

INSPECTION REPORT

PARK SCHOOL

Blackpool

LEA area: Blackpool

Unique reference number: 119867

Headteacher: Mr K Berry

Lead inspector: Mr D Smith

Dates of inspection: 28th June- 1st July 2004

Inspection number: 265740

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	157
School address:	158 Whitegate Drive Blackpool Lancashire
Postcode:	FY3 9HF
Telephone number:	01253 764130
Fax number:	01253 600670

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Allcock

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Park School is a large Community Special School. They gained a School's Achievement Award in 2002. The capacity of the school is one hundred and fifty five and there are currently one hundred and fifty seven pupils on roll, one hundred and ten boys and forty-seven girls, aged four to sixteen. The majority of pupils live in Blackpool, although a significant number of the pupils reside in other parts of Lancashire. The pupils have a wide range of special educational needs. Over half of the pupils have moderate learning difficulties and many have speech or communication difficulties. The remaining pupils either have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, autism or severe developmental delay. Four pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and no pupils are in the early stages of English language acquisition. Six pupils are in public care. Nineteen pupils joined the school, other than the usual time of first admission and seventeen left, other than the usual time of leaving or transfer. These figures demonstrate that the school has a significant transient population.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1732 3	Mr D Smith	Lead inspector	Science
			Art and design
			Physical education
			English as an additional language
1944 3	Mrs N Walker	Lay inspector	
1555 1	Mrs P Mitchell	Team inspector	English
			Citizenship
			Modern foreign languages
			Music
1078 1	Mr R Thompson	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Information and communication technology
			Design and technology
			Geography
			Special educational needs
2246 6	Mrs D Pearson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			History
			Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school with many very good features. The school provides good value for money. Pupils achieve well, overall, making good gains in their learning, as a result of the good and often very good teaching. The leadership by the headteacher, senior staff and governors is very good and the management is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good teamwork and, in particular, the very valuable contribution of the teaching assistants.
- The very good leadership of the senior management team and the very effective support and challenge provided by the governing body.
- Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and English and mathematics throughout the school.
- The high incidence of fixed term exclusions is high.
- The very good links with the community and other schools and very good inclusive opportunities.
- The very good links with parents and, as a result, pupils' very good attendance.
- The very good care, welfare, health and safety provided for pupils.
- Subject co-ordinators, other than those in the senior team, do not consistently monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in tackling the weaknesses identified in their report. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are now a strength of the school rather than a weakness. Significant improvements have been made to the curriculum, the quality of teaching, the use of assessment information and the accommodation. However, the indoor facilities for physical education remain an issue but the school makes good use of local sporting facilities and these provide additional opportunities for pupils to learn in the community. The school is in a strong position to make further progress.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Foundation	Very good	Very good
Year 2	Very good	Very good
Year 6	Good	Good
Year 9	Good	Good
Year 11	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

Pupils' achievement is good, overall. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress in their targets and the goals that they are expected to reach by the end of reception. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is very good. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 9 and the achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. The provision of English and mathematics across the school is given a high priority, their leadership and management is very good and, as a result, the pupils achieve very well in both subjects. Pupils, in Years 3 to 6, achieve very well in science and physical education.

The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development and good provision for pupils' moral development. Pupils' attitudes are very good and the school promotes very good relationships in a warm and genuine manner. The staff team very effectively motivates pupils and they are very interested in activities such as the art Xtra club and playing in the school band. Pupils are generally very keen to learn and make very good gains in their levels of confidence and are proud of their achievement. Pupils' behaviour is generally good in school but the behaviour of their most challenging pupils is, at times, not managed effectively and fixed-term exclusions are used too easily, leading to an unacceptably high incidence of this sanction. Pupils' attendance is very good and they are very punctual, both when arriving at the school and getting to their lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good in reception and Years 1 and 2. The quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils in Years 3 to 9 and satisfactory for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and English is very good across the school. It is also very good in science and physical education for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Curriculum provision is good, overall, and is effectively enriched. The suitability of the accommodation and quality and range of the resources are very good. The care provided for pupils is very good and they receive good support and guidance. The school has developed effective systems for consulting the pupils and values their views. Very good links have been formed with parents. The very good links with the community and other schools provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn and play alongside their mainstream peers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership and governance of the school is very good whilst the management is good. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is very good. There is a very clear sense of purpose in the school that forms the basis for a good school improvement plan. The managers are very good role models and help to develop a very positive ethos. Teamwork is very good and all members of staff are focussed on meeting pupils' special educational needs. Members of the senior management team effectively monitor the quality of teaching and learning, but subject co-ordinators, other than members of the senior management team, do not consistently carry out this role. This leads, for example, to the use of mundane worksheets in some teaching. When this happens, pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than the good achievement that they are capable of. The induction of staff and their continuing professional development are very good. Staff new to the school quickly settle in and make a good contribution to pupils' achievement. The school is well set for continual improvement, very effectively challenged and supported by an able governing body. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are very positive about the school. They are especially pleased with the very good leadership of the school and the good teaching and learning provided for their child. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and enjoy attending. Members of the school band, in particular, are full of praise for the opportunities provided for them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop proactive strategies to improve and manage the behaviour of the few pupils who challenge the authority of adults.
- Provide sufficient opportunities for all subject co-ordinators, to effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good, overall. They achieve very well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Achievement is good in Years 3 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good achievements of pupils in English and mathematics.
- Children in reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well in their personal targets.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well in science and physical education.
- Pupils achieve well in their GCSE science but could be further challenged in some other subjects.

Commentary

1 The vast majority of parents that completed a questionnaire agree that their child is making good progress in the school. There is no evidence of variations in achievement between boys and girls and pupils in public care achieve as well as their peers in the school. Quite rightly, the school places a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' English and mathematical skills in order to ensure that they are well equipped for life in the wider world. As a result, they achieve very well in these subjects as they move through the school. Since the last inspection, provision to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills has improved very well. As a result, pupils' achievement in this aspect of English is now very good. Their speaking and listening skills are promoted very well through discussions, drama and during other planned opportunities throughout the curriculum. For example, in design and technology and science, pupils are taught the appropriate specialist vocabulary and learn to use the key words very effectively, in the right context. Pupils have challenging speaking and listening targets, compiled with the support of the speech and language therapist. She works very effectively with the staff and also provides valuable individual therapy sessions for children and pupils. Reading skills are promoted very well during literacy lessons and also through daily reading sessions. More able pupils read a good range of age-appropriate literature with very good accuracy and understanding. Many very effective strategies are used to help pupils to improve their writing and, as they move through the school, they learn how to write in a variety of styles and for different purposes. No pupils are in the early stages of English language acquisition and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their peers in the school. Pupils make very good gains as they work towards their numeracy targets and achieve very well. The school uses good assessment systems to provide the appropriate data to set challenging targets and, as a result, pupils achieve very well in mathematics. They achieve well above the level of similar schools, nationally, in their national tests in mathematics at the end of Years 6 and 9.

