

INSPECTION REPORT

THAMES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blackpool

LEA area: Blackpool

Unique reference number: 119254

Headteacher: Mrs J Martin

Lead inspector: Mr J Heap

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 April 2005

Inspection number: 268037

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:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	608
School address:	Thames Road Blackpool Lancashire
Postcode:	FY4 1ED
Telephone number:	01253 341 466
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Burrow
Date of previous:	19 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thames is a primary school that caters for pupils between the ages of five and eleven. It is situated near the centre of Blackpool. There are 608 pupils on the roll of the main school: 301 boys and 307 girls. This is much bigger than the average sized school in England. The roll has significantly decreased in recent years and the local authority policy of reducing the size of schools means that this trend will continue. Pupils arrive at school reflecting the full range of attainment levels, but overall attainment on entry is low. Pupils are organised into 21 classes, one of which has more than a single age group of pupils. The pupils come from a large, suburban catchment area which has significant signs of deprivation. Housing ranges from local authority estates to private individual dwellings. The vast majority of pupils are white and there are representatives from a small range of ethnic heritages. Thirty-nine per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals: this is above the national average. There are 138 pupils (23 per cent) on the list of special educational needs and the majority have moderate learning, specific learning or behavioural difficulties. This is above the national average. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is below the

national average. There have been significant barriers to school improvement since the last inspection:

- in recent years there has been upheaval on the staff with changes to personnel in the headteacher, deputy head and assistant headteacher posts as well as others and this caused a lowering of morale;
- the very high rate of pupil mobility in and out of the school.

The school has received the following awards amongst others:

- School Achievement Award in 2002;
- Investors in People in 2004;
- Inclusion award in 2004;
- Healthy schools award in 2004;
- Basic Skills Award 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9520	J Leigh	Lay inspector	
27777	R Greenall	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Music English as an additional language
14732	E Korn	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Science Physical education
17877	C Ingham	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	34

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This complex school is very good because it is highly successful at identifying and supporting pupils and families that have significant disadvantages. Very strong leadership promotes good teaching and very good progress academically and personally. As a result, standards have risen since the last inspection. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Overall, pupils' achievement is very good, including pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
- The head teacher, senior colleagues and governors provide very good leadership and management.
- Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is excellent.
- Provision for care, welfare, health and safety is outstanding and as a result the school is highly successful at recognising different barriers to learning and minimising their effects.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to work and school and develop relationships very well.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Attendance is poor.
- Links with the community are outstanding and very good with parents and other establishments.
- Pupils are very well cared for and this is much appreciated by pupils and their parents.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection despite difficulties that caused the school to stall three years ago. The school has maintained the strengths identified in the last report and improved most of the areas identified as weaknesses. The main developments are higher scores in national tests; very good improvements in information and communication technology in terms of teaching, standards and as a management tool and procedures for care, welfare and guidance are even better. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance has not improved.

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	D	B	B
mathematics	D	D	B	A
science	E	E	B	B

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

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Overall, pupils' achievement is very good. Pupils with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language, pupils from a Traveller background and those identified as gifted and talented achieve very well (all groups). Children enter reception with well below average levels of ability. Children achieve well and by the time they enter Year 1 most will meet the goals they are expected to achieve by this age in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. Standards are still below average in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. By Year 2, standards seen are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents very good achievement for most pupils starting from a low base and broadly matches the results of the national tests in 2004. By the end of Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve very

well in Years 3 to 6 and progress is particularly rapid in Years 5 and 6. This is not as high as the results shown in the table above, mainly due to higher proportions of pupils with special educational needs and the significant effects of high pupil mobility. Pupils with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and those in public care (all groups) make very good progress towards the targets set for them. There is little difference in the performance of girls and boys at Year 2, but boys did better at Year 6. The targets set by the school are challenging and high enough. Standards in information and communication technology are average. Attainment in religious education matches the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. The particular strengths are the very strong attitudes and relationships that are fostered. Pupils like school, but despite the school's best efforts attendance is poor. Punctuality is weak.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education is good, with very good and outstanding features. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Given the inexperience of the newly qualified teachers and the low morale that was evidenced a few years ago, the management of the school has done well to maintain the quality. Teachers know their subjects and plan lessons very well. They judge pupils' levels of attainment very accurately and meet the diverse needs in the classes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and very good for those learning English as an additional language.

