

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PRESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Preston, Canterbury

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118401

Headteacher: Mrs Penelope Victoria Day

Lead inspector: Fiona Robinson

Date of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 265339

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	127
School address:	Mill Lane Preston Canterbury Kent
Postcode:	CT3 1HB
Telephone number:	(01227) 722 235
Fax number:	(01227) 720 055
Appropriate authority:	Kent Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Catford
Date of previous inspection:	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Preston Primary School is smaller than other primary schools. It is located in a rural area to the east of Canterbury. There are 127 pupils on roll, 64 boys and 63 girls. There are 18 children in the Reception class. Pupils come from a wide range of social, economic and academic backgrounds; most are White British and there are no pupils at an early stage of English acquisition. The levels of knowledge and understanding of children when they join the school are about average. The proportion of pupils with identified special educational needs is below the national average. Two of these pupils have a statement of special education need, which is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The school won the Schools Achievement Award in 2001.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22182	Fiona Robinson	Lead inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Art and design Music
9569	Janet Leaning	Lay inspector	
6169	Melvyn Bradshaw	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography
30244	Roger Tapley	Team inspector	Science History Physical education Religious education

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>6 - 9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>9 - 14</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>14 - 15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>16 - 28</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>29</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school that provides a very good education for its pupils. Standards are high in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, because pupils are very well taught. As a result, they achieve very well in relation to ability. The headteacher provides very effective leadership that motivates everyone to give of their best and this enables the school to make improvements at a good pace. The commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to provide for the very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is a key to its success. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are high by the age of 11.
- The headteacher provides very good educational direction to the work of the school.
- The school provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good.
- The quality of the curriculum is very good, rich and stimulating.
- A very strong successful partnership with parents has been created.
- The outdoor play area for the under-fives is unsatisfactory.
- There is a shortage of space for small group work and limited library space for independent learning.

The school has made very good improvements since the previous inspection. Key issues have been tackled very well. In particular, standards in English, mathematics and science have improved significantly due to the school's effective strategies. The overall quality of the curriculum is very good and good use is made of assessment to inform planning. The school improvement plan is an effective tool for guiding advancement. The school is well placed to improve still further.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good. They enter school with broadly average standards and make good progress in the Reception class. By the end of this year, standards are good, with most children meeting, and a significant number exceeding, the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup>. They make good progress over time in the infant phase and good progress in the junior phase. They demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. At the time of the inspection, standards were

<sup>1</sup> The goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

good in Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. They were good in religious education, history, art and design, and satisfactory in all other areas. By Year 6, they were high in English, mathematics, science and art and design. They were above average in information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, history and music, and satisfactory in other subjects. Pupils are well placed to meet or exceed their current targets in English, mathematics and science. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, Year 6 pupils achieved above average standards in comparison with all schools in English and well above average in mathematics and science. English was average compared with similar schools, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well in relation to their prior targets and they achieve well over time.

The development of pupils' personal qualities is very good overall and this leads to the very good attitudes and increasing sense of responsibility they display. Their behaviour is very good and pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good overall. Teaching was good in the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> and infant phase. It was very good in the junior phase. Learning is effective because the standard of teaching is at least good. Very good teaching was seen in English, mathematics, science, art and design and history. Excellent teaching was observed in English and mathematics. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The use of assessment is good in English, mathematics and science. The quality of the curriculum is very good and is enhanced by very good extra-curricular activities. All statutory requirements are met. Partnerships with parents are very good and this greatly enhances pupils' education. Links with the community are also very good and valuable opportunities occur to promote pupils' achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The governance of the school is excellent. Leadership by the headteacher is very good. She provides a very clear vision and focus to the school's work. Teamwork is very good and support staff are used very well to support the curriculum. The management of the school is very good. The governors are very supportive of the school's work and have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. They conscientiously fulfil all of their statutory duties. They monitor the work of the school very well and have a thorough understanding of the impact of teaching and learning on standards. The school provides very good value for money.

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

Parents have very good views of the school. They are very happy with the quality of teaching and the high expectations of staff. Most of their views were positive. Pupils like the school and are happy with the teaching they receive.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the quality and range of the outdoor area for the reception.

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<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

- Explore ways in which the accommodation can be extended and enhanced to provide areas for small group work, library work and independent learning.



**PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**  
**STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**  
**STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

Pupils achieve well in relation to ability throughout the school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by 11. They are above average in these subjects in Year 2.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching in school.
- Standards are high in English, mathematics, science and art and design by Year 6.
- Standards are good in ICT, religious education, history and music.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

**Commentary**

1. When children start school in the Reception class, assessment data shows that their attainment is broadly average. They respond well to good or better teaching and make good progress over time. Most reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and some exceed these.
2. Overall, standards have risen throughout the school, especially in the upper junior phase. There is a significant number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group who achieve well in relation to prior attainment, due to good teaching.
3. The table below shows that in 2003, standards in Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. The cohort was small and a significant number (24 per cent) had special educational needs. Current standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. They are good in religious education, history and art and design. They are satisfactory in all other areas. Pupils achieve well due to good teaching, well-planned lessons and good use of assessment.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (14.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.1 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The table below shows that in 2003, standards in Year 6 national tests were above average in comparison to all schools in English and well above average in mathematics and science. English was average compared to similar schools, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. Pupils achieved well, given that a significant number (20 per cent) had special educational needs. Current standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Girls tend to achieve higher standards than boys; however the school has put effective strategies in place to narrow the gap. There has been good improvement in English over time.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.3 (28.3)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.5 (29.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.6 (27.9)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

**Inspection findings**

5. At the time of the inspection, children had settled well to school life and were achieving well. There is every indication that most will reach the goals expected for their age by the end of their Reception Year in all areas of learning because of the good provision for their learning. Some will exceed the Early Learning Goals, with many exceeding these in the personal, social and emotional area of learning.
6. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is good because of the good provision made for the pupils' development. All pupils, including the higher-achieving pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well. Work is matched effectively to their ability and special educational needs pupils are supported well in their learning. Standards are above average in reading, writing, science, mathematics, religious education, history and art and design. They achieve well in relation to ability and their progress is charted carefully and used well to inform planning.
7. Pupils are making good progress in Years 3, 4 and 5, with appropriate challenge for the higher-achieving pupils and those with special educational needs. Progress accelerates in Year 6, where pupils are making at least good progress due to a consistently high standard of teaching. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science and art and design. They are above average in religious education, history and music, and satisfactory in all other subjects.
8. Pupils apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well in other areas of the curriculum. All pupils, including the higher-achieving and those with special educational needs, are making good progress, due to good or better teaching.

**PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. They are supported by very good behaviour, and the very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, including multi-cultural development. Most pupils attend school regularly and almost all are punctual. Attendance is in line with the national average: it is satisfactory but unauthorised absence is well below the national average and is good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are confident, interested and friendly and they behave very well around the school.