2 Very effective assessment systems are used to set very challenging targets for children in reception and in Years 1 and 2. As a result, although due to their special educational needs, standards are well below those expected at the end of reception. Children achieve very well in working towards the goals that they are expected to reach in their areas of learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop very good confidence in their speaking and listening skills. Pupils with additional special educational needs and communication difficulties achieve

very well, as a result of very good teamwork and support. In mathematics, they show a lot of interest and confidence when answering questions. They are making very good gains in their ability to work independently on the computer. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to achieve very well in their acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. However, they also achieve very well in science and physical education as they respond to the very high expectations of the staff. In science, they gain a very good understanding of the effect of the earth's orbit and rotation on the four seasons. In physical education, pupils are achieving very well in the development of their water skills.

3 The school has made good progress in the introduction of a wide range of external accreditation for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The percentage of pupils, that pass at least one GCSE, is far higher than in similar schools, nationally. Some ex-pupils visited during the inspection and made positive comments about their achievement in the school. Pupils achieve particularly well and, at times, very well in their science as they progress through the school and gain good passes at GCSE Foundation Level. These results demonstrate the potential of the more able pupils. The school does set individual targets and has high ambition for every pupil but they also recognise the need to focus more clearly on pupils' achievement in their provision and organisation of the accredited courses. Subjects, such as art and design and design technology, offer particular opportunities for pupils to achieve well in the future.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are very good and they are very interested in the activities provided. Pupils' behaviour is generally good in school, but the incidence of exclusions is high. Attendance at the school is very good and the pupils are very punctual. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development and good provision for pupils' moral development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a very positive ethos.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and themselves.
- Pupils are very well mannered, and they form very good relationships in school and gain a high degree of tolerance and understanding of others.
- The school does not have the strategies in place to support pupils with more challenging behaviour.

Commentary

4 Pupils love their school. They are very keen to attend and they arrive in a very happy frame of mind each day. A very significant factor in achieving such happy demeanours in pupils is the wonderful welcome that awaits them, from members of staff that welcome them as they arrive. The school liaison worker makes a very good impact on promoting very good attendance in the school. Consequently, the school's overall attendance figure is consistently high and currently it is well above similar schools, nationally. Pupils settle very quickly, they follow instructions promptly and they work hard and do their very best in lessons. Their work and effort is recognised and highly valued by staff and so pupils quickly gain in self-esteem and confidence and they are proud of what they achieve.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (91.6 %)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.8%
National data	8.8%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.6%
National data	1.9%

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

5 All members of staff have high expectations of pupils' effort and behaviour. Very good conduct is demonstrated by members of staff and consequently pupils are polite and well-mannered. The pupils form very good relationships with each other and it is particularly noticeable how tolerant they are of one another. For example, if a pupil struggles to articulate him/herself in answering a question in a lesson, other pupils show the same patience and respect as staff. Through many additional activities, including visits and visitors, as well as through religious education lessons, pupils learn about other people's lives and cultures and so pupils gain a very knowledgeable understanding of others.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	153	19	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0

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

6 Although the behaviour of most pupils, in lessons and around the school, is good, a minority of pupils do present challenging behaviour. This is not necessarily always older pupils but varies from year to year, depending on the mix of pupils in different year groups. The school does not tolerate inappropriate or anti-social behaviour. However, it does not have adequate support systems or effective strategies to manage these pupils. The range of sanctions used does not progressively increase in severity to try and modify pupils' behaviour or reflect different levels of misdemeanour. As a result, the sanction of fixed-term exclusion is used too easily and, consequently, the number of exclusions is unacceptably high and still rising.

7 Overall, relationships are generally very good amongst pupils but, during recreation and lunchtime, staff do not always recognise potential problems or intervene quickly enough when the behaviour of a few is intimidating to others. In addition, although incidents of bullying are dealt with thoroughly and closely monitored, records and observations show it is largely pupils and parents who draw attention to it by seeking help rather than the school intervening at an earlier stage.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good, based on effective teaching and learning. Pupils have very good opportunities to be included with mainstream pupils in aspects of their learning and social activities. They are very well cared for and very good links have been developed with the parents, the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Assessment systems are good and are used well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in reception and in Years 1 and 2 is very good.
- The very effective contribution of the teaching assistants.
- The good use of assessment to inform target setting and teacher's planning.
- The inconsistent use of homework for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

8 The quality of teaching and learning for children in reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 is very good. The staff team knows pupils very well. Their planning of activities is very detailed and very well matched to the needs of all children and pupils. In addition, pupils are made very clear of the staff's expectations and, consequently, they make very good gains in their learning. There are very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning, with a constant and very effective focus on making the best of pupils' abilities. The excellent accommodation is used very effectively to provide an exciting range of activities that inspire pupils to achieve very well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 64 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	28 (44%)	25 (39%)	10 (15%)	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.

9 The very good teamwork demonstrated by the staff, sets a very good example for pupils and contributes to the very good ethos in the school. Teaching assistants are used very effectively and make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. They are involved in planning and, as a result, are fully aware of pupils' strengths and areas for development. In particular, the good achievement of pupils with additional special educational needs, is enhanced by the work of the teaching assistants. The higher-level teaching assistants are making a very valuable contribution to pupils' good learning and personal development. A very important aspect of their role is to help to provide consistent management of pupils' behaviour and, as a result, they behave well.

10 Teaching throughout the school is effectively targeted by the use of a good range of assessment procedures. Where appropriate, pupils' learning is planned in small steps and regularly assessed. This ensures that the work is at the right level and challenges them to make good gains in their learning. Targets in literacy, for example, are very well matched to their abilities and consequently they achieve very well. Pupils are involved in target setting and the evaluation of their achievement and this ensures that they are aware of how to improve their work. Where homework is set consistently and also learning is supported by a study club, for example in GCSE science, pupils achieve well. However, particularly in Years 10 and 11, homework is not given a sufficient emphasis and, as a result, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, rather than the good achievement that they are capable of.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum is good and very good for pupils in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. The opportunities provided for the enrichment of the curriculum are good. The school's accommodation and the quality and range of resources are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well-planned curriculum is effectively designed to meet pupils' special educational needs.
- The good enrichment of the curriculum, particularly for the arts, where it is very good.
- The very good opportunities for pupils to be included in the life of the school, the community, local schools and colleges.

- The provision of a good range of external accreditation for pupils in Years 10 and 11 but insufficient attention is given to ensuring that programmes of study consistently challenge more able pupils.