Overall, the curriculum is good and is enriched by a very wide range of activities. All pupils benefit equally from what the school has to offer. The steps taken to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are outstanding and a particular strength is the development of very good and trusting relationships with adults. Links with parents and other schools and colleges are very good. The school has outstanding links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are very good. The head teacher provides very good leadership and a clearly articulated vision for the school that embraces strong academic and caring values. She has very strong support from key staff. The work of the governing body is very good. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The small number of parents who responded to inspectors' queries have very positive views of the school. Pupils enjoy school and are proud of its achievements.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do is:

- Improve attendance and punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is very good for all groups of pupils, despite the fact that absence and lateness have an adverse effect on some pupils' progress. Standards of work seen are below average in reception and Year 2 and average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are best in Years 5 and 6.
- Standards in spoken language are not developed well enough in lesson time.
- Standards and achievement in information and communication technology are much improved.
- Singing is very strong in the school.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.2 (15.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.3 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.0 (16.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 89 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 1 Standards in 2004 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with all schools. However, compared to similar schools, standards were average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well below average in writing, below average in reading and mathematics and average in science when compared to all schools nationally. Compared to similar schools, reading and mathematics results were above average, writing was below average, and science results were well above average. The trend over three years shows results in reading were average and that writing and mathematics were below average. There were no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in reading and mathematics. However, boys do better in writing. The school trend is broadly in line with the national one.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.7 (25.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.0 (26.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.3 (27.1)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 109 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 Results in the national tests for Year 6 pupils were above average in 2004 in English, mathematics and science when compared with all schools. Compared to schools

having similar proportions of free school meals, English, mathematics and science results were well above average. Comparing the results with schools that had similar results when the pupils were in Year 2, results were above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Overall, results were above average in comparison to all schools and similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was above average in English and mathematics and average in science, when compared to all schools. In comparison to similar schools, results were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Over 3 years, results were average in mathematics and below average in English and science. The trend is inconsistent but, overall, is below the national trend. Overall, boys are doing better than girls.

- 3 Overall, children enter the Reception Year with standards that are well below average. Progress over the year is good and by the time they enter Year 1 standards are below average. The most progress is made in literacy and numeracy development, where the children's attainment is very low on entry. In these areas of learning the teaching fosters the good development of basic reading and counting skills. Standards are average in personal, social, emotional and physical development and below average in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.
- 4 In English, standards at the end of Year 2 are below average and are average by the end of Year 6. Achievement and progress for all groups are good from the low starting point in Year 1. However, achievement varies somewhat from year to year, with the best being in Years 5 and 6. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 do not progress as well as others in writing and this is due partly to there being too few opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. The school recognises that standards in literacy (reading and writing) are better than in spoken language. This is because the approach to literacy is planned better and more systematically.
- 5 In mathematics, standards by the end of Year 2 are below average and by the end of Year 6 are average. Achievement is good for Year 2 pupils and progress accelerates as they move through the school, with the highest achievement in Years 5 and 6. This is the result of good and, often, very good teaching. These findings confirm the generally strong results in national tests. A further strong contributory factor is the arrangement whereby pupils are taught in groups that reflect the level of their prior attainment.
- 6 In science, standards are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory by Year 2 and good in Year 6. Rates of progress are not greater because the higher attaining pupils are given similar challenges to other pupils. Pupils throughout the school have sound knowledge and understanding of what a 'fair test' is. However, predicting and interpreting data skills are less secure.
- 7 In information and communication technology standards are average in Years 2 and 6. The development of skills, knowledge and understanding over time is now very good. This is a direct consequence of improved resources, better and more confident teaching and good support the school's in-house technical assistant. Some pupils have weak keyboard skills because they do not have the equipment at home on which to work.
- 8 Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus in Years 2 and 6. Achievement is good. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of religions are good. Furthermore, the development of pupils' understanding of their own lives and what affects them is a strong feature of this work. As a result, religious education plays a full part in raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Furthermore, there is a clear link between the academic standards and achievement and the effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- 9 Standards in music by the end of Year 6 are above average and achievement is very good. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement in Year 2.. Pupils arrive at the school with low levels of attainment. Owing to good teaching and varied opportunities out of lesson time, pupils develop very well. Particularly strong is the singing in the junior classes and the skills of the school choir.
- 10 It is not possible to make judgements about standards or achievement in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education.
- 11 The productive links with the community, including those with educational and care and welfare agencies, are helping in the removal of barriers to pupils' learning. This is having a most significant impact on the good achievement of these pupils. However, there are examples where poor attendance and lateness is significantly affecting the standards achieved by a minority of pupils, mainly due to interruptions that adversely affect pupils remembering what they have learned. Despite the school's best efforts to minimise the effects of absence by providing well-planned opportunities to catch-up, an examination of work in literacy and numeracy, for a sample group, clearly shows that these pupils are falling behind other pupils.
- 12 Most pupils for whom English is an additional language speak English fluently and achieve as well as other pupils. The few who join the school with little previous experience of English receive very good support and achieve very well in learning English. Some are Traveller children who, typically, join the school at a late stage and for a limited period. The school strongly values these pupils and supports and checks on their progress so that they too achieve very well during their time at the school.
- 13 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve very well in relation to their previous attainment. Pupils do well in meeting the reading, writing and number targets in their individual education plans. The main reasons for these successes are:
- the very high level of support, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons that means they can fully participate in the lessons;
 - the very useful individual education plans;
 - the variety of well planned work, such as the one-to-one work in the Sunshine Rooms where pupils work away from their peers;
 - the very successful way the school provides for higher-attaining pupils and those deemed to be gifted and talented through the groupings based on prior levels of attainment and attendance at clubs, such as those for mathematics and science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are very good. Behaviour is good and pupils mature very well during their time in school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' relationships with others are very good.
- Pupils have a desire to learn and are very interested in their lessons.
- Pupils develop very good confidence and self-esteem.
- Despite the school's best efforts attendance is poor and this has an adverse effect on attainment and progress.

