

INSPECTION REPORT

CLAREMONT COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blackpool

LEA area: Blackpool

Unique reference number: 119240

Headteacher: Mrs P Wills

Lead inspector: Don Gwinnett

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st October 2004

Inspection number: 266628

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	597
School address:	Westminster Road Blackpool Lancashire
Postcode:	FY1 2QE
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Colin Garner

Date of previous inspection: 7.12.1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Claremont is a larger than average school serving the Claremont area of Blackpool. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are well below average. Children's attainments on entry to the nursery are well below average but cover the full range of attainment. Whilst most pupils are 'white-British', very few speak English as an additional language, and none are at the early stages of language acquisition. At the time of the inspection there were 597 pupils on roll. There were 188 pupils with special educational needs, ranging from moderate learning difficulties to autism. The proportion with special educational needs is well above average, and the proportion with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is above average. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school other than at the usual times is well above average and increasing (50 new pupils that were not expected joined the school in the first five weeks of term). This contributes significantly to the well below average standards in Year 2 and Year 6. The school is an Early Excellence Centre for its work with pupils in the nursery and reception. The school has received the Healthy Schools Award and the Charter Mark. It belongs to an Education Action Zone.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16548	Don Gwinnett	Lead inspector	Art and design Music English as an additional language
9883	Brian Silvester	Lay inspector	
28686	Elizabeth Walker	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Design and technology Religious education
25623	Ted Cox	Team Inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education
33694	David Grewer	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's **effectiveness** is **good**, and it gives good value for money. Children enter the nursery with standards that are well below average, but cover the full range of attainment. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 standards are below average overall, although the standards of those who have been in school since reception are above average. The quality of teaching is good, most pupils achieve well and those with special educational needs achieve very well. The school is well led and is particularly caring in its work with vulnerable pupils.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The achievement of all pupils is good, and for those who have been in school since reception or who have special educational needs it is very good.
- The school's commitment to the inclusion of all pupils and its links with the community are excellent.
- The work of the early excellence centre is excellent
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, but inconsistent marking by teachers results in some pupils being uncertain about how to improve.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not promoted sufficiently across all the subjects.
- The work of senior and middle management is not sufficiently well thought through, and so some inconsistent teaching and underperformance is not robustly challenged.
- Parents are very happy with the work of the school and support it well.
- Attendance is well below average.

The school's improvement since the last inspection is good. The planning and management of the curriculum have improved because pupils' progress is more carefully monitored to ensure all do their best. More opportunities are provided for imaginative writing, although some teachers do not ensure that work is well presented or accurate. There are better arrangements for monitoring teaching although middle managers are not sufficiently involved in this process. Despite sound arrangements for tackling attendance, this remains well below average.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	E	E	C
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	E	E	E	C

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

This table compares results with schools that have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. It replaces the normal table that compares pupils' test results in Year 6 with their results in Year 2, because fewer than 80% of the Year 6 pupils who were tested in 2004 were in the school in Year 2

Achievement is **good** overall. Results in the 2004 national tests for Year 2 pupils were in the bottom five per cent nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because many pupils come with a range of severe social and emotional problems, have very low standards of speaking and listening on entry and join the school after the normal entry age. Pupils show cumulative improvements the longer they are in the school. During the inspection, standards in Year 2 were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics but achievement is good. In Year 6, standards are below average overall, but achievement is again good. Achievement is very good for pupils who have been in school since reception or who have special educational needs. Standards in reception are well below average in relation to the goals children are expected to reach in all areas, although their achievement is very good from their low starting base.

Pupils' personal qualities are **good** overall. Their attitudes and behaviour are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attendance is poor.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall and are very good in the nursery, where there is excellent support from outside support agencies. Clear strengths across all years include teachers' very good management of pupils and very good use of teaching assistants, who provide focused individual support for identified pupils. Weaknesses include inconsistent marking, with some pupils not being given sufficient direction about how to improve, and a lack of consistency in teaching literacy and numeracy skills across subjects. The curriculum is good and extra-curricular provision is very good. The accommodation has an adverse impact on learning, but the school is doing what it can to minimise the impact. There are outstanding arrangements to support vulnerable pupils who suffer various forms of personal and social disadvantage. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and good provision for those who are gifted or talented. Links with parents are good and there are excellent links with the community. Links with other schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher provides good leadership, has a very clear vision and is committed to continual improvement. Other key staff provide satisfactory leadership, although the work of senior and middle managers is not sufficiently well thought through and this means that some underachievement is not identified decisively or addressed. The leadership of the nursery and reception is very good and this has a positive impact on pupils' start to the school. Management is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is increasingly well tracked, although middle managers do not always make the best use of available data. The budget is very carefully managed so that there are good resources for teaching and learning, and for new developments. The work of the governing body is very good. Governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and the weaknesses of the school, provide very good support with strategic planning and comply fully with statutory requirements. The leadership and management of the early excellence centre are very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school in most areas. They say that their children like school, they feel comfortable about approaching the school and think that the school is well led and managed. They consider that the school gives appropriate homework and there are

good arrangements for helping pupils to settle in. Some expressed concern about the behaviour of some pupils, although this was not blamed on teachers or the arrangements for managing behaviour. The inspection team agrees with these positive views and feel that the school has very good arrangements to modify poor behaviour. Pupils like most things about the school, but a few think that some pupils could behave better. The inspection team found pupils' behaviour is good but appreciate that a minority of pupils are very challenging.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the planned teaching of literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects in order to improve pupils' achievement in these areas.
- Ensure that people with management responsibilities are clearer about their roles and are more accountable for standards and teaching quality.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teachers' marking so that all pupils are clear about where they can improve.
- Intensify efforts to improve pupils' attendance in order to raise their achievement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good for both boys and girls in the foundation stage and is good by Year 2 and Year 6. Although standards are well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science by Year 6, achievement is good from pupils' well below average starting point.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall as a result of good teaching and a curriculum that meets their needs well.
- Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have been in the school since reception achieve very well.
- The work of the early excellence centre is excellent and provides pupils with a solid start to their school life.
- Achievement in different classes is too variable because systems for identifying and rectifying weaknesses are not applied consistently well.

Commentary

1. Most children start school with well below average skills. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes provide very well planned activities so that children relate well to each other and to adults. This is important because many children are not ready to learn because they are emotionally immature and have difficulty sustaining positive relationships. As a result, children are only introduced to skills across the six areas of learning for their age when they are ready to cope with formal learning. This is why many children do not reach the early learning goals in the six specified areas by the end of reception. Further work is needed in Years 1 and 2 and in later years to consolidate and nurture pupils' confidence and capability. Intensive therapy and counselling are provided by a team of trained staff for the many pupils who require psychological and personal support. The school is justifiably proud of the work in the Early Excellence Centre, where children benefit from very high levels of care and support. Parents of this age group are very happy with the progress they make and inspectors support their positive views.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	11.7 (11.4)	16.0 (15.7)
writing	8.6 (9.4)	14.8 (14.6)
mathematics	12.9 (13.2)	16.4 (16.3)

There were 78 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Although children make good early progress, test results in Year 2 were in the bottom five percent nationally in reading, writing and mathematics in 2003 and 2004 and have been

very low for several years. This is because of the pupils' well below average starting points, the significantly higher than normal proportion with special educational needs (double the national average) and the very high number who join the school late with very low skills. In the first five weeks of the autumn term alone, 50 new pupils joined the school who had not been expected before the start of term. The school has concentrated its efforts on Years 1 and 2 to help pupils make up lost ground and to provide a more secure springboard for future progress. Focused development planning and very good financial planning have placed additional emphasis and resources in Years 1 and 2, with the headteacher taking a lead in managing provision. An audit resulting in staff changes and an intensification of efforts is bearing fruit. Parents are happy with the efforts of the school and inspectors agree that the considerable focus on this age group is fully appropriate and is having a positive impact. During the inspection almost all teaching in Years 1 and 2 was good or very good. The school is well aware of the low standards and has taken very good corrective action, although results stay persistently low.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.6 (25.3)	27.0 (26.8)
mathematics	25.1 (24.8)	27.2 (26.8)
science	27.7 (27.3)	28.9 (28.6)