Commentary

11 The curriculum meets all statutory requirements well, including good provision for religious education. Therefore, very good progress has been made in the planning and content of the curriculum, since the last inspection. The curriculum for children and pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2 provides a very wide range of interesting and stimulating activities based on the early learning goals and the National Curriculum. These have been thoughtfully adapted to meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of complex learning difficulties. The excellent accommodation and resources, which include a soft play area, a sensory studio, a dedicated therapy room and an outdoor play area, contribute to their very good achievement. The needs of pupils with additional special educational needs are generally well met but, at times, the school does not adequately meet the challenge posed by pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

12 Throughout the school, a wide range of residential experiences, visits and activities, for all pupils, make the curriculum relevant and stimulating. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoyed a Greek day as part of a topic on Ancient Greece. Pupils enjoyed a memorable afternoon where they ate Greek food, wore costumes from ancient Greece and learned to write their names in Greek characters. Parents express their appreciation of the dedication of the staff that makes such activities possible. However, there are too few opportunities provided for additional sporting activities and the school has plans to rectify this deficiency.

13 Provision for the arts is very good and pupils enjoy an art club, visits to the theatre and art galleries and participation in an excellent school brass band.

Example of outstanding practice

Twenty-six pupils are currently members of the excellent school band and they are exceptionally well supported by a team of dedicated staff. They perform to a wide range of audiences and during the inspection they joined other Blackpool schools at the Opera House to celebrate three years of the Art Xtra initiative

Expectations were high and the sense of occasion electrifying as the brass band performed to a large and appreciative audience. The long established band has an enthusiastic fan club made up of family, friends and new converts and the completion of each part of their performance was marked by energetic applause. The quality of their music is a tremendous credit to the pupils, staff and their tutor. They all thoroughly enjoyed performing and this was captured and displayed by the high-tech cameras in the Opera House. Their high quality performance is made possible by the discipline of regular practice as pupils and staff contributes to an exceptional team ethos. What is particularly remarkable is that playing in the band is open to any of the senior pupils reflecting the very good equality of opportunity in the school. Some band members also play in the area symphony orchestra and have travelled around Britain and abroad. Participation in the band has an exceptional impact on raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence, encourages independence and provides pupils with the opportunity to enjoy a rich musical life after leaving school. The school and pupils are justifiably proud of their exceptional band.

14 There are very good opportunities for pupils to work with their peers in mainstream schools and colleges. For example, pupils in Year 6 link with a local primary school for a weekly physical education lesson. Many pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit from attending secondary schools to have further access to specialist facilities and learn alongside their peers. Pupils take part in a mobility programme to enable them to travel confidently and safely, independently. This intensive programme includes telling the time, using public transport and using a mobile phone. This allows them greater access to work and leisure activities. All undertake work experience and a coherent careers education programme, which increase pupils' confidence and helps them make realistic choices about their future. Pupils in Years 10

and 11 have extensive opportunities for 'taster' courses at college. These effectively promote the pupils, personal development and prepare them well for their transition to college.

15 The school provides a good range of external accreditation that recognises pupils' basic skills in subjects such as English and mathematics. In addition, a few pupils take GCSE examinations in English and mathematics and the school's GCSE results in science demonstrate that the higher ability pupils are capable of good passes. However, these opportunities are not available in all subjects. For example, pupils do not have access to a GCSE course in design and technology, which is a strong subject for many of the pupils. The school is planning to review their management of pupils' external accreditation to ensure that pupils of all abilities are fully challenged.

16 Teachers are well qualified and experienced and pupils in Years 7 to 11 benefit from good quality specialist teaching using specialist facilities. Teaching assistants provide very high quality support as they work as a team with the teachers to promote pupils' very good personal development and good achievement. Accommodation and resources for learning are now very good and some are excellent. In particular, the new accommodation for the younger children and pupils has an outstanding impact on their very good achievement. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection and includes the provision of a science laboratory, leading to pupils' good achievement in their GCSE. The school continues to improve the accommodation as new excellent facilities have been recently completed for information and communication technology (ICT), the provision of a new library and class bases for Year 11. The new accommodation is contributing to the spirit of continual improvement and very positive ethos in the school.

Care, guidance and support

Care for pupils is very good and the support and guidance offered to pupils are good. The staff value pupils' opinions highly and involve them effectively in the work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a very high regard for pupils' health and safety.
- Pupils are effectively supported by a highly skilled and dedicated staff team.
- There is a limited choice of meals at lunchtime.

Commentary

17 Staff and governors treat health and safety as a top priority. The school environment is kept very clean and safe. There are regular and thorough site inspections and swift action is taken to address any concerns. For example, barbed shrubs have been removed from the grounds, finger guards have been fitted appropriately, and teachers ensure safe practices are followed in practical lessons, such as physical education and science. All staff has been trained in child protection procedures and there is a very high level of knowledge amongst staff about pupils' individual medical and emotional needs. Health care plans for individuals are very thorough and readily accessible for reference by staff. Supervision and organisation of pupils, especially on arrival and departure by taxi and minibus, are very good and very safe procedures are strictly adhered to. However, the efficiency of these procedures is reliant on the school retaining the land recently acquired, to facilitate the improved arrival and departure of pupils.

18 The school has a high number of staff. They are highly skilled and knowledgeable and, consequently, the support they provide to pupils, both in lessons and in other activities, is good. They are very hard working and dedicated to the pupils and the school. They give very much more of themselves and their own time, over and above what would be expected. The school council is well established and all members have a say and clearly represent the views of their peers. Pupils listen to the views of others very attentively and are willing to take their turn. They have recently made the decision to vary the colour of pupils' uniform to give the senior pupils a distinct identity. Although pupils are full of praise for their school and their views are valued, a significant number are not happy with the range of meals provided at lunchtimes. A hot mid-day meal is available but they feel that it is often bland and, despite requests by pupils and suggestions by kitchen staff, the choice of main course or desert is very limited.

Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents, other schools and the community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in very high regard.
- Parents are kept very well informed about their child's achievement and personal development.
- The inclusive links provided for pupils are very good.

Commentary

19 The school is very welcoming to parents and visitors. The school liaison worker makes a very valuable contribution in helping to forge very good links with parents. The views of parents are sought, are important to the school and they have an impact on the management of the school. For example, out of school activities, communication, supervision in the playground, and promotion of independent travel for older pupils have all been improved as a result of a survey of parental opinion. They are especially pleased with how the school is led and managed, with the quality of teaching and with what the school does to help their child to settle in when they first join the school.

20 Information for parents about how their child is doing is very good in English, mathematics and their personal development. Information about what is being taught in lessons is provided at the start of each term. The school does involve parents in specific ways, for example, in asking them to send items into school to help with particular projects. Parents respond well and help where they can. For example, many parents recently dressed their children in ancient Greek costumes as part of their history topic work and nearly all parents ensure their children attend school every day and on time.

21 The school is very outward looking and very keen to take advantage of opportunities within the local and wider community to benefit all of its pupils, both academically and personally and especially in raising pupils' self-esteem. The school takes every opportunity to celebrate pupils' achievement in newspaper articles and through participation in local events. Of particular note is the very high profile of the school's accomplished brass band and that of the highly acclaimed Blackpool Area Schools Symphony Orchestra, whose members include several current and past Park School pupils.

22 Very close links have been established with local schools and colleges and these provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn and play alongside their mainstream peers.

Pupils in Year 6 thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to join in a weekly physical education lesson with pupils in a local primary school. The impact of these links means that pupils in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to experience learning in a local secondary school and college. These opportunities, combined with the very good involvement of Connexions, helps to build pupils' confidence and guide their decisions about the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership and governance of the school are very good whilst the management is good. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is very good. They very effectively manage aids and barriers to pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The senior management team inspires other staff and creates very effective teams.
- The governing body challenges and supports senior managers very well.
- Induction and continuing professional development of all staff are very good.
- Subject co-ordinators, other than the senior management team, do not consistently have sufficient opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

Commentary

23 The senior management team is very effective at promoting leadership at all levels in the school. Their meetings are very well organised with open and honest communication between the members that leads to consensus decisions, with a united determination to move forward. High aspirations are a feature of leadership in the school and this very effectively motivates staff to work together to create a very good school ethos. Leaders are very good role models for staff and pupils and each individual is fully valued in this very inclusive environment. School improvement planning is good but the headteacher recognises the need to improve and sharpen the focus, on measuring the effect of the plan on the quality of the provision. The leadership and management of the school is very well supported by a very effective administration team in the school.

24 The governing body shares the very determined approach for continual improvement in the school. They very effectively help to move the school forward and ensure that all statutory requirements are very well met, including the management of the school's race equality policy. Governors are very responsive to training and, as a result, are very well informed. The chair of governors very effectively leads the governing body and this helps to provide both support and challenge to the school. Governors very effectively share their responsibilities, are very clear about their roles and have a high profile in the school. Members of the governing body are well known to the staff and this helps to promote the very good ethos in the school. Financial management in the school is very good and governors place a very high priority on ensuring that best value principles are applied to the management and use of resources. At the time of the inspection, the confirmed data for the latest financial year 2003/04 was not available.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	1,196,469
Total expenditure	1,276,058
Expenditure per pupil	8,450

Balance from previous year	94,375
Balance carried forward to the next	14,786

25 New members of staff are very effectively inducted into the school and quickly make a good contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. The school has a very good approach to staff's continuing professional development and, in particular, the training and career structure for the teaching assistants are very good. The introduction of the higher-level teaching assistants is a very good initiative. They have readily accepted their increased responsibilities and are having a very effective impact on pupils' achievement and personal development. Performance management is effective and the staff team is very well deployed. The senior managers effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. However, there are no systematic arrangements or consistent approaches to enable other subject co-ordinators to carry out this role and, as a result, are not always fully aware of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects. This leads, for example, to the use of some mundane worksheets. In these situations, pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than the good achievement that they demonstrate in their other work.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for Reception age pupils is **very good**.

26 When children start at the school, their skills and attributes are well below those that are typical for their age. Although the majority have general learning difficulties, a significant proportion also has speech or communication difficulties as well. Sufficient evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about children's personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skill and mathematical development. Although none of the children reach the goals that they are expected to by the end of reception, because teaching and learning is very good, they achieve very well. Excellent examples of children's work are attractively recorded in large books. The leadership and management are very good. Consequently there is very good assessment and very effective teamwork that ensures all pupils are fully involved in a very good curriculum and are developing a very good attitude to the routine of learning. A teaching assistant records responses of each pupil in detail as the basis for future planning. The speech and language therapist is very involved in establishing and working towards individual targets. The use of an ICT white board enhances learning and encourages children's independence, as they use it to register their attendance in the mornings. The new classroom, play area, soft play and sensory room are extremely well organised to very effectively encourage learning in all areas of development.

27 There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on the quality of provision for children's creative and physical developments or their knowledge and understanding of the world. These areas of learning were sampled.

28 Teachers provide a good range of exciting and interesting activities for children to develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world**. For example, this year they have selected and planted seeds and vegetables in pots and in their garden. Photographs and records of children's language show how much they enjoyed digging and washing potatoes and making mashed potato to share. When preparing for 'The Toy's Party' children tasted and made chocolate cake and rainbow cookies. They were amazed when the melted jelly became solid and often refer to the large models of the beanstalk and the castle they have made together. The very good use staff makes of physical targets in children's individual plans ensure they progress in their **physical development**. The excellent new all weather facility ensures pupils have every opportunity to practise and reinforce their physical skills, including playing on large wheeled toys outside. In addition, they develop a range of play skills while having fun in the soft play area, growing in confidence when crawling, climbing and walking up and down stairs. The staff works very well as a team to provide activities to promote children's **creative development**. These are matched to their needs and use the resources to reinforce language and encourage participation. They have opportunities to use paint, clay and other simple modelling materials and tools. Singing and music is also an important part of many sessions including giving children regular opportunities to play basic musical instruments such as drums and triangles.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to relate very well to each other.
- Children make very good progress in learning school routines and how to behave.

Commentary

29 One of the major challenges facing the school is developing children's understanding of school routines and how they are expected to behave. In this aspect of their learning, pupils are very successful and from a low start they achieve very well. They have very clear and consistent expectations and place a very high priority on developing children's ability to work and play together. As a result, by the end of reception, most children behave very well, develop very good attitudes to learning and try really hard to do what is asked of them. Developing children's understanding of the importance of personal hygiene is an important part of the established routine and children make very good gains in their ability to look after themselves with a minimum amount of adult help, such as when getting changed for physical education. Snack and play time are planned very effectively and, as a result, children have made very good progress when sharing, taking turns and eating together. Developing the children's self – confidence is also given a high priority and the teacher uses the ICT white board very well to help children develop an awareness of themselves and each other. For example, as part of the registration system, they view their images on the interactive board each morning. As a result, children are very well prepared to move into Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of a wide range of teaching strategies develops children's communication skills very effectively.
- Teaching assistants are very sensitive to the needs of individual children.

Commentary

30 Teacher's very detailed planning ensures lessons are very focussed and build very effectively on what children have learnt in previous lessons, whilst meeting individual targets and learning new tasks. The teaching assistants are sensitive to the correct approach with each child in order to maximise the effect of their support and encourage learning. Adults take every opportunity to encourage the children to communicate with others and to develop their language skills. As a result, by the end of reception, they are able to say that they are present and put a tick on the board at the start of sessions and a few are beginning to write their name. Teachers make very good use of a broad range of exciting resources to make lessons fun, to encourage children to interact with each other and to develop their interest and enjoyment of books and stories. For example, when reading the story of 'Jim and the Beanstalk' by Raymond Briggs, the teacher put on a giant's wig and used a microphone for children to repeat words at different volumes and pitch. The children were delighted and laughed loudly when they heard each other trying to copy the teacher.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults have very high expectations of pupil's achievement.

Commentary

31 The tasks are clear and interactive and, consequently, children's achievement is very good. The staff's very good attention to speaking and listening ensures children know what they have to do. The children are challenged to achieve very well and most can sequence undressing skills for a physical activity and match items of clothing to images on the screen. Practical situations help children to count and understand positions, for example, next to and first, while they are involved in enjoyable physical activity. Most children can recognise numbers to five and use a finger to move them into correct positions on the ICT white board. The concept of portions and number are reinforced well during snack time and applied to every-day-situations. For example, children know when an apple is halved and accurately count five pieces of fruit.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is enthusiastic and informed by very good subject knowledge.
- Pupils achieve very well in their speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have access to appropriate accreditation in this subject.

Commentary

32 Leadership and management are very good and teachers use their very good knowledge of pupils' abilities and their own very secure subject skills to carefully plan lessons that provide challenging work to pupils of all abilities. As a result, pupils achieve very well in all aspects of English, which is a very good improvement since the last inspection. Assessment procedures are thorough and teachers, throughout the school, make effective use of the information to make sure that learning is accurately matched to pupils' targets and different levels of abilities. For example, pupils in Year 5 were learning about Ancient Greece. The more able pupils used non-fiction books for research, other pupils worked in pairs using word cards to build up and then write a sentence, as a caption to a picture. Pupils, with more complex learning difficulties, worked as a group with the teaching assistant to formulate a sentence about the picture and then copy it. The pace of older pupils' learning is maintained very effectively because in Years 7 to 11, pupils benefit by being taught by a specialist English teacher. They study a wide range of age- appropriate literature in a relevant and interesting way, keeping their motivation and interest high. The key strengths of the teaching in this part of the school were exemplified clearly in a lesson seen in Year 9, in which pupils were learning to distinguish between poetry and prose using 'The Pebble', a poem about the Second World War. Pupils read out aloud confidently, some pupils being discretely helped by the teacher and teaching assistant. The teacher used questioning very well to help pupils to articulate what makes a poem. Throughout the lesson the pace was brisk, there was a very good variety of different tasks and the pupils achieved very well. In addition, visitors to school enrich the curriculum well. For example, a visit by a theatre group to present 'Macbeth' helped older pupils to understand and enjoy the play.

33 Pupils have challenging speaking and listening targets as part of their individual programmes, written in conjunction with the speech and language therapist. She works very effectively with the teachers in the classrooms as well as providing individual therapy sessions. For example, Year 6 pupils use drama to help them to express ideas and feelings using appropriate vocabulary, to interact in a group situation, to listen to others and to take turns. The teacher and speech and language therapist each work with a group to discuss bullying and present a short 'play'. The pupils' skills have been assessed and they all have speaking and listening targets that are worked on throughout the lesson. Speaking and listening skills are also very well developed in assemblies and other lessons. For example, Year 9 pupils confidently answer questions about the rainforest. They learn to use appropriate vocabulary and are expected to answer in full sentences. The very good relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils are always willing to try and they develop self-confidence when speaking.

34 Basic reading skills are very well taught in literacy lessons and in addition, pupils follow a carefully structured programme, gradually developing fluency in reading. As a result, pupils learn to recognise letter sounds, how to blend these together to make words, and they learn to read key words. Once they have mastered their basic understanding of letter names and sounds, pupils either follow a reading scheme, or as they progress, have the choice of a wide range of age- appropriate literature. Daily reading sessions for all year groups are particularly effective, allowing pupils a regular, sustained reading session. Adults listen to pupils read on a regular basis and discuss with them the book that they are reading, whilst other pupils read either individually or in pairs. They say they enjoy reading and the books are good. As they move through the school, pupils learn to read a variety of texts including news reports and play scripts and, by the time they reach Year 11, they are able to tackle poems such as 'The Pied Piper' and simplified versions of Shakespeare.

35 Teachers use a wide range of strategies to help pupils achieve very well in their writing. Planning sheets are used, adapted for different abilities and pupils write for different purposes, for example they write letters, instructions, a children's book and a news bulletin. They word process some of their work. Marking is good and helps pupils know what they have done well and how they can improve. As a result, by Year 6, more able pupils are able to use a story planner to plan a story, write an extended piece of work using capital letters, full stops and some speech marks and make good attempts to spell unfamiliar words. Pupils, with more complex learning difficulties, are able to write a few words unaided. By the time pupils reach Year 11 they are able to write letters, for example, they write to Lady Macbeth, as her husband, explaining what is happening.

In Years 10 and 11 all pupils take an Entry-level accreditation and a few more able pupils study GCSE English at a local secondary school. Although there is some disaffection by a few of the older pupils, this is managed effectively by the teacher and the learning support assistants by humour and an insistence on appropriate behaviour. Pupils achieve well because of the energy and enthusiasm of the teaching. Homework is not set consistently for older pupils and there is no 'study club' to help them with their learning and to challenge more pupils to follow a GCSE course.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

36 Pupils' literacy skills are very well developed through the school and across all areas of the curriculum. The consistent use of key words helps to promote pupils' achievement, for example in science, where pupils accurately name and describe the use of a range of equipment. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very effectively promoted in all subjects and pupils are very confident when talking to others in a wide range of contexts. For example, they are keen to describe their involvement in activities such as the school band, art Xtra club or their contribution in a digital video initiative.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high expectations of the staff team for pupils' achievement.
- There is a comprehensive and relevant programme of work that meets the pupils' range of abilities well.

Commentary

37 French is taught by a specialist teacher who is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and is, therefore, able to provide a wide range of interesting and motivating activities. In lessons, there is a good focus on the accurate use of the French vocabulary and correct pronunciation and, as a result, pupils achieve well. They learn to understand and respond to questions about what they like or dislike. When they reach Year 10, they are able to listen to and understand a meeting time and place and read and understand a simple message. There is appropriate insistence on pupils using a full sentence. However, at this age, a few are becoming disaffected and the teacher and teaching assistant have to work hard to involve them productively in the lessons. They work very well as a team, modelling the correct responses and pronunciation. The brisk pace and wide range of strategies used to provide opportunities for pupils to practice what they have learnt, all contribute to the good progress they make. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to practice their French speaking.

38 Pupils start learning French in Year 6 and follow a programme of work that has been effectively developed to meet the range of pupils' abilities. This is constantly reviewed and modified as pupils' needs change or to incorporate new ideas. It provides continuity and progression as pupils get older and they build up their skills well, leading to an entry-level accreditation for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The emphasis is, appropriately, on the development of speaking and listening skills but pupils also learn to read and write in French. The curriculum is varied to keep pupils' interest high and includes role-play, games and singing. It is enriched by a residential visit to Paris, where pupils are expected to speak French to buy drinks and snacks. The attractive displays support the teaching well and ICT is well used to provide opportunities for pupils to practice.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good use of assessment informs very good planning.
- Pupils enjoy mathematical activities.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- The external accreditation available in school does not fully challenge the more able pupils.
- ICT is used very effectively in lessons.

Commentary

39 The quality of teaching and learning is very good and, as a result, pupils achieve very well. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Very good procedures for assessing the progress of pupils and for record keeping provide information on pupils' progress and inform planning for future lessons very well. The school is using the most recent version of a scheme to assess and record pupils' progress in small steps and this works very well. Teachers plan their lessons very well and incorporate National Numeracy Strategies effectively into lessons. They know their pupils very well, including pupils' targets for numeracy set in their individual education plans. Together these contribute to ensuring that tasks in lessons match the needs and capabilities of pupils well. As a result, all pupils, including those with additional special needs, are very effectively challenged as learners.

40 Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning make an important contribution to their very good achievement. They behave very well, are interested in their work and are pleased when they have done well. They take care and pride in presenting their work and are pleased to show their work to visitors. Teachers take care to build on pupils' previous learning and to relate mathematics to everyday uses such as in a Year 7 food technology lesson where they measured, timed and weighed and in Year 9, they used metric weights. The end of lessons is used well to check on progress and celebrate achievement. Teaching assistants are deployed very well and make a consistent and very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They model very good behaviour, record progress and make timely interventions to keep pupils on task.

41 Most of the pupils follow an Entry Level course in school, leading to external accreditation at the end of Year 11. Four Year 10 pupils are studying a GCSE course in a local mainstream school and this is a very good initiative. However, the school does not fully use its own very good expertise to provide a GCSE course, to provide greater challenge to some of the more able pupils that are currently studying for the entry-level qualification. The subject is very well led and managed by two enthusiastic co-ordinators. This is a relatively new arrangement where the curriculum is split between the primary and secondary leaders. This works very well. The range and quality of resources are good. The most recent innovation is the effective use of ICT white boards in almost all teaching rooms. Computers and calculators are being increasingly used to promote very good learning. Teaching and learning across the school are effectively monitored and evaluated by the co-ordinator, who is a member of the senior management team, and helpful feedback is given to teachers. The fulfilment of this management role makes a major contribution to the very good quality of teaching and learning in the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

42 Numeracy skills are consolidated well in other areas of the curriculum, for example, in science, pupils cost garden planters. In art and design and technology, they enhance their mathematics skills and knowledge through the use of shape, pattern and colours. Older pupils use their numeracy skills when shopping, and in their food technology lessons they accurately weigh and measure their ingredients.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in their external accreditation at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided to be involved in practical work.
- The level of challenge provided for pupils in Year 1 to 6 is very good.
- Too great a reliance on worksheets in some lessons.

Commentary

43 The pupils are effectively challenged and attain good standards, relative to their ability, in their external accreditation at the end of Year 11. Most of the pupils follow a GCSE course, the majority of which is taught in the school, using their good accommodation and resources. Pupils do have access to the occasional use of high school facilities that provides valuable access to some specialist equipment, such as a fume cupboard. There is a good use of assessment, carefully linked to pupils' modular course. This provides the basis for setting

challenging targets and informs the teacher's good planning. Members of staff have high expectations and work very well as a team helping to provide pupils with the necessary focus and confidence to achieve well. It is also clear that the opportunities provided for pupils to complete homework and study after school in science, effectively help to boost pupils' achievement.

44 Teaching is informed by good specialist knowledge, uses a good range of resources in appropriate accommodation and consequently pupils achieve well. Pupils are effectively taught to behave responsibly and safely as they take part in practical investigations. They are motivated by the "hands on" opportunities provided and talk enthusiastically about their experiments. Pupils in Year 10 actively learn how to observe, measure and record features of plants in their natural habitat. They have been effectively taught to name and explain the functions of the main parts of a flower. These pupils also enjoyed support from a visiting horticulturist as they gained a good understanding of the conditions required for plant growth. Their learning was made relevant as it was linked to every day life. There was very good development of pupils' numeracy skills as they worked out the cost of purchasing the plants required to produce a patio pot. Pupils in Year 7 were absorbed in investigating the neutralisation of acids and alkalis. They understood the use of litmus as an indicator and used the appropriate scientific terms with confidence.

45 Planning for pupils in Year 2 is exceptionally detailed and challenges each pupil to achieve very well. Their targets are clearly displayed and excellent teamwork develops an exceptionally stimulating learning environment. Very high quality and informative displays help pupils' understanding of the features of the four seasons. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is very good and, as a result, they achieve very well. Very high expectations and skilled use of an ICT white board challenges Year 3 pupils, as they make very good gains in their understanding of the effect of the earth's orbit and rotation on the seasons of the year. The consistent use of key words is a very good aspect of the teaching and pupils achieve very well as they use words such as orbit, in the right context. Pupils in Year 6 have been very effectively taught to make accurate predictions; for example, they accurately predicted which materials are attracted to a magnet. Again, they had a very high level of success in predicting whether an item sank or floated and stated whether what happened was as expected.

46 Well-planned and attractive worksheets provide an effective prompt for an investigation of plants in their natural environment. Pupils use these sheets for reference and, in particular, they include pictures of plants to aid the accurate identification of specific plants. The sheets also provide a good framework for the recording of pupils' observations and are used constructively in the feedback session in the classroom. However, this is not consistent in all classes and topics. The subject co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to thoroughly monitor the quality of teaching across the school and, as a result, some of the worksheets used by teachers are mundane and lack appropriate challenge for individual pupils. In addition, pupils often take little pride in the completion of these sheets and consequently, in these lessons, their achievement is satisfactory rather than the good achievement that they are capable of.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good accommodation and resources.
- Statutory requirements are now met but the available accreditation does not challenge the more able pupils.
- Very good training opportunities for all of the staff.
- The good use of ICT in other subjects.

Commentary

47 ICT resources and accommodation have improved dramatically since the last inspection and are now very good. All classes are equipped with at least one multimedia PC, a range of access devices, appropriate software and a printer. All classes are linked to the Internet and the LEA intranet programmes. Almost all classes have interactive ICT white boards, which are used extremely well. These very good resources capture pupils' imagination and motivate them to achieve well. A new, very high quality ICT suite has recently been opened and is being used successfully. However, some attention needs to be given to the seating arrangements within the ICT suite to ensure that all pupils can see the whiteboard when required.