- Significant numbers of pupils arrive late for school.

Commentary

- 14 The school has maintained the strong judgements of the previous inspection and parents and pupils appreciate these strengths of school life. Pupils and parents are well aware of the importance of good attendance. However, some parents and carers are very weak at ensuring the attendance of their children. Nevertheless, attendance and punctuality continue to be a problem despite the school doing all it can to promote, reward and encourage good attendance. For example:
- checking and recording systems are most detailed and are applied rigorously to identify trends in absences early;
 - all unexplained absences are followed up keenly;
 - there is a very strong working partnership with the Education Welfare Service. As a result of these levels of absence and lateness, some pupils' levels of attainment are lower than they ought to be. Pupils' ability to remember facts is seriously hampered.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.4	School data	0.5
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.

- 15 The great majority of pupils like school very much, feel secure and are most enthusiastic. They show a great deal of interest in their work and involve themselves fully in the high level of provision. For example, in an excellent religious education lesson in Year 6 pupils' eagerness and fun were evident and achievement was very high. Children in the Reception Year are on target to meet the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development.
- 16 Pupils behave well and demonstrate self-control. Staff have very high expectations for behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour is always challenged with the result that there is little disruption to learning. There is a highly effective approach to behaviour management, which uses a wide range of external agencies to help in individual cases. Pupils with behavioural problems are extremely well supported and many make remarkable progress in improving their behaviour and attitudes to learning. Any incident involving potential bullying or racial harassment is investigated in great detail and clear procedures are implemented to eliminate any signs of oppression. Where there are instances of poor behaviour the school acts quickly and decisively, and management will exclude pupils where the matter is particularly serious.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
501	6	1
1	0	0

