

INSPECTION REPORT

SAMLESBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

Samlesbury, near Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119572

Headteacher: Mr N Cornall

Lead inspector: Mr F Carruthers

Dates of inspection: 7 – 8 February 2005

Inspection number: 267624

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	47
School address:	Potter lane Samlesbury Preston Lancashire
Postcode:	PR5 0UE
Telephone number:	01772 877200
Fax number:	01772 877200
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Dockerill
Date of previous inspection:	21/6/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small, voluntary aided primary school, situated in the village of Samlesbury, near Preston, serves a wider area than its immediate locality. There is a small intake of children into the mixed Reception / Years 1 and 2 class in the September of the school year in which the children are five. There is the full range of attainment on entry and, although it varies from year to year, it is broadly average overall. All pupils are White-British. There are more girls than boys on roll. The immediate location has less social deprivation than is normally found but overall the families' socio-economic circumstances are average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average and their needs are mainly for moderate learning difficulties or visual impairment. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes in the morning for English and mathematics, and in two mixed age classes at other times. Pupil mobility¹ is very variable from year group to year group and overall is about the average found in most primary schools. The school gained the *Investors in People* Award in 2003. Religious education is the subject of a separate inspection.

¹ The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than starting in the Reception year or leaving at the end of Year 6

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21285	Mr F Carruthers	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education English as an additional language
19669	Mrs F Kennedy	Lay inspector	
29261	Mrs P Ward	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. Pupils achieve well and attain above average standards in their work. The quality of education that they receive is good and the school is well led, managed and governed. The school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and standards in these subjects are well above average in Year 6;
- Pupils achieve well in English because of good teaching but there are shortcomings in pupils' handwritten work;
- Pupils show very good attitudes to learning and benefit from the very good provision that is made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- The headteacher provides a very good role model for staff and pupils by his leadership and by his teaching;
- Teaching is good and teamwork among staff is very effective;
- Opportunities in the curriculum for enrichment and enjoyment, for instance in music and drama, are very good;
- All aspects of provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good and adults encourage the pupils to look out for one another;
- The school has established very good links with parents.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The four key issues and two minor issues have been addressed successfully. Above average standards in subjects and very good attitudes and behaviour have been maintained. In addition, there have been improvements to provision in ICT, the Foundation Stage² and the learning environment of the school, both internally and externally.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils achieve well. The table above compares the school's performance in tests in Year 6 with other schools.³ However, because in most years in this school the number of pupils in Year 6 is so small, these comparisons are highly unreliable. It is clear from pupils' work, lessons seen and information on how much progress they make, that individual pupils achieve well and make at least good, and often very good, progress over time. Reception-aged children get off to a good start and achieve well. They reach or exceed the nationally expected goals in each area of learning inspected. They achieve particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development. There was insufficient evidence to judge their attainment in creative development. Pupils continue

² The Foundation Stage in this school consists of the Reception-aged children in the mixed age class of pupils aged four to seven.

³ Note that A* indicates the school's performance was in the top 5% of schools nationally.

to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In most years, standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading and mathematics and pupils' achievement is very good. Standards are above average in science in most years but standards in writing have been broadly average. In the current Year 2, there is a broad range of attainment that includes a number of higher attainers but also a few pupils who are below average. As a result, standards are not quite as high. They are above average in speaking, listening, reading and ICT and average in writing, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 in mathematics and ICT and well in English and science. In the current Year 6, standards are well above average in mathematics and ICT and above average in English and science. There are weaknesses in pupils' writing, however. Pupils with special educational needs and those with gifts and talents achieve well.

The quality of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and attendance are very good. Punctuality to school is excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school, including teaching and learning, is good. Teamwork is a major strength of the teaching and pupils display very good levels of independence and co-operation. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by very good opportunities for pupils to be involved in drama, music and dance. All aspects of provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are good and adults provide very good role models for them, giving guidance and support. Links with parents are very effective and those with the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance of the school are good. The headteacher leads by example and there is clear strategic planning to take the school forward. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well and the chair provides very good leadership for its work. The teaching staff share responsibilities for overseeing subject developments well and there is an effective programme for improvement in the school improvement plan.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Both parents and pupils hold the school in very high regard. They particularly appreciate its family ethos and the relationships among staff and pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Maintain the drive to improve standards of pupils' writing.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well in all age groups. They achieve very well in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and standards in these subjects are well above average in Year 6. Pupils achieve well in English and science and standards are above average in Year 6. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and achieve well. Standards in reading and ICT in Year 2 are above average and in writing, mathematics and science they are average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In mathematics, pupils display very good skills of mental arithmetic and solving problems.
- Because of good teaching and very effective leadership of the subject, pupils achieve very well in ICT.
- Pupils achieve well in English because of good teaching but there are shortcomings in pupils' written work.
- Pupils' skills of investigation in science are good.
- Children in the Reception class do very well in their personal, social and emotional development.

Commentary

1. Because the size and nature of year groups vary in this school and some, for instance the current Years 4 and 5, are very small, statistical information about the performance of pupils in national tests in Years 2 and 6 is highly unreliable. As a result of it being a small year group of less than 10 pupils, there is no table given in this section about the performance of pupils in Year 6 in 2004 to match the one below, which refers to performance in Year 2 in that year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.8 (19.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.6 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.5 (17.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. What is clear, however, is that pupils achieve well in this school. This is evident from a scrutiny of pupils' past work and from the very high standards reached in Year 6 in subjects such as speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and ICT, seen in lessons and in assessments. The school's regular assessments of their work when viewed over time clearly show pupils are making good and often very good progress. This is true of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, the few pupils in public care and those with gifts and talents. As is evident in the table above, in most years, standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading and mathematics and pupils' achievement is very good. Standards are above average in science in most years but standards in writing are broadly average and this is a key aspect for improvement. In the current Year 2, there is a broad range of attainment that includes a number of higher attainers but also a few pupils who are below average. As a result, standards are not quite as high.

3. Particularly strong aspects of pupils' achievement are in mathematics, where pupils in the current Year 6 display very quick recall of numbers and tables and can carry out difficult mathematical operations in their head. This is because of very good teaching and high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Similarly, because they have many opportunities to solve problems that involve everyday tasks of measurement and calculation, they display confidence tackling difficult problems. Pupils' skills of investigation in science are also well developed, because there are good opportunities for pupils to explore and test out their ideas. Displays of work in ICT show off the very good skills that pupils have in this subject too. This is because staff have embraced the challenge of making the most of new technology in their teaching and pupils are expected to follow their example. They use ICT very well across a range of subjects. Standards of speaking and listening, evident when pupils discuss issues, are a key outcome of the high expectations that staff have about pupils' maturity. The pupils are articulate and confident. They enjoy reading and are keen to share their views on favourite novels and non-fiction they have read. However, there are shortcomings in their written work. The presentation of handwritten work is not as careful as might be expected and standards of spelling are not consistently good. Where pupils draft and edit their work by word processing, presentation is very good. However, there is too much of this type of presentation and not enough opportunity for hand written work.
4. Children in the Reception year get off to a good start and benefit from the good provision, good and often very good teaching and the role models provided by staff and older pupils in the mixed-aged class they join. They achieve well and are on course to reach or exceed the nationally expected goals in all areas of learning inspected. In personal, social and emotional development, they achieve particularly well. It was not possible to judge their attainment in creative development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils show very good attitudes to learning. They benefit from the very good provision that is made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour and attendance are very good. Punctuality is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit fully from the very good ethos of the school.
- Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm and commitment to school.
- Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are very good.

Commentary

5. The pupils enjoy school. They work hard and are enthusiastic about all school activities. Their behaviour is very good. There have been no exclusions in recent years. The pupils' enjoyment of school life is reflected in their very good attendance record. As at the time of the last inspection, attendance is well above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. Punctuality to school and to lessons is excellent. Attendance registers are now completed properly and comply with statutory requirements.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year, 2003 - 2004 (95.9%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

6. The Reception aged children are in the same class as the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The older pupils set a very good example to the younger, in terms of attitudes to learning and behaviour. The children's attainment in personal, social and emotional development are well above average. Throughout the school, the pupils work with good concentration and show confidence and enthusiasm when putting forward their ideas and responding to questions. A strong sense of community is created by the way in which the pupils support one another in class and in the playground. Older pupils have responsibility as play leaders, with duties such as organising games and taking out and putting away the play equipment. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to school. They are very well integrated within the school community. The level of support and encouragement that they receive has a significant impact on their self-esteem, their confidence to ask for assistance when they are not sure what to do and on their achievements.
7. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' social and moral development, which is underpinned by Christian principles of loving and caring for one another. Pupils know and understand the school's Golden Rule for good behaviour. They are friendly and caring, and relationships throughout the school are very good. The pupils reach out to the wider community through fund raising for a number of charities. A wide range of extra curricular activities, an annual residential visit for older pupils, inter-school sporting competitions and participation in school productions strongly support the pupils' personal and social development.
8. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good. Music, in assemblies and in the daily life of the school, plays an important part in promoting the pupils' spiritual development. The school's picturesque setting and the environmental area provide many opportunities for the pupils to develop an awareness of the beauty in nature. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. An appreciation of the arts is promoted through lessons in art and design, literacy and music, visits to the theatre and working with visiting artists and dance students. Since the last inspection the school has improved significantly its provision for the pupils' multicultural education. Through religious education and assemblies the pupils learn about other faiths and cultures that are part of a multicultural society. Older pupils recently visited a mosque and spent some time at Blackburn Rovers Football Club Education Centre, discussing racism and its effects. A visit by a group of Ukrainian children from Chernobyl involved a geographic and language topic on Russia and Ukraine. The pupils are extending their knowledge and understanding of a way of life very different to their own through Internet links with a school in India.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. All aspects are good and very good features include the enriched curriculum, the support and guidance that pupils receive and the links with parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and procedures to assess pupils' work are all good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and pupils respond very well.
- Pupils work very well whether in a group or independently.
- Teamwork among staff is very effective.
- The teaching of handwriting, spelling and presentational skills in English is inconsistent.

- Procedures to assess pupils' attainment are good in English, mathematics and science but could be used better to track their progress.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 12 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	8	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

- The good quality of teaching evident at the last inspection has been maintained and pupils' learning is good. Teaching is strongest in mathematics and ICT. The pupils benefit from the effective deployment of staff for the teaching of English and mathematics. The Reception-aged children and pupils in Year 1 are taught together; pupils in Year 2 join with those in Year 3; and pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught in a single class. This means teaching groups are smaller, the level of challenge in the work is good and younger pupils benefit from the good example set by the older ones. For other subjects, and at most other times of the week, the classes are larger, consisting of children in the Reception age group and pupils in Years 1 and 2 in one class, and pupils in Years 3 to 6 in the other class.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They are confident in the pupils' level of responsibility and they know they can trust them to work efficiently unsupervised for prolonged periods. Pupils respond well and as a result, older pupils display very good standards of co-operative and independent behaviour. For example, they use the computer suite very responsibly and highly effectively. Teamwork among staff is a further strength. Teachers and support staff share their expertise well and planning the work for pupils in the mixed age classes is the product of discussion among all members. Classroom assistants are effectively deployed and complete useful lesson evaluations in English and mathematics on how individual pupils have coped with the work. The pace of learning in lessons is good, though at times the teacher's introduction and explanation are over-long. This was commented on by some older pupils in the questionnaires they completed for inspectors. A key aspect for improvement is the consistency with which handwriting, spelling and presentational skills are taught in English in order to raise standards in pupils' writing.
- Although very few lessons were seen in subjects other than the core ones of English, mathematics, science and ICT, it is clear that pupils' enthusiasm for and learning in music and drama are strong. This is the result of the high level of commitment of staff and the valuable services of a visiting volunteer.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are supported effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. When required, specialist input provides one-to-one support which helps pupils to overcome their difficulties. Individual education plans are detailed, targets are set and when these are achieved they are reviewed and the next learning step planned for. Teachers use skilful questioning to ensure that pupils are fully included in lessons, enabling them to make consistent gains in their learning. The good quality support and teaching from teaching assistants and staff from support agencies enable pupils to learn well.
- Procedures to assess pupils' work are good overall. Marking is good in English, indicating where improvements are needed and targets being reached. In mathematics, verbal feedback is used to check pupils' knowledge. There are regular assessments made of children in the Reception age group and of older pupils in English, mathematics and science. Pupils'

attainment is calculated according to National Curriculum levels and the results analysed against levels expected of pupils in the various age groups. However, the information gained annually by these procedures is not used fully to chart individual pupils' progress over time in English and mathematics and this is a point for improvement. Procedures to track the progress of pupils with special educational needs are good. There was insufficient evidence to judge assessment in other subjects.

The curriculum

The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. Its quality is good and opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation, staffing and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and balanced, with particular strengths in mathematics and ICT.
- Opportunities for enrichment and enjoyment are very good.
- The accommodation, including the playground, has been upgraded since the last inspection.

Commentary

14. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects. The curriculum in English and mathematics is well planned to meet the needs of pupils and to promote good progress. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are developed particularly well in other subjects across the curriculum. The curriculum takes good account of the needs of the mixed aged classes. In literacy the regular, short sessions effectively enhance pupils' reading skills. There are also planned times when there is a focus on writing but these are less frequent, which has an impact on the standards that pupils achieve. A rolling programme of topics is linked to the pupils' work in the creative subjects and history and geography, to enable pupils to have access to an appropriate curriculum for their age. The newly established provision to learn French has potential to make a good contribution to pupils' curricular experiences. A recent review of the overall curriculum has clarified priorities and has led a heightened emphasis on writing and on the provision for gifted and talented pupils.
15. The class teacher in the mixed age for younger pupils ensures that the curriculum for Foundation Stage children covers all the recommended areas of learning to meet their needs effectively. Particular attention is rightly given to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. There is a good balance between teacher-directed activities and opportunities to learn through structured play. The new dedicated outdoor play area for Reception-aged children is used well to increase their opportunities for play.
16. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and fully meets the guidance in the Code of Practice. Pupils follow the same curriculum as other pupils through tasks that are well adapted to their individual needs. There is effective inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into every aspect of the school's life.
17. Opportunities for enrichment and enjoyment are very good. Musical talents are particularly well developed. The good range of instrumental tuition provides opportunities for pupils to learn to play musical instruments. The curriculum is further broadened by the drama and music clubs, which take place out of school hours. The performances of pupils in school and for parents together with the unique musical dramas considerably enhance the musical ethos of the school. Visits from the mobile library service support pupils' English skills. Carefully planned educational visits to such places as the theatre, a mosque and places of historical interest, as well as visitors to the school broaden pupils' knowledge and prepare them well for

the next stage of their education. The school is involved and has been successful in competitive and also non- competitive sport. Other activities include an annual residential visit and a *sleepover* in the school. These promote the importance of teamwork and develop independence.

18. The accommodation, which is well maintained, enables all areas of the curriculum to be taught. Since the last inspection there have been some good improvements to the building and the outdoor provision. The grounds are particularly delightful with areas where pupils can sit and enjoy the scenery. There is a very well organised and safe play area. The environmental area, which pupils have enhanced through planting seeds and bulbs, is a valuable resource enabling them to respect the environment, to increase their investigational skills and to develop a love of natural beauty. There is a good match of teachers and teaching assistants to support the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of its pupils and provides them with very effective support, advice and guidance. The school makes good arrangements for seeking and acting upon pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides its pupils with a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Adults provide pupils with very good role models and encourage them to look out for one another.
- The school has a very strong Christian ethos.

Commentary

19. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils. Child protection procedures are thorough, adhering to guidelines provided by the local education authority. Carers of the very few looked-after pupils in school report that the staff have made very effective provision for them. The school building and grounds are clean and well maintained, thanks to the work of the caretaker, cleaning and teaching staff. All matters of health and safety are dealt with well. Interesting and colourful displays of the pupils' work help to create a very pleasant, welcoming and stimulating learning environment. The school supports pupils with special educational needs successfully. Very good arrangements are made to ensure that the requirements outlined in the pupils' individual education plans are met.
20. Arrangements for the induction of children into the Reception class are very good, and help to facilitate a smooth transition from home to school. The Year 1 and Year 2 pupils who are in the same class are kind to the younger children and help them to settle quickly and happily into school routines. Throughout the school, older pupils show very caring attitudes towards younger pupils. This is a feature that was praised by parents at the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors.
21. The Christian ethos of the school is central to all of its work. Pupils are taught that they have a responsibility to treat everyone in the school community with respect, courtesy and fairness. All the adults working in the school provide very good role models for the pupils. They treat the pupils fairly, listen to what they say and value their views and ideas. Carefully planned lessons in personal, social and health education, science and literacy extend the pupils' understanding of how to keep safe and healthy, why rules are needed in school and in society and how to be good citizens. Through these activities, the staff seek the views of pupils and act upon them. Pupils are confident in asking and answering questions and in making

suggestions for school improvement. They expressed strong support for their school in the questionnaires they completed for inspectors.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established very good links with parents and good links with the church and the local community. The school has satisfactory links with other local schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school involves parents through seeking and acting upon their views.
- Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning.
- The quality of the information provided for parents is good.
- The school has established good links with the church and the local community.

Commentary

22. The school has built successfully on the many good features identified in the last inspection report. Links with parents are now very good. The consultation exercise, prior to the inspection, revealed that parents have a very high regard for the school. Parents' views are canvassed on a regular basis, through questionnaires, giving the school a valuable insight into what pleases parents most and what they would like to see improved. The quality of the information provided for parents is good. Through the prospectus, a termly newsletter that is produced by the pupils, general correspondence and the governing body's annual report, parents are kept well informed with regard to the life and work of the school. Pupils' annual written reports are helpful and informative and give parents a comprehensive overview of their children's attainment, progress and personal development. The school has very good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents of these children are kept well informed about the support their children receive and the progress they make.
23. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's education by ensuring that they attend school regularly and through their strong support for the home-school reading scheme and for homework in general. Parents support the religious life of the school by joining in assemblies and services held in the church. The 'Friends of the School' association is active in arranging a wide range of social events for the pupils and their families. Parents and friends contribute to the work of the school by assisting with educational visits, helping in lessons and sharing their expertise, for example in art and design, and music. A parishioner gives recorder lessons to some of the pupils and, during the inspection, they played their instruments in assembly. Their playing was of a very high quality and lent a very moving, spiritual dimension to the occasion.
24. The school has established good links with the church and the local community. The vicar leads an assembly every week, serves on the governing body and is well known to the pupils and their parents. Links with Blackburn Rovers Football Club and a local quarrying company help to broaden and enrich the curriculum and give support to the pupils' all-round development. Sporting competition with other local primary schools helps to raise standards in physical education, supports the pupils' personal and social development and contributes towards their enjoyment of school life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance of the school are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a very good role model for staff and pupils both by his leadership and by his teaching.
- The governing body is very well led by the chairman.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good.
- Effective teamwork among staff, governors and parents helps the school to perform well.

Commentary

25. There have been several improvements to the leadership, management and governance of the school since the last inspection. The school has a much clearer vision of its role and how it wants to be in the future. Governors are much more aware of their roles and responsibilities and take an active part in strategic planning. The headteacher has improved the quality of his leadership through good professional development, including a diploma in school management, and has led the drive towards making the school improvement plan a more useful document which charts the school's progress well. He has a high profile in school, not only through his class teaching commitment but also through his participation in developing drama and music. He provides a very good role model for staff and pupils. He co-ordinates provision for special educational needs very well and is ably supported by a strong staff team and governing body.
26. The chair of governors carries out his role very well. He is highly committed to the school and brings many strengths to the role. He is currently drafting a very useful handbook for governors, which is intended to make them very well informed about all aspects of governing a school. The governing body has good procedures so that it fulfils its responsibilities well. It is firmly involved in forward planning, monitoring the budget, making key decisions about the school, as well as supporting and challenging the headteacher. The governors are kept well informed about how the school is performing and have the opportunity to question data and challenge decisions taken. The climate of dialogue, encouraged by the headteacher and chairman, is one that has developed very well since the time of the last inspection.
27. Teamwork is a key feature in the school. Staff share important responsibilities well and, for example, provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is very well led and managed by the teacher who takes charge of the younger age groups in school. Procedures to monitor the performance of teachers are in place and teachers' objectives are closely tied to the needs of the school as outlined in the school improvement plan. All staff are very strongly committed to doing the best for and including everyone in the school's provision. The work of both the part-time secretary and the caretaker is highly valued by all. Self-evaluation of how the school is doing and financial management are good. The carry-forward of the budget is reducing and there are clear plans about how the funds are to be spent in the coming year. The cost of educating a pupil at the school is considerably higher than the average of all primary schools but more in line with that of a small rural school. Because of the good quality of provision and the good achievement of pupils, the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	199,406	Balance from previous year	41,694
Total expenditure	213,660	Balance carried forward to the next	27,440
Expenditure per pupil	4,748		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.
- Teaching and learning are very well planned.
- The classroom assistant is very well deployed in the mixed age class.
- Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Commentary

28. At the time of the inspection, there were four children of Reception age in the mixed Reception, Years 1 and 2 class. All children have had some pre-school experience and this helps them to settle quickly into the routines of school. Their classroom is an attractive and welcoming environment where children are happy to come. Although attainment on entry is broadly average, it varies year by year. The children will attain or exceed the levels in five of the areas of learning by the end of the year. It was not possible to judge attainment in one area of learning, creative development. There are presently no children with special educational needs in the Reception group. Because year groups are small and the number of children with special educational needs varies, overall standards vary.
29. The good quality of teaching found at the last inspection has been maintained. All lessons are good or better, and two very good lessons were observed, where the focus was on mathematical development. The class teacher, who is also the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) co-ordinator, has a very good understanding of the needs of this age group and plans very well for them. Very good relationships give children confidence to respond to adults and share their thoughts. Very good teamwork between all adults means that the children receive beneficial support. It also ensures that both Reception children and other pupils can receive the individual support of adults. Assessment is thorough and used effectively to confirm that the children are well challenged. Both teacher and assistant are very good role models for the children. Since the time of the last inspection, there have been significant improvements to the accommodation, making the room very welcoming and comfortable, as well as to a recently created outdoor area for the children. The children also have access to four high quality computers in the classroom with a good range of software.
30. The children achieve particularly well in **personal, social and emotional development**. They are encouraged to behave well by the very good example of behaviour set by the older pupils in the class. They have quickly become independent in dealing with matters like dressing for physical education. They co-operate well together and learn how to play together through the good role model of the adults and older pupils. The children's attainment is well above average.
31. The children are achieving well and are on course to attain the early learning goals in **communication, language and literacy** and **mathematical development**. In lessons of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the youngest children benefit from the good deployment of staff, whereby the Year 2 pupils are taught with pupils from Year 3 by a different teacher. This reduces the size of the class to about 12 pupils including the four Reception-aged children and means the two adults can spend more time teaching and supporting them. A scrutiny of the children's past work indicates that they are making good progress in reading, early writing and

knowledge of numbers. Their speaking and listening skills are developing well. The children are forming letters better than when they started and one or two are writing their own short sentences of news. They enjoy sharing a *Big Book* with the teacher and the rest of the class and they are beginning to recognise letter sounds and try to write them down in words. At the time of the inspection, all the children were confident counting, adding and subtracting up to five. They have a good awareness of numbers beyond ten as a result of the opportunities they and the older pupils have to count aloud.

32. The children achieve well and are on course to attain the early learning goals in **knowledge and understanding of the world**. There are good opportunities to find out more about the world about them and other cultures. During the inspection, for instance, the children found out more about the science of cooking as they made pancakes with the help of staff and a volunteer. They found out about recipes, learned a song as they mixed the ingredients and were made aware of hygiene. Using the outdoor area, they begin to know about the natural environment and seasonal changes. They show confidence using simple computer programs.
33. Achievement in **physical development** is good and although not all skills were observed during the inspection, it is clear that the children are on course to attain the early learning goals in this aspect of development. In a lesson in the hall, the children showed good awareness of space, moving and dancing imaginatively as animals. When it came to using some low pieces of apparatus, they showed confidence and often did not need the assistance of an adult to perform an action. They moved with increasing coordination. These lessons are further examples of how the youngest children improve quickly because of the good role models the older pupils provide.
34. There was no opportunity to see any activities involving the children's **creative development**. Displays around the classroom indicate, however, that there are good opportunities to paint, draw and make, and the role-play area, an animal hospital at the time of the inspection, encourages imaginative play well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, teaching is good enabling pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- Standards in listening, speaking and reading are well above average in Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from effective support, make good progress and achieve well.
- The quality of pupils' handwritten work is not good enough.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.

Commentary

35. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is above the national average in reading, speaking and listening and in Year 6 is well above average in these areas. In Year 2, almost all pupils are confident communicators. They demonstrate good listening and speaking skills. By Year 6, nearly all pupils discuss their views and opinions in reasoned terms, for example, when in discussion about the use of archaic language in a challenging text they shared with their teacher. Average and higher attaining pupils read confidently and as they move through the school they make good progress in their reading skills. A contributory factor to pupils' good

achievement is the extra time given outside the literacy lessons to enable the development of reading skills in small groups and individually. The close liaison between school and parents of younger pupils through reading diaries is an added benefit. Lower attaining pupils who are more hesitant in their reading and pupils with special educational needs receive guidance and encouragement from their teachers and teaching assistants to enable them to achieve well. Nearly all pupils in Year 6 read fluently and with very good expression. When asked about the content of what they have read they demonstrate very good understanding. They are able to express opinions on the work of a good range of authors and eagerly discuss their preferences and the wide range of high quality literature that they have been introduced to by their teacher. They are able to research information in other subject areas in the library and through use of the Internet.

36. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in writing and achieve well. They are able to write in simple sentences, forming their letters correctly. Pupils in Year 2 write neatly in sentences using capital letters and full stop. Higher attaining pupils use a wider range of punctuation. When writing their stories, they use their knowledge of letter sounds to spell out unfamiliar words. Standards in the current Year 2 are broadly average. By Year 6, most pupils use interesting language to develop ideas, convey meaning and hold the reader's interest. They write for a good range of purposes including news reports and persuasive letters. Their poetry is of a high standard. The standard of handwriting in Years 4, 5 and 6 is satisfactory overall but this judgement reflects a balance of strengths and weaknesses. By the time they leave school, most pupils are capable of writing in a neat, cursive style. However, this was not always seen in the work provided for analysis and during lessons. Pupils take great pride in the content and presentation of their word-processed work and this is of a very high standard. However, their handwritten work is at times disappointing. Too often there is insufficient quantity, the presentation is not as careful as it should be and there is insufficient care in pupils' spelling. On the other hand, the quality and content of their articles in the published newsletters are commendable and demonstrate good progress in their use of language in their writing.
37. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Planning takes good account of the needs of the mixed aged classes. Lessons begin with an effective summary of earlier work to enable pupils to build on what they already know. Listening and speaking are promoted very well by the planned opportunities for discussion across all curriculum areas. A particular strength throughout the school is the teaching of grammatical skills. Very good use is made of an interactive whiteboard to maintain pupils' interest and particular provision is made for pupils with special educational needs to ensure they participate fully in the lesson. Teachers prepare and make good use of resources. In all lessons very good use was made of ICT to reinforce and extend reading and writing skills. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and have a significant impact on the good quality teaching and learning. The school has recently reviewed the marking policy but this is not yet fully implemented and analysis of pupils' work shows there is still variability. There are examples of good evaluative marking, but too often there is insufficient guidance to pupils about how they can improve their work. The presentation, content, handwriting, spelling and punctuation of the work sometimes pass without comment when there is need for improvement.
38. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and an example is the way results of tests are now carefully recorded, analysed and areas for improvements are identified. There has been a concerted focus on the improvement of reading. The present school improvement plan identifies writing as an area for development. An extra teacher has been brought in to target pupils. Staff training and an increased focus on use of connectives, knowledge of letter sounds and shared writing are beginning to improve standards. Although teaching and learning are not monitored formally in English, whole-school moderation of pupils' work ensures that all teachers are aware of pupils' capabilities and the attainment targets that they should reach.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. Throughout the school, the pupils' literacy and language skills are being used very effectively in other subjects and their ability to do so is good. Examples include a science lesson, when pupils discussed change, and in a history lesson, when pupils talked about the sequence of events leading to the Battle of Troy. Pupils' reading and writing skills are developed further in lessons focusing on ICT, where pupils use their writing skills to word process their work and communicate with others and their reading skills to research information connected to their studies. There are very good opportunities for pupils to participate in drama, in concerts and performances.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils display great mental agility with numbers.
- Pupils have very good skills solving problems.
- Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers make very good use of ICT in this subject.

Commentary

40. Pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average in Year 6. This is mainly because teaching is of high quality and pupils are very keen on the subject. Standards in the current Year 2 are broadly average overall because of the range of attainment in the year group. In recent years, standards in Year 2 have been above and well above average. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. They benefit from the school's arrangements for teaching, whereby pupils in Year 2 are taught with pupils in Year 3. This helps to increase the level of challenge for these pupils. Most pupils in Year 2 show confidence with numbers up to 100 and add and subtract well. Older pupils especially display very good skills of mental arithmetic in the pacy introductions to lessons of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils in Year 6 have had plenty of opportunities to use their knowledge of numbers to solve problems concerning everyday matters such as measurement, money and percentages. They have very good awareness of place value in relation to decimal numbers. The very few pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they receive good attention from the class teachers and their assistants, and the teachers' planning takes their needs into account. Pupils who show a real talent in the subject often work with older age groups to increase the challenge in their work.
41. The quality of teaching is very good. Strengths of the teaching include the very effective ways the teachers are deployed and the support staff assist in lessons. Teachers have very good command of the subject and high expectations for what the pupils can attain. The pupils' ability to work independently, to think and do things for themselves is a key feature. The pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are given very good opportunities to use the adjacent ICT suite to record data, for instance in the form of a spreadsheet or graph. In addition, teachers make excellent use of new technology as a teaching aid and to devise worksheets pitched at a good level of challenge for pupils. There are regular opportunities taken for staff to assess the progress of pupils and to use the information to plan future work.
42. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject is always featured on the school improvement plan and the pupils' performance analysed each year, though this

information is not currently analysed to check progress of individual pupils over time. Subject monitoring is generally good though the subject leader has not checked the quality of teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, especially in the use of computers to aid learning. At the last inspection, marking of pupils' work was an issue for improvement. This has been resolved in this subject by making verbal feedback to pupils the key component of marking.

Mathematics across the curriculum

43. The use of mathematics in science is good and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to use skills of measuring and calculating in investigations. Mathematics features strongly in the work pupils do on computers and pupils' achievement in both subjects benefits as a result. Pupils display good mathematical skills in both subjects. There was insufficient evidence to judge the use of mathematics in geography or history.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for pupils to investigate.
- Support staff and helpers are used to good effect in investigations.
- Information and communication technology is used very well.

Commentary

44. Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average in Year 6. Standards in most years are above average in Year 2. In the current Year 2, standards are average because of the range of attainment in the year group. Most pupils develop a good grasp of concepts such as friction and they record their work neatly in pictures, writing and simple charts. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to conduct an investigation and, because pupils in Years 3 and 4 work alongside older pupils, they quickly develop an awareness of how to make a test fair. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their previous knowledge to make predictions about, for instance, which material will stretch the most. They measure accurately and write up the results of their work clearly. They show very good levels of co-operation as they work in groups on an investigation. Their very good computer skills enable them to transfer their findings on to a spreadsheet, then record them on graphs and decide which type of graph displays the results best. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of effective adult support.
45. The quality of teaching is good. Strengths of the teaching include the good opportunities for pupils to investigate and the use of support staff to help pupils in the mixed age classes to progress. This was evident in a lesson where the youngest age groups in the school were finding out about the science of cooking pancakes. The assistant and a volunteer made a very good contribution to the success of the lesson. There is a good level of challenge to the work and staff have high expectations of how well pupils will work independently or in small groups. Teachers make very good use of ICT both in their introductions to lessons and in pupils' recording of their findings.
46. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has overseen a number of developments in recent years including opportunities to make use of the education centre at Blackburn Rovers Football Club. Monitoring coverage of the curriculum is good and assessments are regularly made to check pupils' knowledge at the end of each unit of work.

There are plans to introduce an assessment checklist of pupils' investigative skills. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, especially in relation to investigative work and the use of ICT. Standards have fluctuated year on year according to the nature of the different year groups but pupils' achievement has remained strong.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well above average.
- Pupils achieve very well as they progress through the school because of the good leadership and effective teaching.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' work in other subjects.
- The quality of resources is very good.

Commentary

47. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Pupils in Year 1 are familiar with the computer keyboard and use the mouse with increasing confidence to click and drag animal pictures into a woodland scene. Pupils in Year 2 are attaining above the levels usually expected. They save, retrieve and print out their work and routinely use ICT to support learning in other subject areas, for example to collect data and reinforce their mathematical skills. Year 6 pupils' skills in word processing are very good. The average and higher attaining pupils confidently word process and edit their work and search the Internet for information. In a mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 4 and 5 responded very well to the teacher's challenge to use the interactive whiteboard to add decimal numbers together and to do exercises of calculations using *Textease*. Pupils in Year 6 used spreadsheets competently to input data and use formulae. In each class, lower attaining pupils and also pupils with special educational needs are very well supported to enable them to access the information, learn new skills and to make very good progress. Pupils really enjoy using computers and this is having a positive impact on their learning.
48. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers know very well indeed how to use computers to demonstrate skills. A good improvement since the last inspection is the way the interactive whiteboard is used as a teaching aid to impart knowledge, motivate pupils and make learning interesting. Higher attaining pupils are provided with very challenging tasks, for example to use voice recording and voice playback devices.
49. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The vision of the headteacher and the hard work of the staff have been central to the high standards the pupils achieve. The school rightly takes pride in the improvements that have been made to resources, and further improvement is planned in the acquisition of another interactive whiteboard. The school has recently replaced the computers in the suite with laptop computers. There are also additional computers in each classroom. The advantage of mobility with the laptop computers means that they can be taken into other teaching areas so they are used at every opportunity. This enables good consolidation and practice of what is learned.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

50. Computers are increasingly used to support other subjects. There is very good practice across a range of subjects, for example in English, where pupils word-process their work, and in geography and history, where ICT is used to engage pupils in research. In mathematics

and science, pupils are encouraged to record pie charts and graphs of the results following their experiments and investigations. Pupils display very good skills.

HUMANITIES

Commentary

51. These subjects were only sampled during the inspection. Because of timetable restrictions it was not possible to see **geography** being taught, therefore no firm judgement can be made on provision. Discussion with pupils and teachers, the teachers' plans and a small sample of work indicate that pupils achieve well and make good progress in their geographical knowledge and skills. Younger pupils have studied the local area, have followed simple routes and have participated in discussion of their immediate surroundings, for example jobs in the locality and leisure facilities. The programme of work includes a traffic survey and the use of ICT to record their findings. Pupils In Years 3 to 6 have good knowledge of the source of a river and pupils in Year 6, when asked about past work, were keen to talk about their comparative study of life in India and the differences in physical and human features. An Indian visitor to the school enabled pupils to gain accurate information and make learning more meaningful. Pupils have maintained contact by sending emails to Indian pupils.
52. It was only possible to observe one lesson in **history**, which was in the mixed Years 3 to 6 class. Teaching and learning were good and there is clear indication that standards identified in the previous inspection have been sustained. Pupils were challenged well, and the stimulating teaching led to effective learning about the main characters and events of the Battle of Troy. The high level of discussion and the good choice of sources of evidence deepened pupils' understanding that the battle could be interpreted in different ways. Pupils with special educational needs were very well supported and resources adapted to ensure that they were fully included. The cross-curricular work in this lesson was effective in extending pupils' literacy skills as pupils were encouraged to read different interpretations of events. Geographical skills were also developed well through good use of a map to show the positions of Sparta and Troy. Pupils in Year 6 intelligently discussed their earlier studies of the Romans, the Egyptians and World War 2. They thoroughly enjoyed the story *Goodnight Mr Tom* and felt it gave them a good insight into what it must have been like to be an evacuee. Although it was not possible to see history being taught in Years 1 and 2, planning documents and analysis of the pupils' work show that pupils cover a good range of work.
53. Leadership and management of geography and history are good. Planning is checked and the headteacher monitors teaching and learning. The rolling programme of topics takes good account of the mixed aged classes to ensure the development of skills and to check that pupils do not miss or repeat topics. Good use is made of fieldwork and educational visits to enable pupils to learn through first hand experience. Discussion with pupils shows that computers are being used very well for research and to support work in these subjects.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Commentary

54. These subjects were only sampled during the inspection and, therefore, no judgement about provision is possible. There is good coverage of the curriculum in both **art and design** and **design and technology**. Although no lessons were observed, a sample of pupils' past work and discussions with pupils show that pupils enjoy these lessons and have good opportunities to explore various media and to plan, make and evaluate the product of their work.
55. There is a very strong commitment of staff and governors to providing the best opportunities for pupils in **music**. A range of instruments is taught and there are recorder and guitar clubs,

as well as an active choir and music club. Pupils have many opportunities to perform in musical dramas devised, conducted and directed by the headteacher. The standard of their performance is high. At the time of the inspection, older pupils were enjoying rehearsing for a production of *Cinders!* for parents and the community later in the term. The school and its pupils benefit greatly from the voluntary support of a member of the local community, who teaches recorders and directs the choir, which performs regularly at concerts and festivals. Music makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

56. Only one lesson of **physical education** was observed. Teaching and learning were good and the attainment of pupils in Year 2 in gymnastics was broadly average. No lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6. The school has increased its participation in tournaments and matches with other schools in recent years and pupils are enjoying the challenge and the social experience. The school has also increased its provision for the teaching of dance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Commentary

57. Provision in the school ensures that pupils are developing confidence and responsibility. They are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle, good relationships and to respect the differences between people. The Reception to Year 2 class has a daily *Circle Time* in which pupils can share and discuss their feelings and views about a range of topics. In Years 3 to 6, these occasions are less frequent. During assemblies issues such as friendship are discussed so that pupils understand the expectations that others have of their own behaviour and attitudes to life. Older pupils have discussed matters such as racism. Safety issues are sensitively discussed to increase pupils' awareness, for example during a Year 6 visit to Washington Hall where pupils participated in *Operation Streetwise*. *Taster* days and the close liaison of secondary school staff with the school enable pupils to be well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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 (ethos)	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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