48 The subject has developed very well since the last inspection and National Curriculum requirements are now fully met, however, the school are aware of the need to introduce more challenging external accreditation in this subject. The co-ordinators, recently split between primary and secondary, have audited the subject and implemented an effective action plan to ensure ICT is embedded in all subjects across the curriculum. Additional training has been provided for all teachers and teaching assistants and consequently, the quality of teaching and learning across the school is consistently good. For example, pupils in Year 7 change the colour of graphs, add text, save and print. Pupils in Year 9 have made further progress and are able to confidently use data to compile a wide range of charts and graphs. Teaching is well planned to meet the needs of all the pupils, some of whom have additional special educational needs and, as a result, pupils achieve well. This is very good improvement since the last inspection. Relationships are very good and, as a result, pupils show very good attitudes, work hard, behave well and enjoy their work.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

49 Pupils use ICT well to enhance their achievement in other subjects. 'PowerPoint' presentations are used effectively for pupils to present their work. Interactive white boards are used very effectively to motivate pupils as for example, pupils in Year 3 use the board to practice their counting. A recent digital video project fully involved pupils in a stimulating activity and the deputy headteacher is determined to improve the available resources and build on this very exciting initiative.

HUMANITIES

50 Geography and history are taught throughout the year on a rolling programme and this ensures that all aspects of the subjects are covered.

51 Only two **geography** lessons were seen during the inspection and it was not possible to make a firm overall judgement on the quality of provision and standards in the subject. Evidence was gathered from discussions with staff and pupils, the analysis of pupils' work and the scrutiny of displays. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils identified places on a map, how they could travel there and what kind of clothing they would need to take. The display on their class board was attractive and stimulating confirming the high quality of work. In a Year 9 lesson, planning

was detailed and because of good relationships, pupils had good attitudes to their work and their behaviour was positive. They took pride in their work and were keen to show their work to visitors.

52 No lessons were seen in **history** during the inspection and it was not possible to make a firm overall judgement on the quality of provision and standards in the subject. Evidence was gathered from discussions with staff and pupils, a review of teachers' planning, the analysis of pupils' work and the scrutiny of displays. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have taken part in a time line of historical facts to study the Romans, Aztecs and the Victorians. A visiting Greek teacher provided pupils with an interesting and informative history of the marathon. He involved staff and pupils in Years 3 to 6 in interacting and supporting each other when writing their names using Greek letters. The pupils also followed the history of various sports and tried a few steps of a Greek dance. Older pupils have made cakes without using eggs as part of their study of rationing during World War Two. There is an appropriate emphasis on encouraging pupils' use of their literacy and ICT skills. For example, pupils have written and word-processed answers to questions, about aspects of the French Revolution.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An appropriate curriculum is now in place.
- The good range of strategies used to motivate pupils.

Commentary

53 There has been good progress since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has worked closely with support from the Local Education Authority to provide an appropriate small-step scheme to cover all the main elements of Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity. All pupils take part in religious education lessons, assemblies with a religious theme and religious celebrations and festivals throughout the year. Evidence of work shows pupils' achievement is good.

54 Teachers make effective use of the resources and facilities in school and in the local area to plan a good range of experiences in lessons to stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm. For example, younger pupils enjoy a visit to their local church where they meet Deacon Ann, listen to the organ and experience the atmosphere of the church. Excellent photographic records show children performing for their parents in 'whoops a daisy angel' during the Christmas celebrations. During the inspection, the sensory room was used effectively to create a special feeling to act out the Jewish Shabbat meal. The well thought out interactive session encouraged pupils to understand the meaning of the plaited Challah bread. In addition, pupils' learning is supported well with an attractive range of large pictures and religious artefacts. For example, an exciting lesson with Year 7 pupils, gave them the opportunity to play a role as a scribe or a reader, as they examined a range of Jewish artefacts. They were supported well by teaching assistants to carefully observe and describe each item. There are also good examples of how teaching links activities in religious education, with topics in other subjects to promote pupils' understanding and to give them opportunities to use their literacy skills. For example, pupils' writing illustrated how well teaching in Year 9 linked their study of the Second World War with the story of Anne Frank. Year 10 pupils receive certificates for their work where they give reasons as to why certain

religious figures are remembered today. Most pupils have the opportunity to visit a Hindu temple and local churches.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of interesting topics is provided for the pupils.
- The good development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- External accreditation does not sufficiently challenge the pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

55 Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have good opportunities to work with simple construction kits, tools, equipment, materials and components to make products in a good range of materials. As a result, pupils' achieve well as they move through the school and develop secure skills in many aspect of the subject. Teachers place a good emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of the importance of the process of design as well as their practical skills. For example, pupils in Year 4 achieve well when designing patterns using fabrics. They make good gains in their learning when using stippling, stencilling and printing skills to produce their patterns. In Year 7, pupils generate carefully considered designs as the start of the process of making slippers. ICT is used well to support the design process. They investigate various materials that could be used, and using clear criteria, found the best material for the product. Pupils in Year 7 to 9 achieve well as they use clay to make tiles, model fish, and pots. In food technology, Year 7 pupils prepare apple crumble using improving skills to carry out a good range of tasks including peeling, slicing and baking. They follow the recipe and show that they have been effectively taught to follow hygiene procedures. The co-ordinator has ensured all health and safety matters identified in the last inspection, have been fully resolved making the work place safe. Pupils are also careful and follow health and safety requirements when using knives. Many lessons also effectively contribute to promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in food technology, pupils read and follow instructions and in design and technology, pupils use their mathematical skills when measuring, and producing a range of shapes using clay.

56 The assessment and recording of pupils' achievements are good. By the end of Year 10, most pupils achieve the AQA Certificate of Achievement in both design and technology and food technology. This is good practice, however, the Year 11 pupils attend a local college for one day per week but do not have the opportunity to extend their qualifications. The school has recognised this and there are plans to ensure that pupils achieve further qualification, as many of them are capable of passes at GCSE.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

57 Only one **art and design** lesson was seen during the inspection and it was not possible to make a firm overall judgement on the quality of provision and standards in the subject. Evidence was gathered from discussions with staff and pupils, the analysis of pupils' work and the scrutiny of displays. Pupils are very proud of their work and the art displays are of a very high standard and cared for. Pupils are provided with examples of work of other artists, as prompts for their own work. They have visited the Lowry Gallery and produced some thoughtful paintings, clearly based on his distinctive style. The art Xtra after school club, which

is financed by New Opportunities Funding, is a major success. Attendance at this extra-curricular club is very good and twelve very well motivated young artists are keen to attend. They have completed an exciting and stimulating range of projects over the last three years. The relationships and ethos amongst the group are exceptional and reflect the expertise and commitment of, in particular, the higher-level teaching assistant running the club. During the week of the inspection, three pupils received certificates for their involvement in a photographic competition and they were extremely proud of their achievement. Also, pupils' work was on display at the Blackpool Opera House as part of the celebration of the impact of Art Xtra over the last three years. The quality and range of the work is a credit to the pupils and staff and, although the funding is coming to an end, the school is determined to continue with their art club.

58 Only two lessons were observed in **music** during the inspection and it was not possible to make a firm overall judgement on the quality of provision and standards in the subject. Pupils follow a detailed programme of work, based on the National Curriculum. They are taught in a specialist music room and have access to a very good range of high quality resources. They are taught by a specialist music teacher who has the expertise to develop pupils' ability to sing, play instruments and appreciate music. Music is not taught to all pupils in Years 10 and 11, however, many of these pupils are members of the school band. Presently 26 pupils play in the school band and their achievement is excellent, often reaching at least nationally expected standards. They receive tuition every week, practice sessions at least twice a week and perform regularly at concerts throughout the North West of England. All are very keen and motivated and justifiably proud of their achievement. The band is fully inclusive and open to any pupils who want to join. It provides opportunities for pupils to play with their mainstream peers, take external examinations and join the area schools' orchestra. Pupils who join the band become members of a thriving team that makes an excellent contribution to promoting pupils' increased confidence, self-esteem, loyalty and friendship.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good opportunities provided for pupils to develop their confidence in the water.
- Subject knowledge and the demonstration of skills by the staff are good.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are very effectively challenged and achieve very well.
- Pupils are provided with a limited range of sports-related extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

59 The pupils' swimming lesson is exceptionally well organised and consequently pupils and staff are very aware of the routines. This activity, for pupils in Years 5 to 7, is very well staffed and the teamwork involving the swimming instructors and the school staff is excellent. Pupils work very hard and are taught very well to make very good gains in their water skills. Many of the pupils in the beginners' pool have progressed from a lack of confidence in the water, to the early stages of swimming. Pupils in the intermediate group are very well challenged to make very good gains in their water safety skills. Pupils work exceptionally well together and they are extremely enthusiastic, yet patiently wait their turn. The more advanced swimmers are provided with very good specialist instruction, as they make very good gains in their use of different swimming strokes. Pupils' progress is carefully assessed and celebrated, leading to the presentation of an appropriate range of swimming awards.

60 The physical education co-ordinator is newly qualified and has been recently appointed. His induction has been very thorough and he has quickly become an established member of the staff team. Good subject expertise leads to pupils being effectively warmed up and many Year 9 pupils understand the benefits of physical activity to healthy living. In addition, his explanations and demonstrations of techniques and skills are clear and explicit which ensures pupils develop a clear understanding of what is expected of them. For example, good demonstration of the appropriate grip, body position and correct throwing technique, led to Year 9 pupils making good gains in the precision, fluency and accuracy of throwing a model javelin. Year 10 pupils are easily distracted and, as a consequence, their achievement in the correct technique of throwing a javelin is only satisfactory.

61 Teamwork is very good and this ensures that very clear instructions are consistently applied and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. The staff is enthusiastic and all of the available time is used fully to encourage the pupils in Years 3 to 6 to achieve very well. Pupils can describe the effect that exercise has on their bodies and enjoy making very good gains in their ability to hop, jump and skip. Individual and group achievement is celebrated and this encourages pupils to try very hard. They work very well in small groups and improve their accuracy and catching ability, when passing a ball to each other. Pupils are very effectively challenged to explore different ways of throwing a ball and they show very good imagination in developing their throwing techniques.

62 All of the pupils are fully included in the activities and the emphasis on teamwork and co-operation has a very positive impact on their personal development. The school's indoor facilities for physical education are unsatisfactory, particularly when the hall is used for teaching a large group of the older pupils. The school uses local facilities to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The school is having an all weather sports facility built in the near future and this will be a valuable resource for the school and local community. The staff recognises the need to extend the range of sports-related extra-curricular activities, as currently these are only satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good use of personal targets in Years 1 to 6.
- Personal, social and health education is well promoted in the life of the school.
- The good opportunities provided for Year 10 and 11 pupils to develop personal skills.
- Some of the teaching for pupils in Year 10 lacks a clear focus.

Commentary

63 Pupils learn to be considerate and help each other, to take turns and make choices and to work independently and collaboratively within a caring and supportive environment. Pupils have personal, social and health education targets as part of their individual programmes. These are used well when teachers plan lessons, and progress against them is regularly assessed. Pupils in Year 6 achieve very well as they consider bullying and how it affects people. They talk freely about their own experiences and are able to express feelings and emotions through role-play, skilfully guided by the teacher. They know that bullies are

'jealous' and 'nasty' and that to take revenge makes you a bully too. They know they should tell a friend or a teacher if they are bullied.

64 Pupils' personal and social development is fostered throughout the day as well as in dedicated lessons. Pupils in years 7 to 11 follow a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme that includes personal finance, applying for a job, interview skills, sex and drugs awareness education. For example, pupils in Year 8 discuss what they want to do as a career, why they have chosen this and consider the important attributes needed for different jobs. The very good relationships between adults and pupils means that pupils feel valued, work hard, behave well and gain in confidence. This is especially important when dealing with sensitive issues such as sex education.

65 Pupils in years 10 and 11 complete an Entry Level accreditation in personal, social and health education and take part in a well-planned programme of work experience that involves a wide range of placements. In conjunction with the connexions service, they follow a cohesive careers education course. Many pupils attend local secondary schools and college for part of their time. These foster personal development through being in a more adult environment and helps pupils to make realistic choices about their future. They take part in an intensive mobility programme to enable them to travel independently. This increases pupil confidence and safety in using public transport, and allows greater opportunities for work and leisure activities. Older pupils act as mentors within school, helping younger pupils in the playground and with their work. Where teaching attempts to cover too many aspects of "growing up" the achievement of Year 10 pupils is satisfactory rather than the good achievement that they show in their previous work.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective encouragement provided for pupils to live as part of a community.

Commentary

66 In citizenship lessons, pupils learn about how employers choose their workers and the importance of presenting themselves well in interviews. They also learn about the basis of what democracy is and their role as members of a community. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on the workings of parliament, pupils achieved well. By way of an example, they worked with teaching assistants in groups, to prepare their own debate about whether the wearing of school uniform should be compulsory. Pupils suggested some good ideas such as 'it looks smart'. They were totally involved in the lesson and read out their points confidently. Very good questioning makes pupils think about issues, such as why it is Important for everyone to be able to express their opinion. The well-established schools council consists of an elected representative from each class. They discuss issues that are pertinent to the life of the school and have contributed to changes in some of the routines. Additional activities such as residential visits, the school band and the youth club, help pupils to learn how to work and play together in a community and part of a team, encouraging independence, confidence and self-esteem. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have recently made a positive contribution to the school environment, by helping to construct an outdoor sensory garden.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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