White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

- 17 Relationships are very supportive and harmonious. Pupils' confidence improves as they get older. Their view of themselves and others develops very well because adults praise, make time to listen and recognise effort and achievement by giving rewards. They are self-controlled, become more self-assured and usually listen to others well. Pupils engage very well in the range of responsibilities given to them and carry them out willingly and with pride. Pupils whose home language is not English are fully involved in all activities. Other pupils respect and value the diversity and give sensitive help when any language difficulties arise.
- 18 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils become more self-aware and gain an understanding of the world and their own place in it. Questions about faith are often raised and pupils use their own personal experiences to make connections with the other beliefs and attitudes which different faiths portray. The quality of collective worship is good and contributes well to spiritual development. Pupils understand and discuss school rules, distinguish right from wrong and most understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils have an emerging understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely effects on others, while showing concern and compassion.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is good, including the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' learning. The school has outstanding procedures and practices for care, welfare, health and safety. The links with parents and other schools are very good and productive. The links with the ever-changing community are outstanding.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in Years 5 and 6.
- Teaching assistants make a very strong contribution in the classroom and when they teach pupils away from the main group.
- Teachers are highly successful at insisting on high standards of behaviour.
- Equality of opportunity is very strongly promoted in lessons.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 64 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (5%)	12 (19 %)	36 (56 %)	12 (19 %)	1 (1 %)	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.

- 19 The school has undergone significant changes in teaching personnel and management since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching has been maintained at a good standard, despite there being inexperienced teachers in place. It says much for the very strong leadership and management that barriers to learning are being lowered and pupils make very good progress in their time at the school. This has much to do with:
- the very thorough and high quality tracking of pupils from the time they enter the school;
 - the strong emphasis on giving support at the right time by people who are trained well in knowing what to do;
 - the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- 20 In the reception classes, the quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result, children make good progress. The particularly strong elements were:
- the consistently very good management and control of children;
 - the very effective use of teaching assistants;
 - the highly effective promotion of equality of opportunity.
- In the very good lessons observed, teachers had high expectations of children's knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects. Lower attaining children were encouraged to take a full part because of the very good support of teaching assistants.
- 21 In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The lessons observed showed a range of judgements: from very good to a single unsatisfactory lesson. In the best lessons the main strengths were the:
- very competent support for higher attaining pupils from the classroom assistant. Year 2 pupils were able to use a computer to help with their learning in mathematics;
 - fostering of independent working that promotes confidence and security when pupils were asked to present data in a variety of ways, such as pictograms and block graphs;
 - linking of good questioning and discussion, so that pupils could highlight their own preferences for ways of working and individual strategies.
- The unsatisfactory lesson was characterised by weaknesses such as slow pace, unclear objectives for learning and lack of supervision. As a result, pupils were unclear about the challenge, they lost interest and were often inactive. This led to unsatisfactory achievement for the majority of pupils. Homework is satisfactory.
- 22 In Years 3 to 6, the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. However, by far the strongest teaching and learning was seen in Years 5 and 6, where it was very good. It is in these classes that pupils achieve the most and standards are rising. Almost all of the lessons were good or better and the range stretched from excellent to satisfactory. The teachers in Years 5 and 6 are successful because of their ability

to teach consistently at the good, and better, level. In fact, in Year 6 all of the lessons were at this level and a high proportion were very good or excellent. The key strengths were:

- the very deep knowledge and understanding of the subject allowed the teacher to frame challenging questions and help pupils to progress very well;
- the very brisk pace helped to maintain interest and enabled the highest attaining pupils to proceed on to much more difficult work, for example, in mathematics;
- the accurate grouping of pupils according to the level of their prior attainment.

This leads to very good collaborative work and high quality discussions.

Across the year groups, there are few weaknesses and the teachers pay great attention to behaviour and to promoting equal opportunities. Homework is satisfactory.

23 The school has an effective marking policy but there are some inconsistencies in its implementation. In the good practice seen, particularly in English, teachers comment on how well a pupil meets the lesson objective or what they need to do to improve. However, there are inconsistencies in this practice. In some cases, marking is simply a means of giving pupils encouragement or showing that the teacher has seen their work.

24 The support for pupils with special educational needs is of the highest quality. The school's excellent and rigorous checking procedures ensure pupils are identified early and support programmes are quickly implemented. Assessment procedures are outstanding and support future learning. Staff know the needs of these pupils very well and the commitment to meeting their needs is an outstanding feature of the school's provision. Very good, regular focused learning opportunities are provided for these pupils both in class and when they are taught away from the main group. Special needs staff are skilled in matching the work to pupils' different learning styles and this is very effective in providing, relevant, practical experiences to support learning. The staff develop excellent relationships with these pupils through sensitive but consistent methods of support and these help to remove the anxieties of pupils and their parents.