- Pupils praise the very good relationships and are confident that any adult will help them.
- Very good thoughtful assemblies with a strong spiritual and moral element and very good behaviour.
- School and consortium councils give all pupils a 'voice'.

## **COMMENTARY**

9. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their learning are very good because of the school's very high expectations. They settle quickly to work, listen carefully and concentrate well on their tasks. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school; they are courteous and polite to each other and to the adults. Because they arrive with good social skills, which the school builds on very successfully, they are very confident and capable, hold lively conversations and express well thought out opinions. Many pupils, especially in Year 6, have responsibilities around the school, some are conscientious dinner and playground monitors and all ensure no-one is feeling left out.
10. Behaviour is very good; it is supported by the school's strong moral code and a clear and consistently applied behaviour policy. Pupils know the system of rewards and understand the consequences if they do not behave well. The 'trophy' and 'show and tell' assemblies are appreciated and pupils are proud to have won a certificate for good attendance. One boy in Year 6 told an inspector he had never had a day off school! No bullying was observed, and most parents and pupils say that teachers generally manage reported incidents promptly and effectively. Pupils work and play very well together and develop good levels of independence. They show respect for the school environment and handle resources with care. Pupils support charities and understand that there are many who are less fortunate than they are.
11. Relationships are very good; pupils say their teachers are fair and kind and this leads to an atmosphere where they can develop their individual strengths and self-esteem. They know the school rules, and want to obey them because the school helps them to understand right and wrong. The school council operates in a democratic way and among other things new toilets for Year 3 and new playground equipment have resulted from these meetings. A 'buddy bench', other toilets and a request for a netball group are presently under discussion. Pupils are also represented at councils within the larger consortium group. This effectively gives all pupils a way of expressing their ideas without fear of ridicule or misunderstanding and builds up their self-confidence.
12. Assemblies and some lessons offer very good opportunities for reflection and a very good spiritual element supports the very good ethos. Social, moral, personal education and citizenship is taught across the school, in lessons and through circle time<sup>3</sup> and makes a very good contribution to pupils' development in these areas. Many visits and visitors, for example, to the 'Indian Day,' support the curriculum very well and pupils study the religions and cultures of other faiths in religious education. Art, music and dance as well as other creative activities are used very well to raise awareness of the cultural and multi-cultural dimension. This was achieved very well in the recent Creative Arts week.

## **Attendance**

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<sup>3</sup> During 'circle time' children sit in a circle and discuss personal feelings and thoughts.

13. Attendance is in line with the national average, but unauthorised absence is well below the national average and is good. The school takes effective action to promote good attendance, and registration practice is efficient. The significant majority of parents ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive punctually. There have been no exclusions. Most absences arise through sickness or medical visits, although some parents do withdraw their children from school to undertake holidays during term time.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	5.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

There have been no exclusions.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Number of pupils on roll
127

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Pupils are taught well throughout the school and are encouraged to do their best. This leads to good achievement by interested and positive pupils in relation to their prior attainment. Teachers plan and assess work in core subject lessons well so that pupils make good progress. There are very good opportunities for enrichment in the broad and balanced curriculum. The school is very inclusive and has a caring ethos. The significantly higher number of pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 and 4 are supported well in their learning and work is matched well to their ability.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The school provides a good quality of education in the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress towards their targets.

**MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Lessons are planned well and pupils are well motivated to succeed.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of behaviour and pupils are involved well in their own learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they are very good role models.
- The quality of assessment is good.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well.

**Commentary**

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor the quality of teaching, planning and learning on a regular basis. They have

worked hard to raise the quality of teaching and learning to good or better throughout the school. The quality of teaching is also good overall for the children in the Reception class. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when 2 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory in the infant phase.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (6%)	12 (37%)	13 (41%)	5 (16%)	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.*

15. Teaching in Reception is good. Both teachers, one of whom had just returned to school following maternity leave, have a confident understanding of the needs of young children. Staff generate very good relationships and a good quality of learning. The children make good progress. Effective challenge is provided for children who learn quickly. There is good support for slower learners and those Year 1 pupils in this class with special educational needs. The expectations of teachers and support staff are high and the children respond well and learn effectively.
16. Lessons are planned well throughout the school and pupils are well motivated to succeed. Care is taken to ensure that curriculum requirements are covered. In a very good Year 4 and Year 5 history lesson, the teacher was rigorous in her appraisal of pupils' knowledge to ensure that they had understood the different types of cakes and biscuits baked by a typical Victorian cook in Victorian times. The objectives were clearly stated and there was appropriate identification of assessment opportunities.
17. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good overall. Staff are confident in teaching the literacy and numeracy strategies. Speaking and listening skills are developed well through the use of skilful questioning and reading is well taught throughout the school. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average by Year 6. Writing skills are taught well and there has been a big effort to raise pupils' achievement. Writing, recording and presentation of pupils' work has improved considerably. Sufficient challenge is provided for higher-achieving pupils throughout the school. Work is matched well to pupils' ability and those with special educational needs are supported well in their learning. Good use is made of homework. In the teaching of literacy and numeracy, there is good development of target-setting. ICT skills are used appropriately in most areas of the curriculum and there was clear evidence of ICT being planned into all lessons. For example, it is used well in science to monitor changes in temperature and record results of experiments in investigative work.
18. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and involve pupils well in their learning. Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils' learning and work hard to help pupils achieve well. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and good use is made of questions to check out progress and to extend learning. For example, in a Year 1/2 science lesson, the teacher asked 'What does it mean if a sound is a soft sound?' A pupil replied "It is low in pitch".
19. Where teaching was very good, the teachers were very good role models. Two examples of outstanding teaching were seen in Year 6 in English and mathematics.

## Examples of outstanding practice

### **An excellent English lesson for pupils in Year 6 on practising a short non-narrative task.**

Following an excellent introduction pupils were challenged to look at a selection of backpacks in pairs. They made excellent evaluations in terms of which ones were suitable bags for school use. There was an excellent evaluation of their discussion by the teacher through questioning. Each group reported back very well to the class. Pupils had a very clear understanding of the best design features and there was a great source of satisfaction as they shared their views. They demonstrated excellent attitudes throughout the lesson. This lesson was inspiring because of the excellent role model set by the teacher and the very good writing which resulted from the discussion work.

### **An excellent mathematics lesson for a Year 6 class.**

The quality of teaching and learning was excellent, owing to the teacher's skill of explanation and the pace and excitement of her teaching. Pupils were keen and highly motivated to contribute to the lesson. The teacher made learning fun because of the challenge provided. The pupils became fascinated with numbers and searched number and multiplication squares for patterns. The teacher continually encouraged pupils to check whether the perceived pattern was always true and then to write a simple summary of the rule. The result was an exceptional group of pupils totally engrossed in their work who continually raised the challenge for themselves to find even more patterns. All pupils demonstrated outstanding progress in their understanding of this topic, due to the excellent challenge provided by the teacher.

20. Lessons are well balanced and pupils have sufficient time to complete tasks. The quality of assessment is good in English, science, mathematics, and most areas of the curriculum. Teachers usually mark pupils' work conscientiously and provide pupils with evaluative comments to guide them to improve their work. However, the quality of marking in science is less inconsistent.

## **THE CURRICULUM**

The curriculum is imaginatively planned, of very good quality and covers all National Curriculum requirements. It enables pupils to achieve well throughout the school. A very good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Accommodation is satisfactory, with some weaknesses, and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The planning of the curriculum is very good.
- The school is alert to curriculum innovation.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum.
- The outdoor play area for the under-fives is unsatisfactory.
- There is a shortage of space for small group work and limited library space for independent learning and the school hall is too small to provide effective teaching of gymnastics.

## **Commentary**

21. The curriculum is very well planned to ensure that pupils of all abilities are given a curriculum that meets their needs and covers the National Curriculum requirements. Better arrangements are made for the planning of work for the mixed age classes than at the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities and ages work on a curriculum at an appropriate level for their needs. Planning is rigorous to ensure progression and continuity. Schemes of work for all subjects are now in place. This has had a good

impact on teaching and learning. More opportunities for investigational work in mathematics and science have been provided.

22. The challenging and interesting curriculum is a key factor in the pupils attaining high standards and good achievement. Whole-school projects are carefully planned to encourage learning. For example, the recently-held Creative Arts week encouraged all pupils and parents to participate, with the aim of further developing the pupils' literacy and artistic skills and raise awareness of multicultural issues. A science week was held in 2003 to further develop the pupils' investigational skills. There is a strong focus on using drama and pupils' first-hand experience to aid their learning. For example, during the inspection, a Year 4/5 class spent the day being taught as Victorian pupils where teachers and pupils dressed in period costume and lessons were given in 'drill' and copperplate handwriting. In addition, teachers make good links between subjects and this adds considerably to the quality of pupils' learning. In a very good art lesson seen in a Year 2 class, the teacher used an opportunity to teach some science when explaining to the pupils how to make a model flower out of fabric. She showed the pupils how to cut and stick the different coloured petals to make the flower head, then explained that the yellow circle in the middle of the flower was the pollen. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, their needs are very well met.
23. There is very good support for learning outside lessons. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities to cater for all tastes. These are popular with boys and girls, ensuring that the breadth of activities found in lessons are extended in the extra activities. For example the environmental club helps pupils further develop their skills by working in the nature area within the school grounds. Theatre visits are arranged and residential visits are organised for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The wide variety of visitors, including community personnel, storytellers and theatre groups, play a valuable part in enriching the curriculum and preparing pupils for adult life.
24. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. However, there are still outstanding issues reported at the previous inspection. The outdoor play provision for the Reception class, which the school has identified as an area for development. The school hall is too small and space limits the development of pupils' gymnastic skills. There is no separate library. Space has been made available in the hall but this does not encourage pupils to work independently. There are no quiet areas where pupils can sit and read. The school has recently been successful in receiving funding for the refurbishment of the air-raid shelter to accommodate small group activities. The school is well resourced with learning equipment and books.

### **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The school makes very good arrangements for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils and this support is at the heart of the school's ethos. The school seeks and values the pupils' views, and the very good relationships between pupils and adults ensure that pupils are confident that they will be carefully looked after.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils are very positive about their experience in school.
- Procedures for health and safety and behaviour management, including procedures to prevent bullying, are in place and work very successfully.

- The school has very good arrangements for children entering school and for pupils transferring to secondary schools.
- Support advice and guidance provided by the school are very good.

## **Commentary**

25. Almost all pupils praise their teachers, and the help and guidance which they receive supports them very effectively in their learning. They know the staff well, are confident in approaching them, and know that they will be listened to. Pupils are supervised very well throughout the day and this makes a significant contribution to their safety as well as encouraging strong relationships between pupils and their teachers. When there are personal difficulties, the school has very good liaison with most parents and with other groups such as social services to help resolve them. Pupils enjoy the school visits and the many visitors are made welcome and enhance the pupils' learning opportunities.
26. Pupils' health, safety and welfare are very carefully monitored by means of good routines and practices. Health and safety are monitored rigorously and pupils who are hurt or unwell in school receive very good care. Pupils have a very good understanding of what is acceptable at school and the behaviour code is carefully followed. There are very good procedures to prevent bullying, which is not seen to be an issue. Although the headteacher has undergone training in child protection, the school acknowledges that this should be extended so that all members of staff are fully aware of procedures. The procedures for ensuring regular attendance generally work well but are too informal and attendance is not as good as at the time of the previous inspection. The standards of care overall are very good and this makes a very good contribution to the school's positive ethos. Very good procedures for introducing pupils to the school involve meetings and visits to the school by the child and parents. Teachers collaborate well with the local playgroup, they visit, attend their events and invite the children into school. Older pupils act as a 'buddy' when they arrive and younger ones say this is very helpful. The school also has very good links with the two main secondary schools to which pupils transfer. Pupils have an induction day visit and participate in a range of activities. Teachers from the secondary schools visit Year 6 to support lessons in ICT and French. Curricular and other relevant records are passed on. These arrangements ensure that transition is managed smoothly.
27. Class teachers know their pupils well and offer good advice, support and guidance in relation to their personal development. They are generally alert to pupils' learning needs, take their views seriously and do their best to support them. Academic and social progress are checked carefully. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in assembly.

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

The school has very good links with parents most of whom appreciate the regular and effective communication and the school's welcoming approach. Links with the local and wider community are also very good.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Most parents are very appreciative of the school; in discussion. They say that children do well and are happy; they are very pleased with the school's links, confident that the school handles complaints well and feel welcome in school.
- Very good links with the community support and extend the work of the school.



- The 'Friends of Preston School' offers very good support, both socially and by the amount of money raised.
- In questionnaires (42 per cent returned) a few parents expressed concerns about communication, the school management, bullying, homework and about the way in which the school seeks their views.

## **COMMENTARY**

28. Most parents are generally very pleased with the care and education their children receive. Discussion and the questionnaires identify many strengths. Most say their children like school, behave well and are making good progress. They say that the teaching is good, the staff expect hard work and treat their children fairly, and that children are encouraged to become mature and responsible. Most parents also feel that the school is well led and managed and that they are welcome. They help in school and on visits and support their children's learning well at home. They support the fundraising both for charities and for the school very well and the funds raised are used to provide much needed extra resources.
29. Links with the local community are very good. The vicar, who is also a governor, visits each week to lead assemblies. Festival services and productions are held in the Church, led by pupils and these events receive very good support from parents. The summer fete is very much a community event. Local businesses give good support by way of donations and welcoming visits by pupils for surveys and geographical work. Pupils visit farms to watch ploughing and planting and to choose a Christmas tree. Exceptionally strong links exist with a local pharmaceutical company, that provides a link scientist, an annual grant for science resources, a two-day science fair and a centre for consortium staff training.
30. Good links with other primary schools enable ideas to be shared and give good opportunities for pupils to take part in joint activities such as sport. The provision for pupils transferring to the local secondary schools and The University of Kent at Canterbury and provides placements for teachers in training and for work experience from local secondary schools. These opportunities significantly enhance the provision for involvement in the community.
31. A very small number of parents in response to pre-inspection questionnaires expressed the following concerns: that they do not receive sufficient information about their children's progress, about bullying, that the school does not do enough to seek parents' views, it is not well managed and that there is not enough homework. The inspection found that the provision of information is good; it includes regular newsletters, annual reports, curriculum information and meetings and is similar to that found in most schools. In meetings and in discussion, parents were very positive about their experiences and the inspection team is satisfied that these negative comments reflect the views of only a very small minority.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of leadership and management of the school is very good. The governance of the school is excellent. The headteacher provides very effective leadership that motivates everyone to give of their best and this enables the school to make improvements at a good pace. Application of the principles of best value is very good. There has been significant improvement in all areas of leadership and management since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership by the headteacher is very good.
- The management of the school is very good.
- The expertise and contribution of the governors are outstanding.
- The secretary makes a very significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.
- Teamwork is very good and all staff are doing their best for the pupils' education.
- Approaches to financial management are very good.

## Commentary

32. The headteacher provides very good leadership and leads the school with the full support and confidence of the governors. She has established a very supportive staff team who are fully committed to making very good provision for the all-round development of pupils. There is a very clear focus on achieving high standards, shared by both staff and governors. In partnership with staff, governors, parents and pupils, she has created a very positive, stimulating ethos. The hardworking and dedicated staff team work well together and are strongly committed to improvement. Key staff effectively manage their areas in terms of regular monitoring of planning, pupils' work and some teaching. The headteacher is given very good professional support by the lead practitioner. All members of the school family feel fully involved and valued for their contribution to the life and work of the school. They carry out their roles well.
33. The management of the school is very good. There are very effective procedures in place to enable the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. There are effective strategies for evaluating how well the school is doing in order to plan for the future. The very experienced secretary provides highly effective administrative and financial support. She makes a very significant contribution to the life of the school. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and the SENCO and assistant SENCO provide very effective management of this area.
34. The governance of the school is excellent and this was a strong aspect which has improved further since the last inspection. The chair of governors works very closely with the headteacher and provides an excellent steer to the work of the governing body. Governors act as 'critical friends' to the school. They are very well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have a very good understanding of the work of the school and bring great expertise to their roles. This is achieved by personal visits to see at first hand what is going on, taking a pro-active role in monitoring the work of the school, and through regular reports by the headteacher. This whole area of strategic planning has improved since the previous inspection.
35. Teachers are well supported by the teaching assistants. There is a very good team spirit amongst all the staff and a very good shared commitment to succeed. Staff make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning, attainment and development. They are very good role models. Induction and mentoring systems are very good. There are high quality performance management procedures in place and the professional development of staff is very good.
36. The management of the school's finances is very good. The fairly high carried forward figures are accounted for by planned expenditure on developing the outdoor area and air-raid shelter. The best value principles are central to the management and use of resources, and these are managed very well.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	338,797
Total expenditure	334,632
Expenditure per pupil	2,635

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30,843
Balance carried forward to the next	18,389

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

The school provides a **good** education for children in the Foundation Stage.

Children's attainment levels, when they enter Reception, vary from year to year. This year, children's attainment when they started school was about average; in previous years it varied between average and above average. Children's achievements are good because of a suitable curriculum and good quality of teaching and learning. Children usually start Reception in the September of the school year in which they are five, either full-time or part-time. The younger children, who start part-time, become full-time after Christmas. The children are taught in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class; they receive a curriculum based on the Foundation Stage guidance. Good links have been established with children and their families before they start school. Most children come from a nursery that is based in the village hall, close to the school. Teachers from Reception visit children in the nursery, and children and their families have opportunities to visit the Reception class in the summer term before the children start in reception. Staffing of Reception has been affected by recent periods of teacher absence; it should become more permanent in September. The headteacher, supported by a teacher who has recently returned to school, has ensured good leadership and management of the area during the absences and there is a good understanding of the next stages of development. Teaching assistants form a valuable part of the team established. Assessment procedures are very thorough and effective in securing good rates of progress by children. One child in Reception has been identified as needing additional support because of difficulties with concentration. Despite the staffing difficulties, the strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained and improved further.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Children make good progress in developing positive attitudes and good behaviour.
- Children are likely to meet or exceed the expected goals by the end of Reception.

#### **Commentary**

37. The quality of teaching and learning is good, in particular the management of children's behaviour. Teachers and support staff insist on high standards of behaviour and regularly remind children of their expectations. Sometimes a few children do not listen closely to adults or other children, but good teaching and regular reminders are leading to improvements. The high expectations of the teachers and other adults help children understand the importance of behaving well, considering and listening to others. As a result, children achieve well and are likely to meet, and in many cases exceed, the goals expected and have made good progress overall. Good support ensures all children develop improved concentration and perseverance. Various activities encourage children to concentrate and learn unsupported for short periods of time. Some opportunities for children to make choices about what they do and to develop

independence in their learning are included each day. Most children have learnt to relate to each other well, talking and sharing resources in small groups. The supportive and welcoming environment helps children make good progress. Children maintain their concentration well because the tasks are varied and adults in the class support them effectively. Music was used appropriately to encourage children to reflect on what it made them think about.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Early reading skills are developed successfully.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to speak and listen.
- Teaching is good, children achieve well, and most will reach, or exceed, the expected goals by the end of Reception.

### **Commentary**

38. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers ensure there are good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, with regular opportunities for individuals to answer questions, or describe what they have been doing. Adults encourage children with questions and listen carefully to their replies. Children's speaking is clear and usually in simple sentences containing a well-developed vocabulary. Children are encouraged to extend their speaking skills through a range of group activities. All adults interact well with children on an individual or group basis, helping to extend vocabulary and build their confidence. Adults are careful to involve all children, and good assessment identifies those who need to be encouraged more. Role-play is used satisfactorily to develop speaking and listening skills, such as in the explorers' camp. Each child has their own reading book, which is taken home and shared with family. Children enjoy books, know the way pages are turned and know words have meaning. Most children read simple sentences accurately, and the most able recognise errors that they have made, and then correct them. Most children will exceed the goals expected in reading. Writing skills are developed well. Children copy writing and letters with good accuracy and care. Children write their own names and most write simple sentences which have a clear and recognisable meaning. The most able include capital letters, full stops and spaces between words. Good marking helps children understand how they can improve, such as about the need to include spaces between words. Children achieve well and most will reach, or exceed, the goals expected by the start of Year 1.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Mathematical development is well taught.
- Children achieve well, and most will reach or exceed the goals expected by the end of reception.

## Commentary

39. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have a good understanding of numbers to 20 or higher. Good teaching helped children focus on simple addition and subtraction skills. The work planned for different groups of children is well matched to their understanding of number. An activity when children had to count as plastic teddy bears were dropped into a container promoted both counting and listening skills well. Displays and puzzles develop colour knowledge and shape-matching skills effectively. This work is further consolidated by the suitable use of relevant computer programs. Mathematical language is introduced so that children use terms such as larger or shorter correctly, and so that they know the names of a range of familiar flat shapes. Good assessment takes place and clear records identify the stage of mathematical development each child has reached and this is used well to plan work. Overall, children make good progress, and most will reach or exceed the expected goals by the end of Reception.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is **good**. The provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children achieve well, but most will reach, or exceed, the expected goals by the end of Reception.
- The outside area is not yet sufficiently well developed to become a fully effective outdoor classroom.

## Commentary

40. These areas of learning were not a major focus during the inspection, but evidence available shows that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have become fascinated by the theme of minibeasts, in particular, caterpillars and butterflies and the changes that tadpoles undergo. This theme, linked to the story, *'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'*, is being used well to promote learning across the curriculum. Children have a good understanding of the changes involved from egg to caterpillar to adult butterfly. They learnt, for instance, that a caterpillar consumes its own weight of food in a day. Suitable opportunities are provided to explore the properties of materials, such as sand and water. Children use the computer mouse with good accuracy to select answers when exploring repeating patterns. Their introduction to old and new toys has helped them understand that changes have occurred since their parents and grandparents were young. Children know that Jesus had a group of special friends, who were called his disciples. Very good teaching helped children understand why they were all men.
41. Role-play makes a satisfactory contribution to children's creative development. The current 'explorers' camp' is providing a good opportunity to look for hidden minibeasts and to write briefly about them. Inside the classrooms, there are many opportunities provided to extend children's manipulative skills, which become well developed, as children use pencils, paintbrushes and construction materials. Good quality puppets, including some made out of wooden spoons, and well-controlled painting of butterflies show good achievement in creative development. In a well-conceived lesson, children were encouraged to listen to some music, *'In a Summer Garden'* and then to create a picture or model of what it made them think about. The lack of time limited the lesson's effectiveness and, because children were not allowed to listen to the music before moving from the carpet, about half produced predetermined pictures, such as tractors, which were not inspired by the music. Others, however, produced good ideas, such as of

butterflies in a garden or of a rainbow. In physical development sessions in the village hall, children moved well to music and showed satisfactory catching and throwing skills; their awareness of how best to use the space available was less well developed. The outdoor area is recognised as being in need of development. The area is under-resourced and lacks the range of equipment to develop it as an area that effectively promotes all areas of learning. Children use the limited number of ride-on toys and tricycles to develop their balance and physical skills. Owing to a lack of resources, there is, however, little opportunity to develop other skills such as climbing and those associated with sharing and co-operating when using large equipment. Most children will meet the goals expected in physical development and meet or exceed them in their knowledge of the world and creative development by the end of Reception.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**. Overall, the quality of the teaching and the work planned for pupils are good and this ensures that they achieve well.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are well above average by Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well because of the good quality teaching and learning.
- Pupils with special needs make good progress against their specific targets.
- The subject is very well managed.
- English makes a very effective contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

#### Commentary

42. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, Year 6 pupils achieved above average standards in English in comparison with all schools, and average standards in comparison to similar schools. Standards in English are rising in the junior phase because of the school's focus on improvement in this subject. Pupils with special educational needs have made significant progress in relation to prior achievement. Standards were average in Year 2 in comparison to all schools in reading and writing.
43. At the time of this inspection, standards were well above average in English in Year 6. Pupils are well placed to meet or exceed the targets set for them in the 2004 national tests. The very positive standards reached are due to very good planning, good and better teaching, and effective use of assessment. The analysis of pupils' work, together with lesson observations, confirms this picture.
44. From a broadly average starting point, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well during their time at school to achieve above average standards. The inspection found that higher attaining pupils achieve well throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by adults in lessons. In all year groups there is a wide span of ability. Every effort is made by staff to raise their attainment by carefully planned work and good support and encouragement. Girls tend to do better than boys; however, the school has worked successfully in the last two years to raise boys' achievement and the gap has narrowed.
45. Overall, standards in speaking are above average in Year 1 and 2, broadly average in Years 3 and 4 and above average in Years 5 and 6. Most pupils speak with confidence and make themselves understood, with younger pupils having an improving vocabulary due to good teaching having a good impact on their learning. There is very good provision for pupils who have speech and language difficulties. Staff work hard to help pupils to extend their vocabulary by:
  - Encouraging pupils to discuss in pairs.
  - Using drama activities or interesting starts to lessons to help pupils to communicate effectively. For example, Year 6 pupils eagerly looked at a selection of backpacks and made excellent evaluations in terms of a suitable bag for school use.



46. Pupils achieve well in reading, with the good development of their knowledge and enjoyment of books being developed well alongside their reading skills. There is a well-structured reading programme, with pupils working through a published scheme. Standards are currently above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6. There are valuable opportunities during the school day for pupils to engage in silent reading, in pairs and in groups. All pupils enjoy reading with parents and carers at home and this helps them to progress well. Most tackle new reading material confidently. They are clear about the strategies that they need to use to work out how to read words and sentences. Pupils enjoy reading the books of the following authors: J.K. Rowling, Jacqueline Smith, Dick King-Smith and William Shakespeare. Book areas in classrooms are well organised; however the location of the library in the hall limits its use for independent learning.
47. Well taught reading skills ensure that younger pupils read accurately and fluently, and by Year 6, pupils read in a mature, expressive way. A strength in the reading is the way in which older pupils' good speaking skills enable them to understand harder words and to explore books at a deeper level of meaning. The school provides regular, targeted support for pupils with difficulties with their reading and for pupils 'nearly' attaining average levels.
48. Attainment in writing is above average for seven year olds and well above average for 11 year olds. The co-ordinator has inspired staff to work hard and successfully improve standards in writing. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Standards have risen because of:
- Very good in-service training led by the co-ordinator.
  - Planning which is of a good quality.
  - Interesting writing tasks set for a range of audiences.
  - Pupils' writing is celebrated in displays.
  - Valuable opportunities for extended writing.
49. The school is continuing to target writing for improvement, with high expectations of handwriting and spelling, and focused marking. This helped pupils to be clear about what they have to do to improve. The following is an example of very good writing from Year 6 written on the theme of 'Alone!'
- 'My strength weakens in a drain of happiness.  
I lay there dreaming of the times we spent together.  
But I leave the friendship bracelet in its place.  
Now I'm desolate and solitary.  
He's gone forever and I'm lost in darkness.'*
50. Teaching is at least good over time and some very good and excellent teaching was observed in the infant and junior phases during the inspection. Pupils concentrate very well in lessons and work hard. Some of the teaching is of a high quality with an emphasis on helping pupils to develop their literacy skills through purposeful and enjoyable activities. This enables pupils to achieve well. In Year 4, for example, higher attaining pupils worked very hard to write a persuasive letter to teachers on the value of children experiencing a Victorian day. Very good motivating strategies also enabled Year 6

pupils to 'read between the lines' and as a result identify elements of character. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of the subject and teach it well.

51. The subject is very well managed and the teaching, planning and learning are very well monitored. Good use is made of assessment to formulate pupils' targets. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through well-chosen texts and stimulating resources. Good use is made of ICT to support learning and pupils' independent learning skills are developed well through research. There has been an improvement in the teaching of reading and writing since the last inspection.

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

52. This is now a strength of the school. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop and apply their literacy skills in other subjects, especially in mathematics, science, art and design and history. ICT is well used to help pupils make a final presentation of their work, such as scenes from *'Macbeth'* by Shakespeare in English, to create designs in the style of Mondrian and Picasso in art, and to present the results of fair testing in science.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well and attain well above average standards by Year 6.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and enjoy problem-solving tasks.
- Teaching is good and, on occasions, excellent.
- The subject is well led.
- Assessment of pupils' work is good and the information used well.

#### **Commentary**

53. In recent years, by Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment has been above or well above average. In 2003, it was above average in Year 2, and well above average in Year 6. Attainment has declined a little in Year 2 since 2001, but this reflected the increased proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In Year 6, pupils' attainment has fluctuated from year to year, shown little change overall and been consistently above average. In recent years, girls have tended to do better than boys in both Years 2 and 6, but the numbers involved are small. Attainment this year is above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
54. By Year 2, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing their numerical skills, including multiplication. They achieve well. The use of a story as the starting point for a range of mathematics problems was an effective strategy by the teacher. The pupils became interested and enthusiastic, they enjoyed selecting the number operation necessary to solve the word problem, and virtually all were correct in the addition and subtraction problems. Average- and higher-attaining pupils also recognised when multiplication was an appropriate method. By Year 6, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, also achieve well as the result of good teaching. A particular strength is the attention all teachers give to developing problem-solving skills, a key area for development highlighted by the effective co-ordinator. Pupils have a very good level of competence in addition, subtraction,

multiplication and division, and apply this knowledge very effectively to solving problems or exploring numbers. The needs of gifted mathematicians are well met by opportunities to study with older pupils, including at the secondary school. As a result, a few pupils are working at very high levels for their age.

55. The quality of teaching is good. In the Year 1 and 2 class, well-planned activities that interest pupils and the very effective use of time ensure successful learning. A strong feature seen in all teaching is the insistence on good behaviour. Pupils respond well, show very good attitudes and complete impressive amounts of accurate work. Relationships are positive. Pupils behave very well and this aids learning. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, the teacher made learning fun because of the challenge provided. The pupils became fascinated with numbers and searched number and multiplication squares for patterns. The co-ordinator is having a positive impact on the subject and leads it well. Monitoring of planning and pupils' work is giving a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses but, as yet, she has not had the chance to monitor teaching directly. Assessment is well organised and the information used well to assess pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Marking is detailed and includes helpful comments to enable pupils to understand what they have done well and areas that need more attention. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, with strengths being maintained and the increased attention given to problem-solving having a positive impact on standards.

## **MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

56. Good use is made of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects. In science, pupils measure and record simple data from their investigations, and present the results in suitable graphs. In ICT, good use is made of spreadsheets and graphs. History time-lines in classrooms are consistently to scale mathematically and pupils are encouraged to make calculations in history linked to when events happened within, for instance, a particular monarch's reign. In geography, interesting graphs were drawn to show the rate of fall of different rivers from source to mouth, but opportunities to develop this, for instance to calculate the river's total length, were missed.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Standards have improved throughout the school since the last inspection.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are very good.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very effective.

### **Commentary**

57. Results of teacher assessment in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were average when compared with the numbers of pupils gaining the expected levels nationally. They were above average when comparing the number of pupils achieving the higher levels. When compared to similar schools the teacher assessment results were below average at the expected levels and average at the higher levels. Results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 were well above average compared to the national results and when compared with similar schools. Inspection findings show that pupils' attainment in science is better than the test results show. It is above average at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well. By Year 6, pupils achieve very well as standards have

risen further to well above the national average. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

58. Pupils achieve very well to reach well above average standards in their work by the end of Year 6. The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards are rising throughout the school. Assessment is an important feature in the raising of standards. The co-ordinator monitors standards very effectively by analysing test results in order to find out areas of strengths and weaknesses within the curriculum. This analysis has resulted in a strong focus on the development of pupils' investigative skills. As a result, pupils gain good enquiry skills and their knowledge is underpinned by a very good understanding of scientific concepts acquired through challenging practical tasks. A very good portfolio documents the standards expected in investigational work, therefore, teachers have a very good understanding of the standards to expect at each age. Consequently, the progression and development of scientific skills are very well taught and almost all pupils achieve highly. For example, from an early age, pupils are taught to think carefully and record reasons for the results seen in their experiments. Pupils in Year 1 can explain why a model car went slowly down a ramp because the ramp was not steep. By Year 2, their explanations have more depth. One pupil had written, 'The ramp was a little steep because it only had four blocks it travelled for 1.97 seconds'. By Year 3, pupils are able to identify changes made when controlling a sound and use more technical vocabulary. A pupil said that when a cloth was put around a cylinder it muffled the sound. Year 4 pupils have been taught to make judgements on the quality of insulation materials. They can explain which is the best insulator. The pupils' predictive skills are well developed by Year 5. A pupil had written "My prediction was correct. The shadow would get longer in the afternoon, in the morning it would be shorter". By Year 6 pupils have developed into young scientists and are confidently making a hypothesis based on their investigations. They draw conclusions based on secure knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for because the tasks and activities meet their needs well. The teaching assistants give them good support; as a result, these pupils achieve well.
59. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers plan interesting lessons with a good range of practical activities so that pupils can learn and develop scientific skills through first hand experiences. Pupils are very keen to learn because the way the teachers present the work is exciting and enjoyable. Teachers check thoroughly how well pupils are doing and provide a high level of challenge for more able pupils so that they begin to think more creatively. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher gave pupils a wide range of 'mini investigations', based on previous work, which they had to solve themselves by carrying out experiments and drawing their own conclusions. Due to the challenging nature of the work, all pupils made very good progress. Teachers promote the use of scientific vocabulary well, enabling pupils to express their ideas clearly in discussion and in writing. There is some inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work. The best marking is seen in Year 6 where pupils are shown how to improve.
60. The subject is led and managed very well. Good links are made with other subjects to develop pupils' scientific skills further. Pupils in Year 6 have drawn accurate line graphs to explain the effects of a weight on the length of stretch on an elastic band. Work on habitats is further enhanced through art where Year 4 pupils have made colourful habitat displays. Pupils in Year 2 have sorted a collection of materials to decorate their story sacks in English. There is a strong focus on using educational visits to enrich the curriculum. The school attends the local science fair sponsored by local industry each

year. A link scientist visits the school each term to work with both teachers and pupils. Science has recently been given a higher profile, with the organisation of 'Science Week' during the term. Although assessment procedures are very good, pupils do not have their own small targets to work towards so as to give them a better understanding of their own learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and attainment by Year 6 is above average.
- ICT is used well to support learning in other subjects.
- Good subject leadership and management have contributed to raising standards.

### **Commentary**

61. Standards of attainment in ICT are comparable to those attained nationally by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' use of ICT skills demonstrates that teaching is good. Teachers adopt good strategies to overcome the lack of an ICT suite. The school's effective integration of the teaching of specific skills in a dedicated ICT lesson and the use of the taught skills during the following week are successful. Pupils enjoy working with a range of ICT tasks. Year 6 pupils were noted working on 'PowerPoint' presentations during a wet lunchtime. Last year, pupils from Year 6 produced impressive 'PowerPoint' presentations of extracts from Shakespeare's 'Hamlet', using modified digital pictures, music and dramatic sound effects. Pupils in Year 2 drew bar charts of information from surveys and observations, word-processed text to an appropriate standard and made good use of art programs to create pictures. By Year 6, pupils have learnt to use ICT for word-processing, vary the style, size and colour of the font, to investigate databases and find information from the Internet. In a well-taught lesson, which moved on at a good pace, pupils in Year 5 successfully produced repeating patterns to produce wallpaper in the style of William Morris. The teacher's expertise helped to develop pupils' skills quickly so that they could then apply them independently or with the effective help of a teaching assistant. The regular access to ICT resources by pupils helps them develop their skills during the day.
62. The two co-ordinators work very well together and lead the subject well. They have helped the school see ICT provision as something of value to the whole school, administration, management, teachers and pupils. The division of labour ensures that the needs of all areas are considered and met. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. Sufficient resources are available, and well-planned use has helped pupils' attainment to rise by Year 6. Satisfactory, but accelerating, progress has been made in the area of assessing pupils' skills. One of the co-ordinators has introduced new procedures in her class, and will evaluate their success before extending them further. A good feature is the increased opportunities for pupils to assess how well they have achieved their targets in each area of work. Gifted and talented pupils in ICT are identified and their skills often used to support their classmates.

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

63. ICT skills are used well to develop learning across the curriculum. Its planned use within the school day and in many subjects reflects the strategy of teaching particular skills, which are then used in the following week. Regular use of ICT supports learning in mathematics, such as reinforcing number skills or drawing graphs. Good use of ICT in English is evident in tasks that include word-processing, and incorporating this with pictures. In an English exercise, related to factual writing about earthquakes, the Internet was used well to gather relevant information and then, in some cases, word-process the report. Good use was made of ICT in design and technology when pupils transferred their outline designs to the computer. Regular use is made of ICT in art-related tasks, such as producing wallpaper designs and experimenting with different colours and paint techniques.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **GEOGRAPHY**

64. Geography was not a major focus during the inspection and no lessons were seen. The school has a two-year programme of study in geography, to accommodate the mixed age classes, which gives adequate coverage of the curriculum. This programme covers aspects that include skills, such as map work, and factual knowledge, including comparisons between Preston and other locations in this country and overseas, and physical features such as rivers and earthquakes. Opportunities to develop cultural awareness are used well. The areas covered are based on national planning, but at present there is inadequate detailed guidance on how this is used to challenge all pupils. The work in pupils' books indicates that not enough thought has been given to developing and using literacy and numeracy skills sufficiently. Some of the recorded work seen involved relatively undemanding worksheets. An exception was the literacy-based task involving informative writing about earthquakes that produced some detailed and interesting accounts in Year 6. The school is aware that progress since the previous inspection has been only satisfactory and that the subject needs to have a higher priority in its development programme. It is planned to give the necessary priority following the current focus on history.

#### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

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

- Standards are above average overall.
- The school is developing an innovative curriculum for teaching history.
- Assessment does not take account of the pupils' historical skills of enquiry.

#### **Commentary**

65. Standards are above average by Year 2 and by Year 6. Overall, pupils' achievement is good. There have been good improvements in planning and the curriculum since the previous inspection. By Year 2, pupils have a good grasp of some important events and people from the past, and write with good understanding of the Great Fire of London. By Year 6, pupils show a good understanding of life in Victorian times. Teachers link this well with drama and literacy, providing good background information on conditions in Victorian schools. Pupils research topics well and good use is made of ICT to support learning. Visits and role-play

provide interesting learning opportunities in units of work on the Romans and Anglo Saxons. Visits to the school from re-enactment groups gave pupils in the junior classes a clear understanding of the differences between life then and now.

66. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good in the junior phase. It is good in the infant phase. The school is developing the curriculum in an innovative way. There is a strong focus on improving pupils' understanding in other subjects through history. The use of role-play is very good. For example, during the inspection, a Year 4/5 class spent the day being taught as Victorian children. Teachers and pupils dressed in costume appropriate to the time. The classroom was rearranged to replicate a Victorian school. Pupils sat in rows and were taught copperplate handwriting and drill. During the day, they were visited by other teachers playing the role of an inspector of schools and a famous cook, Mrs Beeton, who brought in Victorian cakes and recipes. Due to the very good planning, pupils gained a very good knowledge of Victorian customs and attitudes and the impact of significant individuals and events. Good use is made of numeracy and art. In another very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher's skilful questioning and good use of photographs enabled the pupils to work out the length of time Prokofiev lived in Paris. Pupils in Year 6 have made 'timelines' showing the significant events of the Second World War. They have developed skills in design and technology by making replicas of medals issued during the war together with the presentation boxes. In a similar way, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have designed Roman helmets.
67. Leadership and management are good overall. Teachers make some basic assessments at the end of units but these are limited to checking pupils' knowledge and give little evidence of their historical enquiry skills.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- The subject is well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

68. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the meaning and significance of religious events like Christmas and Easter in the Christian church. They understand that churches and temples are places of worship. A pupil had written "I believe in God and go to church to pray". They are beginning to develop an understanding of the parables like '*The Good Samaritan*'. They know that Jesus told stories to help others learn about God. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of various religions and can compare and contrast religious routines of different faiths like Judaism and Hinduism. They have a good understanding of the purpose of the sacraments, like baptism as the welcoming of a child into the Christian faith. They know how this faith is developed through the sacrament of confirmation, which admits a child to full participation in the church. They are able to compare this with the Bar mitzvah celebrations in the Jewish community. The higher-achieving pupils are able to use the Bible accurately as a reference aid to locate information by looking up the chapter and verse.

69. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good. In a Year 6 lesson about 'the Torah', the teacher's very good questioning and explanation drew out all that the pupils already knew about the five stories of Moses written in the Torah, then took them on to consider what feelings the Torah might provoke when being read out at the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah. Resources are used well so as to captivate the pupils' interest; as a result, they are eager to learn. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher used a video showing the sacrament of baptism to the class. She explained they were going to be detectives and watch the video so as to identify artefacts found in the church. As a result, the pupils were able to identify many artefacts like the font and the altar, and to explain what they were used for during the ceremony of baptism.
70. The subject is managed well. There are good links with the local church. The vicar is a regular visitor at the school and takes assemblies and visits classes to support the teaching of the Christian faith. The subject is enriched by visits to the local church. The curriculum meets the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus. The high standards seen at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Appropriate plans are in place to develop the subject further and to assess the quality of pupils' work by using the national attainment targets. Resources are satisfactory overall, but more artefacts are needed to support the teaching of other faiths in the junior classes.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

71. Only two lessons were seen in art and design and no lessons were seen in music. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about overall provision; however, the evidence available indicates that it is good in both areas. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work, spoke to pupils about what they had learnt in art and design and music, and looked at pupils' work.
72. It is evident from teachers' planning, the prospectus and discussions with pupils that work planned in **art and design** is interesting and varied. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. This lively approach was observed in a very good Year 3/4 art lesson, when pupils concentrated very hard to produce a picture in the style of Henri Matisse. They were inspired by the picture produced by their teacher and took careful note of her thoughts on the skills and techniques they needed to use. They maintained very good attention as they produced their own version of a snail. The pupils then collaborated very well with their partners to praise and evaluate each other's work. The teacher and learning assistants supported all pupils, including those with special educational needs, very well in their learning. Displays are bright and colourful around the school. For example, there was a very good quality of Aztec-style printing on display in the Year 6 classroom. The subject makes a very effective contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
73. The curriculum is very good overall. It is broad, balanced and relevant. It is enriched by experiences such as the Creative Arts week. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed making puppets. There is good use of ICT to support pupils' learning and older pupils really enjoy visiting art galleries on the website. They enjoy clay work, marbling, collage work, two-dimensional and three-dimensional work. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils have completed imaginative collage decorations on story sacks. Standards are above expectations for pupils by age seven and are well above expectations for pupils by age 11. Evidence from a scrutiny of work shows that pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. The co-ordinator is providing very good clear educational direction for the subject. The school has developed good systems for pupils to self-evaluate their work



and there is a good record kept of their progress. There has been good improvement in the quality of the curriculum, planning and assessment since the last inspection.

74. In **music**, no lessons were observed; however, pupils were heard singing enthusiastically in assemblies and an instrumental ensemble was heard rehearsing prior to the start of the school day. In assembly, pupils sang '*Morning has Broken*' tunefully, with full awareness of breathing, diction and dynamics. The standard of singing is good throughout the school. The quality of the curriculum is very good overall and the subject makes a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The new music scheme enables all teachers to be confident in teaching the subject, which is an improvement on the previous inspection.
75. In a brass instrumental group session seen, pupils were developing a good sense of performance as they practised. There was very good pace to the teaching and high expectations of behaviour. All pupils achieved well.
76. Concerts and performance contribute well to pupils' overall musical experience. Pupils have the opportunity to learn all the brass instruments, violin, recorder and keyboard, and enjoy performing for others.
77. Standards are above average by Year 2 and Year 6, and there are good cross-curricular links. Pupils achieve well in their singing due to the very good efforts of the peripatetic singing teacher. Year 6 pupils happily perform an intricate piece of jazz in two parts, following very good choral direction. The co-ordinator is providing very good clear educational direction for the subject. There are good assessment procedures in place and good use is made of assessment to inform planning.
78. **Design and technology** was not a major focus during the inspection and only part of one lesson was seen. The curriculum for design and technology has developed well, and good progress has been made since the last inspection. Pupils' literacy skills are used well as they evaluate their designs with thoughtful comments. Linked to a history topic, Year 6 pupils, for instance, had designed medals and boxes to keep them in and evaluated carefully the problems experienced and how they were overcome. Teachers sensibly separate the design process from that of making, but not enough attention is given to the need for pupils to consider the dimensions of their designs and the limitations this may pose on the artefacts to be made. Suitable use is made of ICT to assist in the design process. A particularly successful theme was that of 'Puppets', which was part of a Creative Arts week. Through each class of the school, starting with Reception, pupils looked at different types of puppets, before designing and making their own. The range of styles was impressive and included 'wooden spoon' puppets, glove puppets and, in Year 6, large three-dimensional string puppets, the standard of which was above that expected. Pupils' very good attitudes to the subject are demonstrated by the perseverance and attention to detail shown in these models.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

79. **Physical education** was not a focus of the inspection and no judgements were made about provision in this subject. No lessons were seen so no judgements have been made about teaching and standards. Information given has been the result of discussions with teaching staff and the scrutinising of documents.
80. The scheme of work used by the school for physical education is based on National Curriculum requirements. It covers dance, games, gymnastics and swimming. Almost all

pupils swim 25 metres by the time they leave at the age of eleven. The wide range of extra-curricular activities gives pupils further opportunities to develop their games skills. The school plays a good range of competitive sports, which includes athletics and cross-country running and football. The residential trips for pupils in Years 5 and 6 gives pupils very good experiences of climbing and orienteering. The school has satisfactory accommodation with some weaknesses. For example, the school hall is too small and limits the teaching of gymnastics. The school copes with this the best that it can with teachers and external trainers using the village hall, recreation ground and outside areas extensively to develop all other aspects of physical education. Resources are satisfactory.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHEC) is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision is planned very well into the curriculum.
- Cross-curricular links are clearly identified and developed well.

### **COMMENTARY**

81. The arrangements for PSHEC, including drugs education, are very good. Pupils' citizenship skills are developed very well through 'circle time', religious education, science and music. This area contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. The arrangements for drug and health education are very good. Pupils learn about the importance of a healthy diet in science. Pupils are learning how to develop a healthy and safe lifestyle. They gain confidence and interact very well with others.
82. The very caring school ethos supports pupils' personal development and 'circle time' provides very good opportunities to share feelings and to discuss a range of topics. These sessions are effective in building the pupils' confidence and enable them to share their feelings with others. As pupils get older, they are given increasing responsibility, preparing them well for the next stage of their education.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
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

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	1
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).*