There were 85 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Year 6 results in English, mathematics and science in 2004 were well below average compared to all schools but were average compared to similar schools. The results of pupils who had been in the school since reception were well above average compared to similar schools and above average for all schools and this reflects the consistently good teaching throughout the school. This shows the adverse impact of the very high numbers who come to the school late, having attended a number of previous schools and often showing severely disruptive tendencies. The school has attracted national attention for its excellent work with these kinds of pupils. In English and mathematics, double the proportion of pupils attained a level 5 in 2004 compared to 2003, and in science this proportion was one third higher. This shows that the school is successful in its efforts to support higher attaining pupils. The standards seen during the inspection were above those of the test results, even though the current Year 6 contains a higher proportion of both pupils with special educational needs and of those who arrived late.

4. Pupils' achievements accelerate the longer they are in the school. Value added analysis shows that little substantial value is added in the work of pupils up to Year 2, but the burgeoning confidence of pupils is much more apparent as they grow older. This consolidation only begins to emerge in tangible results when pupils have spent several more years in school. However, although the school provides excellent support for emotionally damaged pupils, the progress of many pupils is too dependent on the skills of individual teachers and those with management responsibilities who do not always successfully apply the systems set up to monitor progress and identify weaknesses. Some managers are not 'crisp' enough in their identification of problems and so uneven patterns of achievement have not been entirely eliminated. The school is aware that some 'tightening up' is required in order to identify and rectify these inconsistencies and anomalies. It also recognises that more should be done to teach basic literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects in order to improve standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The level of attendance is poor. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour (including the incidence of exclusions) are good. The pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' moral and social development is very good and this is reflected in their behaviour.
- Arrangements to promote self-esteem, caring and good behaviour are very good and contribute significantly to pupils' personal development.
- The pupils' spiritual and cultural development is enhanced by the school's excellent community links.
- The level of attendance is well below the national average.
- Up to five per cent of pupils arrive late each day.
- A minority of pupils have challenging behaviour traits.

Commentary

5. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are generally good. They get on well with the task given, persevere and concentrate. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and well motivated. The school has a range of very enterprising ways in which it attempts to improve pupils' self-esteem and willingness to work. Amongst the most influential of these are the detailed Foundation Stage profiles that provide the base for future work, the homework club, the Early Excellence Centre activities, anger management and self-esteem routines and the responsibilities exercised in the school council and elsewhere. Arrangements to support all pupils, particularly those who are most vulnerable, ensure an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere that promotes good personal development.
6. The provision for pupils with special educational needs contributes significantly to pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour. For instance, members of the inclusion team are developing a citizenship programme for pupils with specific behavioural difficulties. Together with the site supervisor, the pupils are involved at present in the design and building of wooden window boxes and this reinforces positive collaboration and mutual respect. Pupils with specific needs are able to experience aromatherapy, body massage and 'heart math', a computerized application that measures pupils' heart rate and shows visual imagery on the computer as they relax more.
7. The pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. The provision of religious education is good; pupils are taught about Christianity and other faiths and cultures. Pupils visit local churches and a mosque. Regular religious assemblies are held. A moment of awe and wonder was observed when pupils were amazed at what could be achieved on the computer in a lesson. The school prepares pupils satisfactorily for life in a diverse multicultural society. Pupils visit museums, art galleries and theatres. They sing and play instruments in the town's Winter Gardens. The cultural links are greatly enhanced by the school's excellent community links. The school has a good selection of multicultural books.

8. The pupils' moral and social development is very good and this is reflected in the good behaviour and very good relationships observed. Incidents of bullying are rare but, when they do occur, they are dealt with speedily and properly. In the last year there were 14 fixed-period exclusions of boys, all White British. There were no permanent 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	593	14	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0

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

9. The level of attendance is well below the national median and the unauthorised absences are well above the national median. Overall, the level of attendance has not improved since the previous inspection. However, when the level of free school meals is taken into account, attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Up to five per cent of pupils arrive late, which is high. Unpunctual pupils are recorded in the late book and the parents of pupils who persistently arrive late are contacted and told of the school's concerns. The school has a very high level of transient pupils; this adversely affects attendance because these pupils can be absent for several weeks before they can be taken off the school register. The school's actions to promote good attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Registers are marked properly and any concerns about absence or punctuality are identified.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	1.9
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

10. The behaviour educational support team (BEST), the office administrator and the educational social worker (ESW) take up concerns, communicate with parents, do home visits and generally do everything they can to improve attendance levels. The breakfast club is an encouragement to pupils to come to school before the start of the school day. The school has a system of rewards and incentives to encourage full and improved attendance. There is a special scheme in Year 6, where a half-term trophy is presented and the attendance results are displayed. Other year groups have not been targeted in this way. The school is making great efforts to try and improve attendance but they have not yet been successful. The school needs to investigate further best practice ideas to improve attendance.

11. Pupils in reception are not on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of reception in their personal, social and emotional development but their achievement is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Good teaching enables all pupils to make good gains in their learning and achieve well. A good curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are very well cared for, and links with parents are good. Links with other schools are very good and those with the community are excellent.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good in the nursery and reception, good in Years 1-2 and good in Years 3-6. Teaching and learning are good in all subjects where judgements could be made. Assessment of pupils' work is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching of children in the nursery and reception gives them a good start to their education.
- Teachers' very good management of pupils creates a happy learning atmosphere in most classrooms, helping pupils to adjust well and take an interest in their work.
- Teaching assistants and other adults provide very good support and this contributes to pupils' good achievement.

- Teachers do not do enough to promote basic literacy and numeracy skills across the subjects.
- The variable quality of marking means that some pupils do not have clear messages about how to improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	16 (35%)	17 (37%)	10 (22%)	1 (2%)	0	0

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

- The way that nursery and reception children respond to the high expectations of relationships and behaviour helps them to prepare for later learning. The nursery and reception staff are very caring and very well organised. They enable children to adjust well socially and this helps them to behave well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The way that teachers manage pupils is very good. They do this in a non-confrontational way, urging pupils to behave well because they want to and not because they are being threatened. Positive reward systems and a friendly but firm way of correcting pupils are seen across classes and this creates a settled and amicable learning atmosphere throughout the school, and is a major reason why pupils' achievement is good. Lessons are inclusive; there is equal regard for boys and girls, good provision for higher attainers and very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. As a result, learning is equally good irrespective of pupils' individual starting points.
- The learning mentors and learning support staff make a very good contribution to the good teaching and learning within the school. They are well briefed and support the learning of both individuals and groups within classrooms. Other adults, including students, parent volunteers and support teachers, are very well used to help pupils who need extra support. Pupils who have recently arrived at the school, and those who are potentially disruptive, are given special attention. In a music lesson, a member of the support staff gently helped an autistic pupil to focus on what was happening in the rest of the class. This was done unobtrusively so that the pupil re-focused his attention and other pupils were not disturbed in what they were doing. Due to this skilled support, the teacher was able to continue with the lesson without disruption. In the same lesson, the teacher avoided confrontation by moving one pupil who was upsetting another. This was done without rancour and without disturbing the flow of the lesson. In these quiet but firm ways, teachers create a positive ethos for learning and encourage good responses from some potentially very difficult pupils.
- Teachers understand and apply the national literacy and numeracy strategies with skill and understanding. However, some of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are not reinforced successfully across subjects. Opportunities are missed and this holds back pupils' achievements, particularly in literacy. In addition, teachers do not always bring learning alive by applying literacy and numeracy to everyday situations. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher asked pupils to name the properties of two-

dimensional shapes, but only referred to the shapes on the board and not to objects seen in the everyday world, thus missing opportunities to bring the lesson alive and to make links to other areas of learning. The national tests place emphasis on pupils applying their learning to everyday situations and so this weakness in teaching means that pupils are not fully prepared for the tests, and this could contribute to low test scores.

16. Whilst assessment is good overall, some marking is not helpful enough. Whilst some teachers give clear comments that take pupils forward, other teachers merely use ticks. In the weakest marking, teachers do not correct poor spelling, grammar and punctuation that pupils have been learning about in their English lessons and this is another example of where literacy is not reinforced across subjects. In isolated books teachers used incorrect grammar in their comments, thus aggravating problems that were already apparent in the pupils' own work. A common approach to marking is in place, but this is not monitored sufficiently and reinforces the judgement that aspects of management that directly impact on pupils' standards and achievement are sometimes not tight enough.

The curriculum

The quality and range of the curriculum are good and it caters well for pupils' interests. A broad range of activities enrich the curriculum very well. Resources are good overall but accommodation is unsatisfactory – overall the accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad, innovative and accessible to all.
- Planning for personal, social and health education is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Resources are good overall with some weakness in art.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- A very good range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and there is very good support for learning outside the school day.
- There are very good curricular links with nearby secondary schools and colleges.

Commentary

17. The school regularly reviews its curriculum and makes improvements: the teaching of reading, for example, has been helped by the introduction of the accelerated reading scheme. 'Spellbinder' concerts are arranged to inspire speaking and listening and drama activities. Internal and external evaluations of the way physical education is taught and training for staff have raised the profile of that subject.
18. It is in the very good planning for personal, social and health education to combat pupils' behavioural and social problems that the school puts a great deal of its effort. Pupils are well supported by learning mentors, the inclusion team and targeted help for pupils with special educational needs. A special room, called 'Xanadu', has been set aside for quiet reflection to reduce stress. The emotional well-being of pupils is further catered for in the 'cartoon room' where pupils can give vent to their emotions without hurting themselves or others.
19. These arrangements ensure that no pupil is stopped from taking part in what the school has to offer. Very good support in lessons ensures that pupils do as well as they are able.

All pupils have the chance to learn to play a musical instrument and the school has a large orchestra that takes part in concerts in and out of the school. Very good arrangements are in place for pupils to take part in sporting activities against other schools.

20. Support for learning outside the school day is very good. A breakfast club is provided for those who want it. This not only makes sure that those who attend have a breakfast, but also provides very good opportunities for pupils to socialise. The after-school homework club enables pupils to further their learning.
21. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Several innovations contribute to the school being very inclusive and this aspect of the school's work has resulted in it being recognised as such by the LEA and region. Innovations include the work of the school's speech and language co-ordinator, who works with pupils across the school to ensure that those whose speech has been a barrier to learning can access the curriculum with increasing confidence. Similarly, a member of the learning support team, with the support of the Local Education Authority, has successfully introduced a programme to support pupils with fine and gross motor skills difficulties.
22. Resources for learning are good overall. A large number of books have been bought to support work in English lessons and the library is well stocked with both fiction and non-fiction books. There are good resources for ICT and the introduction of interactive whiteboards will improve them further. However, in art there is no strategic approach to developing resources so that the teaching of 3-dimensional and more imaginative 2-dimensional art is dependent on the enterprise and imagination of individual teachers. The good number of teaching and support staff have a positive impact on learning and achievement.
23. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Although the school has two halls, one is very small. The shortage of storage space means that the space available in both is limited by the need to store equipment and furniture in them. This results in some areas that are not conducive to learning and which have an adverse impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils and adults have to pass through both halls to get to different parts of the school. The music room is small and claustrophobic, as is the library, which cannot be used for groups of pupils to carry out research. This impedes pupils' opportunities to learn independently. There is no school field and the playground has a pronounced slope. The small outside play area for the Foundation Stage limits opportunities for physical development and this is further restricted by on-going building work. However, the school is doing what it can to improve the situation. For example, classroom ceilings have recently been lowered. This makes the rooms easier to heat and more pleasant places in which to teach and learn.
24. Pupils are offered many opportunities to extend their learning and develop wider interests in out-of-school activities. They take part in competitive games of football, netball, cricket and athletics against other schools. Teachers and coaches from local schools, colleges and sport clubs provide tuition in a variety of sports, including crown green bowling. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are catered for when they visit a local film studio to learn about editing. Pupils take part in musical performances at the Grand Theatre and the Winter Gardens. Pupils are exposed to music and acting of a high quality when the Halle Orchestra and theatre companies visit the school. Pupils in both Year 5 and Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in residential visits and day visits to other places of interest are arranged for those who cannot take part.

25. Links with local schools and colleges are very good. These links give pupils a positive view of the education they will receive when they move to secondary education and greatly enhance their learning whilst at primary school. Advanced science teachers, as well as mathematics and French teachers, give demonstration lessons. Sports teachers and coaches from a local sports college and the local authority take series of lessons. The after-school club is run jointly with a local secondary school. Pupils take part in the performing arts organised by a school which specialises in that aspect.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is very good. The support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring, are very good. The involvement of pupils, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes very particular care of its more vulnerable pupils.
- Care and welfare are central to the school's ethos
- The care provided in the early excellence centre is excellent.
- The school has very good arrangements for the induction of new pupils, including home visits.
- Pupils are given a wide range of responsibilities.

Commentary

26. Care and welfare is central to the school's ethos and is one of its strengths. It takes very particular care of its most vulnerable pupils, who may have particular learning and social needs and who often suffer from the adverse impact of regularly moving schools. The strategic use of staff teams and external support means that the school has a very well-managed framework for identifying and supporting pupils who require additional help, including those with special educational needs. The Xanadu and cartoon rooms provide areas for pupils who are stressed to calm down and receive counselling. This helps to improve their behaviour and attitudes and aids their learning and achievement. One initiative is 'Funky Friends' held in the Xanadu room. This supports pupils in overcoming peer group difficulties and establishing and sustaining friendships by using role play and games to explore the negative emotions that accompany loneliness and feeling rejected. However, whilst much is done in school, the lack of access to speech therapists and clinical psychologists affect the progress of some pupils. The school has taken action and it is hoped that access to these services will improve in the future.
27. The induction of new pupils into the school is very good. All parents receive a home visit and parents and children are invited into school prior to the child's entry. The induction of transient pupils is a strength, with pupils being provided with such things as school uniform and sports kit, and welfare forms being completed for free school meals, clothing grants etc, where appropriate. The new pupils' experiences in their previous schools (such as breakdowns in relationships) are recorded by the school's administration team so that staff are clear about the help pupils need to ensure they learn well.
28. Provision of care through the early excellence centre is excellent. The Early Years Unit, where all children under five spend two years, has a high priority. The high quality of care successfully supports children whose attainment is well below that expected nationally for

three year olds. Here, children are supported by a high adult ratio, very good teaching, a vibrant curriculum and very good resources. The collaboration amongst the team is excellent. Each child is carefully assessed at very frequent intervals to ensure they are gaining in confidence and learning well.

29. Pupils work in a very healthy and safe environment. Regular reviews of the buildings and grounds take place, and monthly fire drills are held. Staff receive regular first aid training and nine are fully qualified first-aiders. Pupils with individual health needs are well catered for. Healthy eating is encouraged. The infants receive a free piece of fruit each day and the older pupils can obtain fruit from the healthy eating food bar at break time. The school holds healthy eating events and family fitness days, which are supported well by parents and pupils.
30. The school has good child protection procedures in place and the headteacher, who has received training, is responsible for their implementation ably supported by the assistant headteacher with responsibility for special educational needs. All staff are given training in the child protection procedures when they start at the school, and this training is updated periodically.
31. Pupils are taught to take responsibility, organise themselves and problem-solve. They take on more responsibilities as they get older. Each class from Year 3 to Year 6 has two elected representatives on the school council. The council produces a newsletter for parents and pupils, helped to plan the school improvements and chose the school uniform. A head boy and girl, prefects and sports team captains are chosen from Year 6. Years 5 and 6 pupils go on residential visits and help to run the healthy eating bar. Years 4, 5 and 6 act as playground monitors and wear red sweatshirts to distinguish themselves. The older pupils are willing to help the younger ones, for example Year 5 pupils hear Year 1 pupils read.
32. In the pupils' questionnaire, prior to the inspection, pupils stated that they liked most things about the school but a few think that some pupils could behave better. The inspection team found pupils' behaviour to be generally good but appreciate that a minority of pupils are very challenging.
33. The pupils' personal development is very well monitored by their class teachers and reference is made to it in their annual reports.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The links with the local community are excellent. The school's links with other schools and colleges are very good. The Early Excellence Centre has excellent links with extended school services and provides excellent support programmes for children and parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with the community, including those promoted through the early excellence centre, are excellent and are a strength of the school.
- Links with the main receiving high school are strong.
- Parents are very appreciative of the school's work.
- Procedures to deal with concerns and complaints are very good.

- Links with agencies that help vulnerable pupils and parents are very good.
- Parental involvement in their child's work, at home and in the school, is, overall, unsatisfactory.

Commentary

34. Parents are generally very satisfied with the work of the school. Some parents expressed concern about the behaviour of a minority of pupils but the inspection evidence shows that the school has good arrangements to modify behaviour. The school sends out regular, informative newsletters. It has a website and targets for improvements are given so parents can help their child at home. The pupils' annual reports tell parents what their child knows, understands and can do and sets some targets for improvement. Parents and pupils are invited to comment on the reports. The school periodically carries out parental questionnaires.
35. The links promoted through the early excellence centre are excellent. The school has an integrated approach to children's services, using the ethos of an Early Excellence Centre within a primary school setting. The school provides high quality advice and support for parents and carers. The good range of adult learning opportunities, in partnership with the local college, will be enhanced when the new accommodation becomes available. A number of parents are engaged in NVQ and access courses toward higher education degrees. Parents and children access the very good support services already established within the school. A very good range of health professionals, social service officers and a community paediatrician visit the school regularly. They advise, assist and support both children and their parents. The Home Start worker works with over 60 families per year. She has trained volunteers to work in the community and set up a successful parent and toddler group. She attends meetings with the school and parents for induction and special educational needs concerns. Early years staff carry out a programme of home visiting when children start nursery or reception class. This builds a valuable link between the school and home. The school works in partnership with Blackpool's Sure Start and provides advice and support when necessary, particularly in special educational needs and curriculum issues. The school has rightly won awards for its work with such services.
36. The contribution of links with parents to pupils' learning at school and at home is satisfactory overall. Some parents assist in the school's fund raising events, some participate in courses on subjects like ICT, English and mathematics, and a few act as helpers in the school. However, attendance at parents' evenings is low and many parents do not help with their child's work at home. The school's homework club helps those pupils who find it difficult to complete their work at home.
37. There are very strong working relationships across the Claremont community, the borough and the wider region. The school encourages a healthy lifestyle and eight health visitors use the school on a regular basis. Community police have launched blood donor sessions and drugs awareness. The school's leadership team and the Early Excellence Centre manager serve on a range of community committees. The school's Charter Mark celebrated the work the school does in the local community. Pupils are taken on visits to local places of interest and talks by local experts enrich the pupils' education.
38. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the high school are good. The family support worker and learning mentors accompany some pupils on their first visits to their high school. All pupils spend time in the high school before they transfer. Pupils attend an after-

school club at the Beacon High School and teachers from the high school teach Claremont pupils science and mathematics.

39. The school has very good links with the Blackpool and Fylde College, Southport College and the Central Lancashire University. Around 50 students each year come into the school to carry out teaching practice from the St Martin's College.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides good leadership. The leadership of the senior staff is satisfactory. Management is satisfactory, and the governance of the school is very good. Management of special educational needs is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's strong commitment to inclusive education shows in a happy school with a long serving and hard working workforce.
- The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use their own skills very well.
- The leadership and management of the Early Excellence Centre are excellent.
- Structures set up to monitor and evaluate the school's efficiency are not applied with sufficient thoroughness.
- Best use is not made of data about pupils' progress.
- Financial management is very good.

Commentary

40. The headteacher provides resolute leadership and a strong commitment to an inclusive ethos in which pupils and staff are valued and supported. She takes a firm lead on provision for vulnerable pupils and ensures that the many pupils who arrive late at the school, often with a background of disrupted schooling and rejection by other schools, are fully integrated and achieve well. Other senior staff provide satisfactory leadership, although some roles are not clearly enough defined and this limits their effectiveness. An exception is the very good leadership provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator (Senco), which has made a significant impact upon the values of the school and its very good inclusion.
41. Governors play a strong role in the development of the school. Some visit the school regularly to help in classes and all are serious about the business of running the school. There is good attendance at governors' meetings and the minutes and agenda show that issues are debated fully in order to reach resolutions that will take the school forward. At the meeting with governors before the inspection, they showed a very good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide a firm steer to the work of the school by offering critical advice and support. All statutory requirements are met.
42. The school has adequate structures in place to monitor its work. The teaching and learning co-ordinators and school improvement co-ordinators have identified aspects of provision for improvement and, as a result, teachers are more imaginative in their work and have a better understanding of how statistical data can pinpoint areas for improvement than at the time of the last inspection. However, too much is left to chance; the admirable concerns for individual pupils and efforts to provide a positive learning ethos sometimes inhibit the robust identification and rectification of teaching weaknesses. As a consequence, whilst teaching is good overall, this is not uniformly the case. Some aspects, such as marking and promotion of basic literacy

and numeracy skills, are too open to individual teachers' discretion and so there is a variety of practice, some of which is weak. Management roles are not clear enough and managers are not sufficiently accountable for identifying and addressing weaknesses within their areas of responsibility. For instance, the school improvement co-ordinators' influence over arrangements for improving provision in the nursery and reception is yet to impact fully. Greater accountability would tighten up these areas and aid further improvement in pupils' achievement.

43. In addition, whilst the use of data about pupils' achievements is improving, this is not as well used as it could be to identify weaknesses and put them right. The school knows, for instance, that the value added to pupils' skills in Year 4 and Year 6 is better for higher than for average and lower attaining pupils. This kind of information is not always used to trigger tactical improvements. This is because the school improvement co-ordinators are not sufficiently held to account for ensuring that data is used well to improve provision. They have limited responsibility for analyzing data from the nursery and reception and so transfer of pupils from reception to Year 1 is not as smooth as it should be.
44. The school manages its budget very carefully, ensuring that spending is directed to raising standards and retaining the good level of staffing. The amount of money it receives is below average and so it carefully heeds the principles of best value in order to ensure maximum benefit from expenditure; the school compares its results and achievements with other schools, consults with others who can provide improvement support and ensures that it procures good service and the best possible price from suppliers. There are good resources for learning, including an above average number of computers that are used across subjects.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,380,820
Total expenditure	1,411,182
Expenditure per pupil	2,360

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30,335
Balance carried forward to the next	-27

45. The vision of the headteacher and school for the Early Excellence Centre is excellent and provides a clear direction in providing services for the children, parents and community. The school's acclaimed and pioneering work, which is at the cutting edge of provision, has been developed in partnership with nationally recognised partners including the Department for Education and Skills, the National College for School Leadership, and the Blackpool Early Years and Childcare Partnership. The school was designated an Early Excellence Centre in 2002. The limited accommodation was a priority; services and accommodation for some activities are scattered across various sites. An innovative building programme to incorporate integrated accommodation was approved and will be completed in March 2005. The school is also working towards Children's Centre status in 2006. It provides very good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further when the new facilities are completed. The headteacher has been instrumental in gathering together the key players; the school provides on-site activities and works very well in partnership with a local independent school and high school to provide extended care facilities in the area. Transport is well organised and managed so that children can attend the local high school after-school club. The well run and organised breakfast club provides a good start to the day for many children. The Early Excellence Centre manager is totally committed and innovative. Her secure partnerships with various community agencies successfully promote improving standards and enhanced learning for children and parents.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

46. The children enter the school, either in nursery or reception, with well below average attainment; the majority have very limited speaking and listening skills. Children enter nursery in the September after their third birthday. The majority of three year olds attend for a morning or afternoon session. The very good organisation within the early years' unit ensures that all children in nursery and reception classes remain in the same group for two years. Relationships are very secure because of the detailed organisation about how the children learn, and their emotional needs are well met by all the key workers in both nursery and reception. They achieve very well in nursery and reception because the teaching is very good in most areas of learning. The curriculum is very well planned to accommodate different ages and learning needs. Children are continually challenged, encouraged and supported to use their speaking and listening skills and to develop their reasoning skills in an interesting and exciting environment. The provision in nursery and reception is very well managed. The excellent teamwork and collaborative working between all members of the unit enable all children to achieve very well. The assessment procedures to measure children's progress are excellent and use technology well to ensure the smallest detail is recorded and shared with parents, key workers and children. The progress since the last inspection is good and whilst accommodation is still limited, the anticipated move to a new unit will enhance and allow further development of the already good resources. Provision at present for outdoor play is unsatisfactory but these facilities are scheduled for development when the building work is completed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and children are very good.
- Children listen well and concentrate for long periods of time.

Commentary

47. The children achieve very well. They are receptive to the interesting and lively environment but quickly recognise the rules and conventions of the classroom. Older children assist younger ones to explore and play and include them well in their play and activities. Careful thought and planning ensure very good opportunities for children to develop their skills in this area. The rooms are carefully set out and children are very responsive to returning equipment and tidying away after they have used the painting and other areas. They work very well alongside each other, for instance in the builder's yard, building a digger and taking turns well to use it in their play. Others help each other to put on helmets and goggles and overalls so they are equipped to use the tools to join pieces of wood together. They listen well to each other and concentrate for lengthy periods of time on one of the range of different activities.
48. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The very good interventions by teachers and key workers extend individuals and integrate them quickly into the learning

experience. Children enjoy using the social conventions and sit in a friendship group to enjoy snack time and chat together. Children develop their independence as they collect their drink and snack and organise the area for themselves.

49. Children are receptive and listen to each other and adults well because they are supported by the ethos of the unit, which focuses on independent, individualised and small group learning. Younger children follow the high standards set by the reception age children. High expectations from adults lead children to dress and undress independently for role play and physical activities. They are confident but are quietly encouraged to develop their independence and participate in a full range of activities and learning together. Standards are currently well below average in the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A plethora of constant opportunities are used by adults to develop children's language skills.
- Achievement is very good as a result of very good teaching.
- The children do not respond well to opportunities to read by themselves.

Commentary

50. The children are very aware of the language that surrounds them and in spite of their own underdeveloped language skills are very responsive to the very good range of opportunities and activities provided by the teachers to develop this area of learning. Children are enthralled and listen well to stories at the end of the day – often interjecting with interesting and perceptive comments to the teachers' very good delivery of the story. Teaching is carefully focused throughout the day in every activity on extending children's vocabulary and developing their thinking skills. Activities are introduced on a daily basis which links all the areas of learning but the predominating focus is on language skills. Children respond well to the frequent and different rhymes which are part of the daily routine. They develop counting and rhyming skills and are encouraged well to listen for similar sounds. Children of reception age are introduced to key words but the focus on developing key reading skills are centred within the range of reading and mark making activities. This does not prepare them adequately for the different styles and expectations as they move to Year 1. The children do not use the range of books within the unit and are reluctant to read by themselves. They are eager to use the different mark-making experiences to retell simple news and stories in a visual form. They match their names to their own photograph and name on their personal computer file or writing their names from the register. They use a limited range of tools and are encouraged to use the patterns and styles in creative activities so they develop the style and flow of different letter formations.
51. Children are eager to share verbally their achievements and progress. They recognise different stories and share information they have learnt during their focus on the building of the new unit. They are eager and interested in developing a very good range of technical vocabulary whilst describing and using real tools to join materials together. Teachers use

the building materials very well to introduce new words to describe purpose and textures of the different materials in the new building. However, because of the very poor oral skills many children's standards are well below average and will not achieve the Early Learning Goal by the time they leave the reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are used well to promote children's mathematical language.
- The building theme is used as a good tool to develop children's mathematical skills.
- The very good use of rhythms and musical patterns develops number skills.

Commentary

52. The children achieve very well because of the interest and enthusiasm which are fostered within the very well managed and interesting range of mathematical activities. The children are nurtured and persuaded to think about numbers in all areas of learning and many opportunities are incidental but all secure their learning. Numbers figure largely in the rhymes and stories which are used throughout in the learning opportunities and activities. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers and key workers interact very well to promote children's vocabulary and extend children's thinking according to their ability. The very good record and assessment procedures are used well so that particular groups are extended well through a range of well-planned activities.
53. Number skills were extended in a music session where the story of 'Three little pigs' formed a basis for both counting and shape recognition, and rhythms were used very well. More able children confidently named the two- and three-dimensional shapes they used to build a house. The new entrants to nursery were equally responsive to the very good teaching in matching and counting numbers to five and then building a tower of consecutive numbers to ten. Children respond very well to the pertinent range of activities to consolidate their learning. They enjoy their mathematical activities and are making very good progress, but the standards of the majority are well below average at present and they are unlikely to achieve all elements of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The focus on a wide range of activities through all areas of learning enable children to make clear connections about the world around them and to achieve very well.
- Adults use questions very well to encourage children to develop their thinking skills and understanding of the world.

Commentary

54. The interest and curiosity about the new building project has provided a rich and relevant curriculum to stimulate children's knowledge and understanding about buildings and how they are constructed. Teachers have planned and utilised the experiences effectively to allow children to gain in understanding and develop a range of skills in pursuing the theme. Every day stimulates a different range of activities. The children engaged in a lively discussion with the teacher when studying the plans and photographs of the new building. Their curiosity was harnessed well as they explored the materials involved in construction. Children use building words such as "joining", "corners" and "sawing" well in the correct context when using real tools to hammer nails into wood. Their awareness of health and safety when using tools is very good; they dress for the occasion and describe the overalls, helmet and goggles as important. They developed their independence skills well as they were encouraged use their own words to describe textures as "rough", "spiky" and "smooth" as they prepared to build the Little Pigs' House. The emphasis and constructive methods adults use to help children develop both their understanding and vocabulary are good. Children make clear connections using the words they have learnt in the various and diverse activities they explore during the day and consolidate their learning very well. Standards are well below average at present and children are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and very good links between all areas of learning help pupils to achieve well.
- Outdoor facilities are very limited and do not offer sufficient opportunities to develop outdoor play.

Commentary

55. Only one session was observed and this was limited by the current resources and facilities for outdoor play. Outdoor activities are planned but these are constrained by the area and in wet weather are not available. Vandalism has further curtailed the resource. Plans are in hand to extend the facilities when the new building is completed. The various activities are planned well so children can interact and pursue different physical skills throughout the day. They are encouraged to use the mouse on the computer to identify themselves on their records by photograph and name. They develop good mouse control when using a drawing program and dressing the teddy. The children use the building tools carefully and effectively and successfully join together various materials to build their models of different houses for the Three little pigs. Their painting skills are good; they painted a large variety of diverse materials and used a good range of very different tools to create different effects and textures for their building projects. The very good links between all areas of learning promote specific physical skills and assist children in developing their thinking and reasoning skills well through the very good questions and challenges from adults.

56. The children showed a good degree of independence in preparation and control when using the hall for a movement lesson. They listened carefully and used a very good range of different movements and space to explore their own ideas. The very good teaching stimulated their interest and encouraged them to develop their physical skills well. The children achieve well, and whilst standards are currently below average they are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of percussion instruments to promote children's learning is excellent.
- Resources are very well prepared.

Commentary

57. The children enter school with attainment that is well below average in this area of learning. Their experience is very limited. The gentle encouragement to explore the wide and different range of activities is very well managed by the constant and well-timed interventions of all adults to encourage children to explore different situations and materials. The children achieve very well because the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Adults plan a very wide range of good creative experiences as part of the theme. Creative opportunities permeate all areas of learning.
58. Children particularly enjoyed using musical instruments in an excellent session setting the story of the Three little pigs to music. The development of a very good awareness of rhythms, counting and matching musical sounds to the words "I'll huff and I'll puff etc...." was both creative and imaginative. The children responded enthusiastically and carefully to the directions the teacher gave them. They used their self-control very well, only playing when the conductor directed them to. They developed musical patterns well and consolidated counting skills in addition to singing various rhymes within the story. This very well planned session engaged the children's interest unequivocally and their concentration span was outstanding. They worked well with each other and listened carefully to each other's performance.
59. The ongoing activities promote storytelling, sand and water play to make cement and children enter imaginatively into the role play of the builder's yard or the office. These activities are available for children on a daily basis, however the well-timed interventions extend the children's ideas and imaginations very well. Standards are well below average; by the time they leave reception children are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall.
- Teaching overall is good.
- Good efforts are being made to improve standards in reading through the use of the accelerated reading programme.
- Not enough use is made of writing in other subjects to develop writing skills.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not show pupils how to improve often enough.

Commentary

60. Standards are much the same as they were at the previous inspection – they are well below average by Year 2 and Year 6 in speaking and listening, reading and writing. However, pupils attain standards in line with others from similar backgrounds. Achievement overall is good, because the school works hard to overcome the problems caused by the large number of pupils who enter and leave the school during the school year. For example, in Years 3 to 6, pupils are taught in ability groups so that teachers can match the work to their needs more easily. Those pupils who stay at the school for the whole of their primary school career often make very good progress; sixteen per cent of pupils reached the higher Level 5 in the national tests in 2004, an improvement of 7 per cent over the previous year.
61. Most pupils' listening skills are satisfactory but they are let down by their inability or reluctance to give answers and join in discussions. Most listen carefully and put up their hands when they want to contribute. Where teaching is good or better, pupils listen well because the lessons are interesting. Very good teaching in a class of Year 1 and 2 pupils encouraged pupils to justify their answers when the teacher asked them about a story book and some higher attaining pupils were able to predict what might happen next in the story. However, many pupils are reluctant to answer or join in discussions. They lack the depth of vocabulary to enable them to explain what they want to say. A significant minority of pupils speak indistinctly and are difficult to understand. Nonetheless, teachers encourage pupils to join in and treat those who do not with sensitivity. In a recently introduced innovation, adults supervise small groups of pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills and this is successfully supervised by a trained member of staff. Teachers are good role models for pupils, showing them how to speak expressively and introducing them to new words.
62. Reading skills are well below average by Year 2 and Year 6. Reading is not a pastime of choice for many pupils, some of whom say they have few books at home. The school is making great efforts to improve reading skills. When teachers read to pupils they do so expressively and explain why they are reading in that way. The accelerated reading programme, which concentrates on improving pupils' understanding of what they read, is very popular with pupils in junior classes. Pupils take great pride in the number of books they read in this programme. However, the school could give pupils more encouragement to read. For example, little thought is given to making reading areas in classrooms attractive and comfortable places and books are not displayed imaginatively. Although the library is well stocked, it is very small and better use could be made of corridors to display books. There is a wide variety in the abilities shown by pupils, particularly in Year 6, ranging from pupils who do not know all the sounds of blends of letters to those who confidently read books intended for adults. Apart from using the sounds of letters to work out words, many pupils do not use other strategies, such as thinking about the meaning of

the story, to work out new words. Consequently, although most pupils take books home regularly, the progress that some average and lower attaining pupils make is slow. In some classes, teachers give pupils books that are too easy for them because they have not assessed pupils' reading accurately enough.

63. Writing skills are well below average. Pupils enter school with poor vocabulary and literacy skills and the problem is added to when more pupils with low attainment in literacy join the school during the school year. Those pupils who do stay at the school for much of their school career make good and sometimes very good progress. It is to the credit of the teachers that a significant number of these pupils reach higher than expected levels. Some write very expressively, such as when an eleven-year-old pupil used a metaphor of a hunting animal in a poem about thunder:-

“Thunder, like a speeding cheetah.....

Hunting day,

Eating night...”

64. Pupils write in a variety of styles. They sometimes write for a wide audience, for example when they display their applications for election to the school council. However, teachers do not use opportunities to develop pupils' writing in subjects such as history and science, and some English lessons, where pupils use too many worksheets that need only short responses. There is a lack of consistency in the quality of handwriting that teachers accept. Although many pupils are introduced to joined letters early in the infant classes, some older pupils continue to print and some mix upper and lower case letters without being corrected. The handwriting of some teachers in their marking of books does not present a good example.
65. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Work is planned well for pupils of all abilities and teachers know the subject well. Pupils learn well when teachers make their lessons interesting and give examples of what they want pupils to do. For example, pupils in Year 5 were fascinated by the use of alliteration and rhyme in an advertising leaflet about attractions at Blackpool Tower. The development of speaking and listening skills was good in this lesson when pupils discussed the leaflet with a partner. Teachers make very good use of support staff in lessons to enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to take part in lessons. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and plan work matched to their abilities. However, teachers' marking is inconsistent. It is at its best when teachers tell pupils what they have done well and set targets so that they can improve. It is less useful when pupils are simply congratulated or told to do better. Pupils are not helped to improve when teachers use poor grammar and spelling in their comments.
66. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory but lack stability due to staff illness. This means that the school does not have as clear a picture as it should have of where improvements are needed. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. Provision in literacy lessons themselves is good. However, pupils need opportunities to practise the skills they have learnt. This is not happening as much as it should and pupils are not given enough chance to write at length in subjects such as history, geography, science and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and those with special educational needs achieve very well because of consistently good teaching.
- Good teaching helps pupils to enjoy mathematics and work very hard in lessons.
- The leadership of the subject is good.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support the pupils' learning.
- Inadequate development of numeracy skills across the curriculum hinders pupils' achievement.

Commentary

68. The standards of work seen in Years 2 and 6 were below average but better than the well below average results in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests. Many children enter the school with a very low level of understanding but good teaching throughout the school helps them to achieve well. Indeed, standards of pupils who have been in the school since reception are above average by the time they leave. Achievement is good in numeracy, both in mental calculations and in written computations.
69. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and in Years 1, 2, 4 and 6 they are very good. As a result, pupils make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Notable strengths include highly skilful questioning techniques and good subject knowledge that enables teachers to judge pupils' learning and deepen their understanding. Most of the teaching moves at a good pace so that learning is productive. Pupils are successfully encouraged to explain their thinking. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils confidently identified and named a range of two-dimensional shapes, such as a pentagon and a hexagon, and used the mathematical terms 'longer than' and 'equal to' with understanding. Year 6 pupils explained how to find fractions of a whole and confidently suggested alternative methods to the teacher. In the lessons that were satisfactory, pupils sat for too long and tasks were not always clearly explained. As a result, not all pupils were clear about what they were learning.
70. Pupils enjoy mathematics, reflecting the good climate for learning in most classrooms. Pupils' good and often very good behaviour results from the very good relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils take obvious pride in their achievements, for example, when Year 5 pupils eagerly shared their understanding of the difference between numerator and denominator. They know how to improve their work because teachers give them clear verbal and written guidance. There is very good teamwork between teachers and learning assistants. As a result, learning assistants provide very good support and pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
71. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. The knowledgeable co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and makes good use of assessment data to make improvements. Following the tests, pupils are given targets and the progress towards these is closely monitored. Good improvement in teaching since the previous inspection results from the successful implementation of the national numeracy strategy, better provision and use of resources and improved planning. The result is rising standards, particularly in Years 3 to 6. However, there is insufficient monitoring by the subject co-ordinator

of the teaching of mathematics across the school and so some weaknesses in specialist aspects of teaching are not quickly enough identified and rectified. Whilst mathematics meets statutory requirements, there is insufficient use of ICT in mathematics. This restricts pupils' opportunities to apply mathematics to other areas of understanding.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. There are some opportunities to use mathematics across the curriculum but they tend to occur incidentally rather than as part of systematic planning. For instance, a scrutiny of work in design and technology showed that pupils measure accurately when preparing materials for construction projects, and in a music lesson, pupils' counting skills were successfully reinforced. However, provision is informal and so opportunities are missed to develop pupils' competence.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good as a result of overall good teaching.
- Teachers' marking is variable and sometimes does not guide pupils sufficiently on how to improve their work.
- Pupils have good opportunities to conduct their own investigations.
- Assessment processes to measure pupils' progress are not rigorous enough.

Commentary

73. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were well below average in 2004. In Year 6, where many pupils had special educational needs, results were below average. Standards seen during the inspection reflect the test results. However, pupils achieve well from a well below average starting base. This is because improved opportunities for pupils to conduct investigations have increased their interest and motivation. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have been in school since reception achieve very well.
74. Teaching and learning in science are good. However, the quality of teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Where lessons are taught well, pupils are enthusiastic and contribute their own predictions and ideas to investigations. In a Year 3 lesson, they were completely focused on their experiments and recorded accurate data on how much water various papers absorbed and the reasons for this. They made sensible suggestions and adjustments to modify their original ideas to conduct a fair test. The resources were used very well so that pupils prepared and measured the absorption of water efficiently and correctly. They used scientific vocabulary well and were confident in drawing conclusions from the data they collected. Good lessons began with a clear and interesting exposition which triggered pupils' interest. The good balance between teacher input and opportunities for pupils to offer their own ideas enabled pupils to grapple with new ideas and hypotheses.
75. In less successful lessons, for instance an unsatisfactory lesson with lower attaining pupils in Year 6, there was little variation in the challenge for pupils; some pupils were not sufficiently encouraged to work by themselves and so they didn't show enough individual

ingenuity. Pupils' work is sometimes not well presented and insufficient guidance is given to all pupils on how they can improve the quality of their work. As a result, some pupils are not sufficiently precise and methodical in their recording of experiments. Assessment procedures do not always highlight areas for improvement.

76. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and improving following the appointment of a new co-ordinator. Issues for improvement have been identified and new procedures that are improving achievement are being introduced. The limited monitoring of teaching has resulted in some variation of quality. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The pupils' understanding of scientific concepts, the ability to conduct their own investigations and their ability to recognise processes have improved significantly from those reported at the time of the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Resources are good.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to support work in other subjects.
- Good use is being made of ICT in record keeping.

Commentary

77. Provision has improved since the previous inspection. Standards now meet expectations by Years 2 and 6. Overall, teaching is good and resources for learning are good.
78. Pupils enjoy working with computers, particularly when they work in the computer room. In a very good lesson, Year 6 pupils made very good progress in developing a multi-media presentation because the teacher knew what could be achieved using the program. He accurately assessed the rate at which pupils were learning, introducing new ideas to individual pupils and small groups when he judged they were ready to accept them. Consequently, by the end of the lesson all pupils had produced a presentation using a variety of features such as text, pictures and animation. Higher attaining pupils helped others to introduce new features. Pupils were thrilled with what they produced. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher's very clear explanation of the task meant that pupils were able to start work confidently. They controlled the mouse accurately to select shapes and colours to draw plans of a simple model they had made. All pupils were able to succeed because the teacher and classroom assistant paid close attention to pupils who needed help. For example, a pupil with physical infirmities uses a specially adapted computer to ensure he is fully included in all provision and a trained assistant provides high level support
79. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Good resources have been provided and more are being introduced. Good provision is made for higher attaining pupils to extend their knowledge, for example, when they visit a local film studio to watch the editing process. Whilst progress since the last inspection is satisfactory overall, not enough progress has been made since the previous inspection in using ICT in other subjects. Procedures for assessing pupils' work and the skills they have acquired are not

rigorous enough; this means that the co-ordinator does not have a clear view of the standards that pupils attain.

ICT across the curriculum

80. Whilst there is evidence of the use of ICT in some subjects, such as English and geography, there is more to be done to make pupils' use of ICT a major contributor to their learning. However, the school is making very good use of ICT in record keeping: a new assessment system is recorded on computer in the Foundation Stage and books in the library and those issued for the accelerated reading program are logged using a bar code reader connected to a computer.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected individually and is reported in full below. History and geography were sampled.

81. In **history**, past and present classroom displays show that there is a breadth of historical enquiry taking place. For example, in Year 3, pupils study the Egyptians and in Year 4 the Greeks. From discussions with pupils in Year 6 it is evident that many of them enjoyed their history work and they spoke enthusiastically about the history topics they have studied. Visits and visitors play an important part and so enrich the provision. There has been a good emphasis placed upon the development of the pupils' understanding of chronology and this is exemplified in the design of a historical time line around the school, with each year group taking specific responsibility for a period of history.
82. In **geography**, displays around the school show that the National Curriculum requirements are being successfully tackled and that the pupils are developing not only the skills but also a knowledge and understanding of different places and regions. In Year 2 they have linked their study of the locality to their work in design and technology and begun to design and build their own houses. In discussion with pupils from Year 6 it is clear that they enjoy geography as they describe how they have used the Internet to research their work on a contrasting locality. They particularly enjoyed their study of the Lake District, which they visited for a week.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest in RE is good as a result of engaging teaching.
- Teachers do not use written work well enough to consolidate discussion and practical work.
- Teaching in Year 2 is very good.
- Pupils do not apply their learning of other religions to their own lives.

Commentary

83. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection, and pupils' achievement is

satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of different faiths, and confidently explain the basic beliefs of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. They are interested in lessons and have assimilated key facts through a range of well-constructed themes in their progress through the school. For instance, they are very aware of different traditions and recognise the importance of Ramadan to a Muslim, and the current display of artefacts at the school entrance ensures that all who pass through are aware of the current fast and the importance of the Muslim Eid. However, pupils' knowledge is factual and they do not apply their understanding of different beliefs to their own lives. Whilst pupils discuss issues well, and this has a positive impact on their achievement, there is limited written work to record or consolidate learning, and there is insufficient use of the subject to promote literacy skills. Some lessons are too short and do not reach a coherent conclusion.

84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching and learning seen during the inspection were good overall, although variable from teacher to teacher. However, a scrutiny of work showed that overall expectations of pupils are very variable and this is why the quality of teaching is judged satisfactory rather than good. Teachers successfully use a variety of strategies including storytelling and drama so that pupils experience emotions such as the fear of being lonely or friendless. Where teaching is very good, lessons are very well planned to include the skills pupils have learnt in other subjects. In a very good Year 2 lesson, the pupils were motivated and interested because the teacher varied her approach, using their ideas and providing a very good range of different tasks using model-making, sketching and writing to help pupils to consolidate their learning. Pupils listened with great interest to each other and responded positively to the personal opinions they expressed. However, written work across the school is meagre, showing that teachers do not reinforce discussion work and practical activities with written work, and this is why pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than good.
85. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and improving following the appointment of a new co-ordinator. Pupils have opportunities to visit different places of worship and experience a variety of visitors who contribute well to the curriculum. The scheme of work is well planned and covers all the elements of the locally agreed syllabus. However, not all teachers record or assess pupils' efforts and so pupils are not always sure what to do to improve. The new co-ordinator is now very aware of this and is seeking to put in place guidance to address issues raised through the recent review of the syllabus. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music and PE were inspected individually and are reported in full below. Art and design and design and technology were sampled.

86. Scrutiny of work in **art and design** shows a variable quality of art work. In the hall three recently completed sculptured relief wall hangings are visually dramatic and enticing. These were successfully completed by pupils across classes with the recently appointed co-ordinator. Elsewhere, portraits completed by Year 6 pupils, some abstract chalk pictures by Year 1 and pouncing (putting pin pricks in a piece of paper and dusting paint through) in Year 5, show that teachers successfully use a range of media. However, the teaching of 3-dimensional and more imaginative 2-dimensional art is dependent on the enterprise and imagination of individual teachers. The new co-ordinator wishes to

promote greater consistency of provision so that all pupils are effectively challenged using both 2- and 3-dimensional media and are able to talk about art using a developed vocabulary.

87. In **design and technology** there was evidence of interesting and well-presented projects based on national guidelines. In Year 5, for instance, the construction of model Tudor houses demonstrated the good use of measuring and joining skills, and in Year 2, pupils successfully built a model from plastic bricks to illustrate the shape and features they consider essential to a place of worship. The pupils' work is well displayed and shows evidence of good progress throughout the school. The curriculum is well planned and the co-ordinators manage the subject well. There are good links with other subjects, including geography, history and religious education, to extend pupils' skills and knowledge.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Regular opportunities for vocal and instrumental work and frequent public performances cultivate an enthusiasm for music that promotes good achievement.
- The good teaching in class lessons and skilled coaching of performance groups leads to high levels of motivation.
- The music room is very cramped and this limits the quality of pupils' practical work.

Commentary

88. Achievement is good and standards of practical music-making are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. During the inspection, pupils showed their musical commitment in a number of ways; they sang and played with enjoyment in lessons, attended a choir practice and instrumental lessons in large numbers and told inspectors how much they enjoyed music.
89. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with very good coaching of performance groups. Although no lessons were seen in Year 2, pupils said how much they enjoyed their lessons and explained how they had used instruments to invent their own simple pieces of music. They sang with enthusiasm in assembly, accurately reaching the higher notes and managing confidently some intricate rhythms. By Year 6, all pupils have had instrumental lessons and many pupils sing in the choir that comprises Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. In a choir practice, pupils sang with clear, well-controlled voices. They sang accurately in two parts and coped very well with some difficult rhythms. This was because the teacher explained carefully what was required and helped them to listen to where improvements could be made. Clear and supportive verbal feedback is an important factor in helping pupils to reflect critically on their learning. As a result, pupils achieve well. Pupils cope well with musical notation; a Year 3 class had grasped how to play or sing basic notes and rests. The teacher reinforced this very well by introducing fun musical games that kept the pupils eager and fully involved. Teachers successfully adapt what they are doing for particular age groups and abilities. For this reason, pupils with special educational needs are not left out and achieve well.

90. The leadership and management of the department are good. The co-ordinator of the subject and specialist teacher provide enthusiastic and committed leadership which leads to good achievement. The music room is too cramped and this makes practical music making difficult. For this reason, in two of the lessons seen, pupils were unable to explore simple compositions in enough depth because there wasn't the space for instruments or for pupils to explore sounds in small groups. Nevertheless, the music room is much better than at the time of the last inspection and improvement is good overall. There is better provision of instruments and much more confident management of the subject with specialist teaching for all pupils in Years 3-6. Availability of instrumental teaching for all older pupils shows how much the school wants to improve pupils' musical skills and is a prime factor in generating musical interest and enthusiasm.

Physical education

Provision in PE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Good use is made of visiting teachers and coaches.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

91. Standards are as expected by Year 6 and achievement is good. No clear judgements were made about standards at the previous inspection.
92. Teaching overall is good. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, pupils learned to bounce a ball with ever-increasing skill and control, developing a very good sense of balance and rhythm as they worked, so that they were able to change direction when requested and protect the ball from attackers. This was because the teacher had very high expectations of what the pupils could achieve and developed pupils' skills in small but challenging steps, so that all pupils experienced success, and gave constant praise. By the end of the lesson, pupils were working well above the expected level for their age, skilfully moving around each other and coping with the sloping playground as they bounced the ball. Pupils were constantly involved and active in a good Year 4 lesson. They worked in the hall to develop a series of gymnastic movements. Higher attaining pupils evaluated the quality of their work very well.
93. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection; the subject leader has introduced an assessment system that enables her to judge standards. The school makes very good use of expertise within the staff and teachers and coaches from other schools and organisations. Very good links have been made with a local sports college. Pupils are offered a wide range of activities to join in, such as football, athletics, cricket and crown green bowling. The school takes part with success in competitions against other schools. Good emphasis is placed on teaching pupils to swim and almost all pupils leave school being able to swim the nationally expected 25 metres. Resources for PE are good but accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is no easily accessible field and the playground has a pronounced

slope. Although the school has two halls, the hall used by Years 3 to 6 is small. The space available in both halls is restricted because the lack of storage space means that PE equipment and furniture are stored in the halls.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only one lesson of personal, social and health education (PSHE) was observed, in Year 6, and so no judgements can be made about overall provision.

94. The school plans effectively for the teaching of PSHE and this helps pupils to behave in a courteous and considerate way to others and to develop a healthy lifestyle. In the good Year 6 'Funky Friends' lesson, which was taken by two learning mentors, pupils focused on activities to improve behaviour and build relationships. They showed good social and moral awareness. The school council provides pupils with a good opportunity to understand and take part in the democratic process. As pupils get older, teachers give them increasing responsibility, preparing them very well for the next stage of their education. By the end of Year 6, the pupils confidently express their views and take responsibility for younger pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
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	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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