25 The few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English have very good support that clearly distinguishes their language needs from those of others in the same group who have learning difficulties. Except for the Traveller children, who are supported by a dedicated local authority service, the school makes its own provision for pupils whose home language is not English. This provision is sensitive and thorough. Careful monitoring of needs and progress leads to meticulous records that securely guide the work of teachers and support staff.

26 The assessment of pupils' work is good overall. The main strengths are:

- work and pupils' achievements in English and mathematics are assessed very well and thoroughly recorded;
- the systems focus attention rightly on the needs of individual pupils and prompt questions about the performance of groups of pupils;
- information is used well to group pupils and provide extra help where needed;
- gifted and talented pupils are identified and this ensures more challenging tasks are planned for them;
- the analysis of tracking clearly shows the differences in achievement and attainment between the 'stable' and 'transient' population of the school.

Assessment in science and other subjects is not based on such detailed tracking procedures although the staff use assessment information well to track achievement and predict pupils' future attainment.

- 27 The school has implemented systems to set targets for pupils. These are written in the front of pupils' workbooks and also displayed on classroom walls and on group tables. Whilst these are in evidence around the school, pupils are not always sure of what their targets are and they are sometimes written in language too complex for the younger pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and it is enhanced very effectively through a very good and varied range of enrichment experiences. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The full curriculum provision has been successfully planned to break down the barriers to learning that many pupils have when they enter the school.
- Personal, social, health and citizenship education is excellent and has a very positive impact upon pupils' attitudes to school.
- The philosophy of early assessment and intervention for pupils with disabilities ensures that there is very good equality of opportunity within the provision.

Commentary

- 28 The curriculum is fully planned to meet the varied and extensive needs of the pupils. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Around half of the curriculum time is correctly spent on effectively developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. This is very important because:
- pupils often arrive at the school with very low levels of these skills;
 - very large number of pupils enter the school after the age of five.
- However, this arrangement means that the time for some of the other subjects is relatively low, such as history, geography, design and technology and art and design. Nevertheless, there are many enrichment days to compensate for this, when the pupils may visit museums or do practical work. The curriculum effectively prepares the pupils for the next stages in their education.
- 29 The curriculum for the reception children is good. It incorporates all the nationally recommended areas of learning in a balanced and appropriately presented manner. There is a good emphasis on learning letter sounds (phonics), reading and numeracy. In Years 1 to 6, subjects of the National Curriculum are frequently linked together to increase the pupils' understanding and interest, and the skills learned in literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily used to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum. However, the recommendations of national initiatives, such as 'The Primary Strategy', are not yet fully developed and implemented in relation to the curriculum for spoken language skills.
- 30 Since the last inspection, there has been very good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology. For example, much of the curriculum is now presented through interactive computer generated touch sensitive boards that hold the pupils' attention well. The pupils' skills are used well in most subjects, but less so in science. There has been considerable improvement in the provision for music. The physical education curriculum planning is very good and it has been adopted throughout the Blackpool community of schools.

- 31 A recent innovation is the personal, social and health education programme which is fully planned and is implemented throughout the school. It includes sex and relationships education and attention to alcohol and drugs misuse. The strong social messages within this programme of forming good relationships, understanding and controlling emotions and developing self esteem are reinforced in lessons and in many of the numerous support activities provided for selected pupils. The themes in the school's daily assemblies are based upon this area of the curriculum and they very effectively extend the provision. The legal requirements for collective worship are met.
- 32 The school provides very good enrichment opportunities and support for learning outside the school day. There are numerous clubs that offer an unusually wide range of opportunities. Sporting clubs include golf and tae-kwon-do as well as the more traditional sports. Musical opportunities include participating in the school's outstanding choir and playing instruments. There are reading, mathematics and science clubs that are designed for the pupils identified as gifted and talented, but which are open to all pupils. Enrichment activities include visits and visitors from the community, such as a physicist, an imam and a rabbi, who have all extended pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school provides a breakfast club and support for learning before and after school. It properly encourages the pupils to attend activities provided by the community during the holidays.
- 33 Pupils with special educational needs and other minority groups are very well supported through carefully written individual education plans, very good professional support and the school's total commitment and success in ensuring that all groups of pupils have access to the full curriculum. Links with outside agencies are very effective. