently, pupils feel confident and secure in their learning. Very good induction procedures ensure that children entering the Foundation Stage quickly settle into its established routines.
25. The school's designated officer for child protection deals effectively with any issues, and another fully trained member of staff is available to take over if necessary. There are good arrangements to inform staff about the school's child protection policy and procedures. Regular risk assessments are carried out as required for general health and safety matters, and the governing body is effectively involved in these. Accident and emergency procedures are very good. The school is to be commended for having so many staff fully trained to administer first aid. Many initiatives are taken to raise pupils' awareness of health and safety matters and encourage a healthy lifestyle.
26. This school has a very strong family ethos and very good relationships at all levels. Pupils are happy because of the friendly atmosphere. A few parents are concerned about bullying, but the inspection team found that, although there had been some minor incidents, they had been dealt with effectively. Staff work very well together to support all pupils in their academic and personal development. Teachers are quick to identify pupils who are struggling in lessons and they give much additional advice and guidance where necessary. The school works very effectively with external support agencies to address particular needs, illustrating its inclusive approach to learning. For example, specialist teachers support pupils with special educational needs very well. The very good support and guidance these pupils receive enhances their self-esteem and enables them to participate in all parts of lessons and in all school activities. There are very good systems in place for the early identification of pupils with SEN and their individual education plans have clear targets for literacy, numeracy and behaviour, which are reviewed regularly.
27. There are many opportunities for pupils to make their views known to staff and become involved in the school. The school council enables pupils to develop a very strong sense of responsibility for others as they debate many issues and concerns with their peers and senior staff. Pupils' maturity and confidence were highly evident during a school council meeting where they were keen to ask the headteacher about various school provisions. It is pleasing to see that the school takes so many of their suggestions on board, for example, about the plans for new play areas, play equipment and refurbishment of the toilets.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **very good** links with parents and the community, including other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school involves parents very well by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.
- Parents are provided with very good written information about their children's standards and progress.
- Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.
- The school has established many very good links in the community that enrich learning.

Commentary

28. Parents are generally very pleased about how approachable the staff are. There are many opportunities for parents to express their views and make suggestions. For instance, questionnaires are issued from time to time on matters such as arrangements for consultation and information provided by the school. The school considers parental responses carefully and makes prudent changes where necessary. The school's very strong links with parents contribute in great measure to pupils' learning and achievement.
29. Although a significant number of parents are concerned about the quality of information they receive, the inspection team judges that this is very good. For instance, the school holds three consultation sessions during the school year, and a very good range of information is given to parents about the school, the curriculum and how they can support their children's learning. The prospectus and newsletters are attractive and user friendly. Pupils' annual reports give good information about how well they are doing in their subjects, personal development, effort levels and what they need to do to improve further. The parents of pupils with SEN are kept fully informed of their children's learning difficulties. They are invited to regular review meetings, and the children's individual education plans are discussed in detail at the termly parents' meetings. Parents of pupils with behavioural difficulties meet on a more regular, informal basis with staff and provide good support at home for the work being done for their children in school.
30. Many parent helpers give their time generously to the school. For example, they listen to readers, help in many lessons and accompany school trips. The parents, teachers and friends association works very hard and gives very good support to the school through fundraising. The group raises a lot of money for the school which is used to provide additional learning resources and improve the accommodation. Parents give very good support to their children's learning by helping with homework tasks. The school works very hard to help parents become even more involved in their children's learning. For instance, courses such as 'five to nine' and 'starting out with the children' are organised regularly.
31. Wider community links include those with the church and other places of worship. For example, a member of the clergy from a local church leads assemblies in school occasionally, and pupils visit different places of worship such as mosques. These factors support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils use the community very well as a learning resource. For example, children in the Foundation Stage drew many different types of housing in the immediate area during the inspection week, and older pupils visit Preston when they study, for example, the development of the docks area. Visitors to the school have included an artist who helped pupils to develop the excellent experiential area in the school grounds. The community supports events such as multicultural art and music weeks very well. The school puts a great deal back into the community by fundraising for charities and good causes, and allowing the community to use its accommodation for many

purposes. Very good educational links with local secondary schools also support learning, for example, in science, sex education and netball skills. The school has very good mechanisms in place for the transfer of pupils to local secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher's leadership is excellent, the school is governed very well and it provides very good value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher focuses the whole school community very effectively on school improvement.
- The headteacher is empowering co-ordinators to take a much greater part in leading and managing their subjects, which is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement across the school.
- Checks on teaching, learning and pupils' progress are evaluative and reflective, with a very clear focus on raising achievement and improving teaching and learning.
- The governing body supports the school very well and keeps a very good check on all of its work.
- Management systems throughout the school, including finance, are very effective in helping the school achieve its aims.

Commentary

32. Since he took up his appointment just over two years ago, the headteacher's excellent vision, high expectations and very clear educational direction have had a very positive impact on pupils' overall achievement. His very perceptive, well-focused monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning clearly identify areas for improvement. Through this, teachers are very successfully encouraged to build on their strengths while tackling their weaknesses, and are given very good advice and guidance on how to do so. This has established a very good climate for learning and resulted in the overall very good improvement seen since the previous inspection. The school's ethos is very firmly based on well-managed pupil behaviour, very good teaching, mutual respect, a rich curriculum and a very strong commitment to further improvement through the full inclusion of all pupils in all that the school has to offer. All of these factors are evident in the very clear strategic planning which, combined with the very effective management of the school's finances, provides a strong framework for even greater success.
33. The school is keenly aware of the need for constant review, evaluation and refinement of existing good practice. As a result, all test and assessment outcomes are rigorously analysed to identify weaknesses in learning which are then addressed as a whole school to ensure that all pupils achieve to the best of their capability. The headteacher is closely supported by the deputy headteacher and a very committed team of staff and governors. All play a full part in reviewing the work of the school and in planning its very rich curriculum. Subject co-ordinators understand and fulfil their roles well. Although not yet fully involved in the direct monitoring of teaching, they do have some well-focused non-contact time to check teachers' planning and the quality of pupils' learning. As a result, they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and of what to do to improve provision in them. They are keenly aware of the inconsistencies in assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, and the assessment co-ordinator is providing a very good lead in setting up systems that will address these. The leadership and management of SEN are very good. The co-ordinator maintains all appropriate documentation and liaises very well with outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive all necessary support. Staff and finances are very effectively targeted on the areas of greatest need. As a result, these pupils too are fully included in all that the school has to offer and they make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

34. Governance is very good. The governors support the school very well and have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They have an in-depth understanding of issues facing the school, and a very good understanding of how to apply the principles of best value in all areas of the school's work. They have a very good understanding of their role in evaluating the work of the school. They plan the budget with care, oversee the very good financial management and control procedures, and check that the school's spending is helping pupils to achieve as well as they can. The considerable surplus in the school's budget last year included carrying over 'ring-fenced' ICT money from the previous year, the school's contribution to the new classroom (the recently completed computer suite), and a sum of money to address the potential deficit budget in the following year.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	872,060	Balance from previous year	34,242
Total expenditure	836,924	Balance carried forward to the next year	69,378
Expenditure per pupil	1,853		

35. The very efficient office staff work very closely with the headteacher and teachers, ensuring that the day-to-day management of the school is unobtrusive and supports learning. High quality leadership, management and teaching, together with the very effectively organised curriculum, care for the pupils and partnership with parents, are significant aids to learning. The major barrier to learning has been the large number of pupils joining the school in recent years, though this has now slowed. The school rose very well to the challenge the increased numbers posed, and planned very well to ensure that all pupils achieved as well as they could and reached the highest possible standards by the time they left. All of this is achieved within a relatively low income per pupil and demonstrates that the school provides very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Reception Class is **very good**, as is the improvement since the previous inspection. The children enter Reception in the year in which they are five, and parents are provided with very clear information about starting school. The transition from home to school is smooth because of the opportunities to spend a number of afternoons in school. Children join the Reception Class with attainment that is above expectations and they achieve well because teaching is very good and the well-planned curriculum provides a wide range of challenging, stimulating activities that are well matched to their needs. The provision is very well led and managed, and the children's progress is carefully monitored. All adults manage children very well and the good ratio of adults to children ensures that the needs of all are well met. The accommodation has recently been extensively improved and there are secure plans to improve the outdoor provision further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and support ensure that all children achieve very well.
- The daily routines offer security and lead children towards increasing independence.

Commentary

36. All children are very well cared for and supported. They are well used to the established class routines. They behave well, know how to take turns, and put their hands up and wait till they are asked to speak. They concentrate very well on their various activities and, when they do step out of line, respond very well to the adults' firm but gentle approaches that support their self-esteem and help them to distinguish right from wrong. Children respond very well to the high expectations the staff have of their ability to take responsibility for themselves and for some of their learning. Good routines establish this well. For example, children know that they must put their names on the planning board to show which activity they have chosen to do and understand that only a certain number of children can be involved in each activity. The high expectations of all adults and the opportunities given to the children through very good teaching enable them to make very good progress in this area. The majority of children will considerably exceed the goals expected for the end of their Reception Year. Staff form very good relationships with them, thereby ensuring that they are happy, relaxed and able to benefit fully from the very well-planned activities that are prepared for them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and language skills are promoted at every opportunity.
- The majority of children achieve well and are on course to exceed considerably the goals expected for the end of Reception.
- Strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of sounds, letter formation and reading.

Commentary

37. Children develop good speaking and listening skills through the many opportunities provided in the daily class routines. These include the very effective use of puppets to retell stories and very carefully planned role-play activities that develop vocabulary well. Very good attention is given to the development of writing skills. Activities are very well planned, organised and enjoyable, and teachers are good role models as they write for the children. They ensure that children are given every opportunity to practise their writing skills as, for example, they write down their 'orders' in the 'office' on the 'building site'. All children write their first names legibly. Letter formation is secure, and they make very good attempts at spelling as they write words on the 'word wall'. The development of reading has a high priority. Children understand the terms 'title' and 'author' and have good ability to retell stories in the correct sequence. The teacher's effective questioning ensures that they follow and understand what is happening in a story. All children are encouraged to take books home to share with their parents. Careful records are kept of each child's development, and are used to provide appropriate help when necessary to move their learning forward. There are many opportunities for children to listen to stories and to enjoy looking at books. Higher-attaining children particularly enjoy reading. They recognise simple words and try hard to work out unfamiliar words from their first sound and by looking at the pictures. Teaching is very effective and the staff have a very good understanding of the needs of young children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good; children achieve well and the majority are on course to exceed considerably the goals expected for the end of Reception.
- Pupils use a good range of mathematical vocabulary well.
- Adults question children very effectively and use a wide variety of activities to support learning.

Commentary

38. Many opportunities are taken to reinforce counting skills. The majority of children count confidently in twos and many recognise numbers to 20. All children in the higher-attaining group count confidently to 100 and some know that 100 pence make one pound. The mathematical language of number and shape is clearly displayed in the many areas of the classroom and its use is a regular part of adults' conversations with children. As a result, the children use mathematical vocabulary confidently and with a good understanding of what the words mean. A very good range of very well-planned activities gives children the opportunity to apply their mathematical skills in everyday situations such as purchasing goods in a shop. During the inspection, children found it particularly enjoyable to put bricks in a jar for other children and adults to estimate the number, and they carefully recorded each person's guess, forming numerals correctly.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, children achieve well and the majority are on course to exceed the goals expected for the end of the Reception Year.

- A wide range of imaginative and enjoyable activities encourage children to find out about and reflect upon the world around them.

Commentary

39. Good planning and teaching successfully give children valuable experiences in all aspects of this area of learning. They learn to appreciate the world around them. As they learn about the seasons, they develop their understanding of new life, for example, through the idea that chicks and lambs are a sign of spring. They confidently use the computers in the classroom for writing and painting pictures and have been recording information on a data-handling program about favourite shapes. They also use a tape recorder confidently to record themselves speaking and enjoyed listening to their recordings. Teachers' planning shows that aspects of history and religious education are also adequately covered through a range of stories and enjoyable activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good; children achieve well and are on course to meet the goals expected at the end of their Reception Year.
- A good range of well-planned activities promote this area of learning effectively but opportunities are missed to encourage children to talk about and evaluate their own and others' work.

Commentary

40. Children enjoy physical activities and participate wholeheartedly in them. They use scissors, pencils and paintbrushes with good levels of dexterity, and skilfully roll and knead modelling dough into the shapes they want. They use space effectively to jump, jog and run. Copying the teacher's good demonstrations, they improve the quality of their movements, and their throwing and catching skills are satisfactory. Activities are well planned to provide challenge and enjoyment, and children respond well, reflecting the very good relationships they have with the staff, who work hard to make learning fun for them. However, children are not often enough encouraged to improve their work by watching and evaluating each other.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good. Children achieve well and are on course to exceed the goals expected for the end of Reception.
- There is a wide range of imaginative and enjoyable activities.

Commentary

41. A good range of well-planned, progressively challenging activities provide children with good opportunities for developing their creative skills. Art work is attractively displayed and demonstrates the children's developing understanding of colour and texture, and of how to use a computer program to make pictures. Children enjoy music. They sing in tune and accompany a story with percussion instruments, demonstrating a well-developed understanding of loud and quiet sounds and how to make them. They use their instruments imaginatively to represent what is happening in a story. They respond very well to the role-play activities set up for them.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve very well in English and, overall, standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening are all well above average in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers are especially skilled at teaching English skills, knowledge and understanding in many different ways, ensuring that all pupils learn effectively.
- Pupils' achievement is rigorously tracked throughout the school from whatever point they start, and the information is used very effectively in planning.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Pupils use their literacy skills very effectively in other subjects, and English makes a particularly good contribution to their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils use their ICT word-processing skills very effectively but do not yet use additional skills such as desk-top publishing to present their work.

Commentary

42. Speaking and listening skills are very well developed throughout the school. From an early age, pupils are taught to think carefully and to use a very good range of carefully-selected vocabulary to express their ideas and opinions. As a result, they do so clearly in discussions and when responding to their teachers' well targeted questions, showing obvious enjoyment in their work. They also respond very well to questions from other pupils as they are 'hot-seated' in role as a character from a book, for example, Jeremy Fisher from the Beatrix Potter tale in a Year 2 lesson. This teaching technique was extended very effectively in an excellent Year 5 lesson as pupils explored the moral dilemma facing two boys in the story of 'The Mouth Organ Boys'. Pupils read widely. They enjoy reading and keep a personal record of what they read, which they share with their teacher. They use books and the Internet very well to research information in a range of subjects, quickly finding and using the information effectively to extend their learning. They readily recount what they have read, working out the meaning behind the written word and inferring from the text a wide range of additional information that demonstrates their very good understanding of what they read.
43. Pupils use their wide vocabulary very well in their writing. Throughout the school, pupils are very successfully taught, step by step, the main features of different styles of writing. They record these in their books and use them effectively in extended writing. By Year 2, most pupils write at considerable length, with a very good understanding of punctuation, spelling and sentence construction that goes well beyond the national expectation for their age. Higher attainers in particular use speech marks, exclamation marks and apostrophes accurately and join sentences using correct connectives which they know to be 'comparative' or 'logical'. Even lower-attaining pupils use simple connectives accurately. Although they do not always use capital letters and full stops consistently, they do know when they should, and also at times use commas properly. By Year 6, pupils write at considerable length, using the full range of styles and a wide range of descriptive language that engages the reader and shows a very well-developed sense of audience and purpose. Pupils use drafting very effectively to plan work of high quality. Persuasive writing and recounts show very good levels of empathy with characters and situations. Pupils express their feelings and opinions very well with clear thought and structure. Throughout the school, handwriting is very good and work is very well presented. By Year 6, writing is almost always grammatically accurate, spelling is virtually always correct, and pupils use paragraphs and a wide range of punctuation very effectively in their work.

44. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. Marking perceptively supports learning and assessment information is used very effectively to inform planning and to set targets for individual pupils. Praise, encouragement, and comments showing pupils how to reach their targets all ensure that pupils know what to do to improve. Pupils are effectively involved in evaluating their own and each other's work, thereby extending their learning further. They are encouraged to respond in writing where appropriate, as was seen in one pupil's comment that 'I would like to meet that character'. This approach, and the very effective use of support staff also ensures that pupils with SEN make very good progress towards the clear, measurable targets in their individual education plans.
45. English is very well led and managed by two co-ordinators, one for each key stage. They work closely together, supported by the English curriculum team. Perceptive monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher ensure that teaching and learning are kept under constant review and that swift action is taken to address any weaknesses found. Teachers are successfully encouraged to build on their strengths and to tackle their weaknesses, often by using a different teaching style. All advice and support given is followed up when the teacher is next monitored. This very good practice ensures that staff feel valued and supported in their work and that the English leadership team has a very good overview of strengths and weaknesses across the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge very effectively to promote language and literacy skills in other subjects. A particularly good example was noted in religious education, where pupils were very successfully encouraged to compare the different styles of writing in the four gospels as they learned that the apostles wrote from different viewpoints for different audiences. Through their work in English, during which they are very successfully encouraged to explore feelings, discuss moral dilemmas and present their view of the world, pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well developed. Pupils use a wide range of computer programs that support spelling, grammar and punctuation and they use their well-developed word-processing skills effectively to draft and present their work. However, they do not yet use additional skills such as desk-top publishing to enhance the presentation of, for example, newspaper reports.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national expectation for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and overall, pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching is very effective and the information gained from the school's very good assessment systems is used very effectively in planning.
- Many opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their number work to problem solving situations and they enjoy doing so.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

47. Achievement is very good and standards are well above those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with SEN achieve very well because of the very good support they receive.
48. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan a wide range of interesting activities that meet the needs of all the pupils, whilst strongly emphasising the teaching of basic number

skills. Pupils are highly motivated by the stimulating practical and real-life problem-solving activities and by the good use of resources, which make learning interesting and fun. They particularly enjoy and respond enthusiastically to the mental calculations and mathematical games at the beginning of lessons. These are used very effectively to sharpen pupils' mental skills and reinforce learning. Teachers are skilled at drawing all pupils into the whole-class sessions through adapting questions to suit pupils' needs. Their very clear explanations and very effective demonstrations ensure that pupils are able to see different methods of calculation clearly, for example, the use of partitioning and re-combining of numbers in subtraction work in Year 3. Particularly effective are the challenging questions that develop pupils' reasoning skills and the many opportunities provided for all pupils to explain different strategies for solving problems. This they do accurately and confidently because of their very secure understanding of number concepts.

49. In most lessons little time is lost between activities. The teachers' very high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and work rate result in very good pace and productivity in learning. Very occasionally pupils become restless and lose concentration because the teacher talks for too long during the introductory session. However, relationships are very good and the teachers use praise and encouragement very effectively to promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem. This has a very positive impact on pupils' learning as does the pride that pupils show in the presentation of their work. A good range and amount of homework reinforces and extends learning beyond the school day.
50. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator, effectively supported by a very committed curriculum team, has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. This is gained from regular and rigorous analysis of all test and assessment results. A very well thought out action plan focuses very effectively on ways of raising standards and pupils' achievement even further by improving resources and developing cross-curricular links and enrichment opportunities. Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored, pupils' progress is very well recorded, and the information is used very effectively in planning. Teachers successfully ensure that, through marking, discussions with the pupils and the very good assessment procedures, pupils know what they need to do to improve. They are given suitable work to enable them to do so. Good resources and classroom displays effectively support learning. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Pupils use and consolidate their mathematical skills satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, they record and interpret data about pulse rates and shadows in science and use measurements accurately during design and technology lessons. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support pupils' day-to-day learning in mathematics, and older pupils competently input data to produce spreadsheets and graphs. However, the school has rightly identified the need to develop further links between mathematics and other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 to achieve very well and attain standards well above those expected for their ages.
- Very strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' investigative skills through a wide range of practical activities.
- Literacy skills are promoted very well in science.

- Pupils' very good attitudes to their work, including its presentation, impact very positively on their learning.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Very good enrichment opportunities effectively enhance pupils' learning.

Commentary

52. The school has acted quickly and very effectively over recent months to address weaknesses in science. The very strong emphasis placed on learning through practical, investigative activities, the very good input to improve teacher subject-knowledge and confidence and the very rigorous assessment procedures have resulted in very significant improvements. Overall, achievement is very good and standards are now well above the national expectation for pupils in Years 2 and 6.
53. Teachers plan very effectively a wide range of interesting practical activities that develop pupils' knowledge and understanding very well. As a result pupils have a very good scientific knowledge, use appropriate technical language well and develop very good skills of making predictions and carrying out a fair test. Teachers use questioning very effectively to help pupils use what they already know, to extend their thinking skills and to relate their work to everyday situations, as in the Year 6 lesson on micro-organisms. In all lessons teachers prepare and organise materials and group pupils effectively to promote good learning. The interesting activities and brisk pace foster a sense of curiosity in pupils that results in very good levels of concentration, very good behaviour and very productive learning. However, the very cramped accommodation in some classrooms, particularly for the older pupils, limits the scope of investigative work. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning from an early age and, as seen in the Year 3 lesson on plant growth, they plan, organise and record their investigations. Pupils work very well together, discussing ideas and talking through possible solutions. Where teaching assistants are present, they are carefully and effectively used to ensure that lower-attaining pupils and pupils with SEN achieve as well as others in their class.
54. Pupils apply their language and literacy skills very well as they confidently articulate their ideas and record their findings using, for example, labelled diagrams, making notes and writing scientific reports. They eagerly use non-fiction books to research information. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily to record and interpret data through graphs and charts. Pupils take an obvious pride in the presentation of their work, which is of a very high standard, especially in Years 5 and 6.
55. The subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator, effectively supported by a very enthusiastic curriculum team, has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Using information gained from the rigorous analysis of all test and assessment results and the checking of pupils' work, a very effective action plan has been devised. It rightly focuses on the balance between practical and written work, the need to identify weaknesses in the knowledge and understanding of pupils admitted late to the school, and to make better use of information and communication technology. Some very good enrichment opportunities very effectively promote pupils' scientific learning. These include, for example, the effective use of the school and local environment, visits to museums and a local environmental centre, a health and science week activities and very good links with other schools. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**. During the inspection, no teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2 but evidence was gleaned from pupils' work, discussions with them and with their teachers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good, enabling pupils to achieve well and standards are above the national expectation in Year 6.
- ICT supports learning in other curriculum areas well.
- Assessment procedures, though satisfactory, are not used totally effectively to ensure that work is accurately matched to the needs of individual pupils.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

56. Overall achievement is good and by Year 6 standards are above the national expectation. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 2 enter text appropriately and use this skill to communicate information, as when recording the names of favourite football players. They use computers competently to access information, comparing, for example, artefacts in history. Overall achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and accelerates in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6 pupils have well-developed word processing skills and access a wide variety of programs confidently to support learning in other subjects. In mathematics, for example, work on co-ordinates is reinforced well, and data and formulae entered competently into spreadsheets. A larger proportion of pupils than is found in most schools have high levels of skill. For example, some Year 5 pupils were observed using sensors to investigate the light stopping properties of a variety of sunglasses. ICT skills are used outside the classroom too. Minutes and agendas of the school council are prepared and e-mailed to pupils in other year groups. Overall pupils, including those with SEN, achieve well in Years 3 to 6.
57. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 so no overall evaluation of teaching can be made in that age group. However the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. Despite the lack of an ICT suite, basic skills are taught well. Teachers skilfully use overhead projectors, prepared diagrams and effective questioning in whole-class sessions. In a good Year 5 lesson, for example, the pupils were enabled not only to understand the steps required to interrogate a data base but also its limitations. Pupils are competent at taking notes in whole-class sessions when appropriate, thus enhancing their literacy skills also. Good relationships underpin teaching and learning so that pupils concentrate well during demonstration lessons and are therefore clear about what to do when they are 'hands on'. Teachers carefully select examples of the use of ICT that engage the interest of the pupils. This helps to keep pupils on task and motivated when explanations and learning takes place away from the computers. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher showed the pupils a Power Point Presentation about the Year 6 residential visit that had been prepared and shown to their parents during an information evening, making the pupils enthusiastic to plan and prepare one of their own. In some lessons, however, higher-attaining pupils and pupils who have comprehensive ICT experience at home sit through whole-class sessions unnecessarily before being allowed to complete individual tasks. At present, pupils' 'hands-on' experience is constrained by the small number of computers in each class. Teachers are looking forward to the challenge of using the new ICT suite which was completed just prior to the inspection. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory.
58. Leadership and management are good. The team has been instrumental in raising the expertise and confidence of class teachers. It has also facilitated the use of ICT to enhance learning across the curriculum, with a subsequent improvement in achievement. However, the co-ordinator does not yet fully monitor teaching, learning and the curriculum. Assessment procedures, although satisfactory, do not ensure that pupils' progress is monitored consistently or that work is totally matched to the needs of individual pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. The use of ICT to enhance and support learning in other curriculum areas is good overall and is a strength of the provision. The skills are used well on a daily basis in mathematics and support learning in a wide range of topics in other subjects. In literacy, although word-

processing skills are used effectively, there is scope to extend these to include, for example, desk-top publishing. Other good examples of the use of ICT were observed in research work in the humanities. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

HUMANITIES

Only two **geography** lessons were observed and therefore no overall judgement is made about provision in that subject. However, evidence from pupils' work, discussions with pupils and the analysis of teachers' planning indicate that pupils achieve well by Year 6, reaching standards that are above the national expectation. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and standards match the national expectation. The local environment is used well to support learning and pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good knowledge and understanding of local geography. Their learning is enhanced by memorable, well-planned fieldwork, the exploration of environmental concerns, residential weeks, orienteering events and very impressive focused weeks. Numeracy skills are used well in fieldwork. However, opportunities are missed to develop data-handling skills, particularly graphical representation of data. ICT supports learning well and is used effectively for research, as in a Year 4 lesson where pupils collated information about water. Assessment procedures have improved and are now satisfactory. Pupils' work is marked consistently and pupils are praised appropriately. However, the use of constructive comments to enhance learning is variable and it is not always clear to pupils what they have to do to improve their work. The subject is well led and managed, and the enrichment opportunities established within the curriculum have a positive impact on achievement. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils, including those with SEN, achieve well overall and standards are above the national expectation in Year 6.
- Good teaching and the imaginative use of artefacts promote effective learning.
- Assessment procedures are sound but pupils are not always clear about what to do to improve.
- The role of the co-ordinator is not fully developed.
- Visits enrich the curriculum and have a positive impact on learning.

Commentary

60. Overall achievement is good, though it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. They match the national expectation in Year 2 and are above it in Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a clear understanding of chronology as shown by the sequencing of events in the astronaut, Neil Armstrong's life. They recognise the differences between life in the past and the present day and successfully distinguish between what is fact and what is only opinion. Pupils in Year 6 make good links between events in history and their impact on subsequent events. For example, they have a clear understanding of the links between the war and the establishment of a welfare state.
61. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good overall, with the more effective teaching evident in Years 3 to 6. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to plan effectively, identifying clearly the learning objectives for each lesson and explaining them clearly to the pupils. In the most effective lessons teachers clarify with the pupils how they will know that the objectives have been achieved and that learning has been effective. In these lessons pupils are aware of the progress they have made. Teachers work hard to bring history alive for the pupils through the use of artefacts or replicas and visits to places of historical interest. For example, Year 1 pupils washed clothes using a dolly and a tub;

Year 3 pupils tried on Tudor costumes; Year 5 pupils donned a knight's armour; and Year 6 pupils examined a collection of artefacts from the seventies. In these lessons motivation was high, pupils gained a better understanding of an aspect of the period being studied and learning was good. Effective class management skills and good questioning techniques ensured that these practical sessions were used well to promote learning. Good use of the local environment and visits and visitors also extend learning well. A visit to Dunham Massey during the inspection brought the past to life for Year 1 pupils, and an earlier visit to the Eden Camp gave Year 6 pupils a good insight into the war years.

62. Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills very well in history. In Year 6, for example, pupils compose letters to their parents as if they were evacuees. Opportunities to use and support numeracy skills are sometimes missed, however. Teachers use ICT well to develop the topic being studied. For example, pupils in Year 6 used the Internet competently to find out information about bicycles and how they have changed in the last thirty years. This involvement in practical research and finding things out for themselves leads to an obvious enjoyment of history lessons, during which the pupils work with high levels of motivation and interest.
63. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall but are not yet fully developed to ensure that individual pupils are clear about what they have to do to improve. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the use of constructive comments to aid the learner is variable. No evaluation of leadership and management is possible as one subject co-ordinator is on long-term sick leave. However, the overall evidence available indicates that co-ordination is good, although as in other subjects the role is capable of further development. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school achieve well and standards are above the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- The curriculum is good. It very effectively covers distinctive features of religious traditions in major world faiths and their application to everyday life for believers.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

Commentary

64. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. This is the result of very good teaching that leads pupils to a well-developed understanding of the similarities and differences between the major world faiths and how they affect the lives of the believers.
65. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are successfully introduced to religious traditions through stories and the imaginative use of religious artefacts and books. For example, imaginative teaching, using the story of 'The Blind Man and the Elephant' successfully introduced pupils in Year 2 to the idea of the different gods in the Hindu religion, and the different roles that they themselves play and that people play in their lives. They become increasingly aware of the world around them as they learn the story of the creation from the Bible, ponder the beauty of the world and write their own prayers such as 'You made the world for us – help us to look after it'. By year 6, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the beliefs, teachings and practices of various major religions, and reflect on what religious experiences mean to those who believe. They understand that there are similarities between different faiths. For example, they know that religions have their own 'holy books' such as the Bible for Christians, the Qu'ran for Muslims and the Torah for those of the Jewish faith. They reach a good understanding of the

effect each religion has on its followers as they consider the 'rules for life' in the Christian faith, in Judaism and in Islam and realise that such rules are common to several faiths.

66. The quality of teaching is very good overall and good use is made of teachers' expertise as they exchange classes. Teachers use their good subject knowledge in well-led discussions. They target questions appropriately at pupils and provide them plenty of opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious education through discussion. For example in a Year 6 lesson on Judaism, such a discussion led the pupils to understand the importance of the Torah in Bar Mitzvah ceremony, and to compare it with confirmation in Christianity. Resources are used very effectively to promote learning. For example, the use of videos in a number of lessons gave pupils firsthand experience of how the Torah scroll should be handled with respect and how a 'yad' should be used so that no-one touched the scroll when reading.
67. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has drawn up a comprehensive scheme of work from the recently revised locally-agreed syllabus. She is supporting her colleagues effectively in its implementation by meeting with them each half term to review each unit of work. Assessment procedures are sound and the co-ordinator is helping teachers to use the information gained from them when planning further work.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one art and design lesson and two design and technology lessons were observed. Therefore no overall judgements are made about the quality of teaching in these two subjects. Other judgements are securely based on the scrutiny of pupils' work and of teachers' planning, and on discussions with pupils and staff.

Art and design

68. Pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6. They have good opportunities to experience painting, observational drawing, printing and sculpture work and to learn about the work and techniques of artists from different times, places and cultures. Pupils use sketchbooks to collect and explore ideas, and these provide good information for teachers as they assess pupils' work and monitor their improvement. Teachers' planning is focused appropriately on the development of skills and they use their sound assessment information to plan work that enables pupils to build on their previous experiences. A visiting artist has worked with the children in painting underwater scenes in the courtyard area and this provided a good starting point for the further development of this area. The subject is well led and managed and the co-ordinator has developed appropriate ways for pupils to assess and evaluate their own work and that of others. There has been good improvement in art and design since the last inspection.

Design and technology

69. The curriculum is well planned, pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to design an artefact, and to learn and practise the necessary skills before making it. They also understand well the importance of effective research to enable them to evaluate and improve their work as part of the design and technology process. This was evident in the Year 4 and Year 6 lessons observed during the inspection. Their work shows a well-developed understanding of the design, make and evaluate process. The subject is well led and managed and assessment procedures are satisfactory.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and reach good standards in music by Year 6.
- The school provides a rich variety of musical experiences for the pupils that contribute in great measure to their overall achievement and to their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The quality of teaching is good but sometimes too much teacher talk and direction stops the pupils from using their own imagination and creativity.

Commentary

70. Achievement is good overall. Pupils in Year 2 reach the nationally-expected standards for their age, while pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are above the national expectation. Singing is of good quality in assembly, in class and in hymn practice. Pupils enjoy singing and playing and respond particularly well when encouraged to improve their work, for example, when they are going to be taped so that they may evaluate the quality of it. Listening skills are developed well and pupils use them effectively to evaluate their own work and to discuss the wide range of music to which they are effectively introduced. Year 6 pupils make some very perceptive comments in their music books showing a depth of thought and maturity beyond their years as they discuss the mood and the historical, cultural and social implications of blues music. The teaching and learning of musical theory is effectively woven into practical work, and listening, composing, performing and appraising are all very well covered. Pupils have a good understanding of music from different cultures as was evident in their explanations of the different types of drums they heard and played during an Asian music workshop at the school. Their written work also shows a perceptive understanding of the use of the gamelan from Indonesia in relation to story telling. Their diaries of the themed music week, which focused on music from the Caribbean, again show considerable depth of thought as they respond very well to questions aimed at perceptive listening. They use their literacy skills very effectively to record fact, mood and opinion. The music curriculum is greatly enriched by the range of workshops provided, the provision of instrumental tuition, and the themed weeks that allow pupils to study music from another culture in depth. Thus music makes a very effective contribution to the pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
71. Despite the above strengths, pupils' practical work is sometimes less well developed during lessons. Teaching is good overall but pupils' learning is sometimes impeded by too much teacher talk, direction and demonstration, and too little time for pupils to practise and refine their compositions and performances using their own creativity and imagination. Nevertheless, in Year 5 and Year 6, pupils hold their own parts well as increasing demands are made on them to sing in unison, in rounds, and add instrumental accompaniments. Progressively demanding activities were also a feature in a very good Year 2 lesson as pupils successfully learned to distinguish between rhythm and pulse. The subject is well led and managed. The new scheme, adapted to the needs of the school, provides a good structure for teaching and learning. The school is sensibly evaluating its impact through the use of end-of-unit assessments. The co-ordinator is providing good levels of support and guidance for staff in the implementation of the scheme and in the effective use of assessment in planning. The music curriculum is greatly enriched by the range of workshops provided, by the provision of instrumental tuition for pupils who wish to participate, and by themed weeks that allow the whole school to explore an aspect of music in depth. The cramped nature of some classrooms inhibits pupils' learning from time to time because there is not enough room for them to move into groups to refine their work. The heavy timetabling of the hall for physical education means that it is not an option for the teachers to use. Overall, however, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A clear progression in the development of skills and movements was seen in most lessons.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in inter-school sporting competitions.
- Evaluations of pupils' performances are not used well enough to raise their achievement.
- Limited indoor opportunities and timetabling arrangements impact negatively on pupils' achievement and on standards overall.

Commentary

72. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in this subject and reach the nationally-expected standards in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with SEN are supported very well, enabling them to be fully included in all activities. All aspects of the subject, including swimming, are adequately covered during the year.
73. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers use their sound knowledge of the subject to prepare sequences of progressively demanding activities that engage pupils' interest and promote good levels of concentration and perseverance. The 'wet plan' activities effectively consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding of sports' techniques as, for example, they identify skills and criteria for classifying games. In most lessons appropriate emphasis is placed on warm-up activities and the majority of pupils control their movements satisfactorily in terms of space, direction, speed and levels. Teachers' clear explanations and demonstrations ensure that pupils know what they are to learn. However, teachers do not consistently encourage pupils to identify good techniques in demonstrations of gymnastics and games, in order to use them to improve their own work. This restricts pupils' progress as they are not clear about what they need to strive for in order to improve. Good relationships and class management promote good behaviour in most lessons and help maintain a safe environment. However, a small minority of pupils lose concentration and become restless when the pace slows or they are not actively involved in practical activity.
74. Provision is effectively enhanced by participation in inter-school sporting competitions, by specialist coaching and by lessons taken at the local high school. The good provision for outdoor and adventurous pursuits such as canoeing, sailing and orienteering on residential visits develops pupils' physical skills well, as do the activities planned during the health and science week. However, the limited indoor accommodation and heavy timetabling of the hall before, during and after school, restricts the provision for extra-curricular sporting clubs and for physical education lessons in the event of wet weather. This restricts pupils' overall progress and achievement. Resources are satisfactory, but some gymnastic equipment is not totally suited to the needs of the younger pupils.
75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinators use their specialist skills well to support and guide less confident colleagues and to ensure that learning is continuous for all pupils. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject through the monitoring of teaching and learning, but assessment systems are not yet consistent throughout the school. A good action plan has been devised which clearly focuses on raising standards and pupils' achievement through the better use of resources, more staff training and further links with the local high school, which is a specialist sports college. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in this area is **very good** and permeates the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between adults and pupils give pupils confidence to share their ideas and opinions.
- Topics covered prepare the pupils very well to take their place within the community.

Commentary

76. The very good PHSE and citizenship contributes in very great measure to pupils' overall achievement. A very well-planned programme of work promotes the continuous development of pupils' awareness of citizenship, healthy and safe lifestyles and personal growth and relationships. It is promoted very well through many activities such as circle time, the school council and assemblies. A range of captions around the school give pupils 'food for thought' and encourage them to reflect on a wide range of issues that are also picked up in assembly and in different subjects. The school's caring culture enables all pupils to feel personally valued and to gain in confidence and self-esteem. As a result, they become caring, mature and responsible young people who are very well prepared to take their place in society. An extensive range of visits and visitors contribute in great measure to pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. Combined with the pupils' work in subjects such as English, religious education and music, this aspect of the school's provision also contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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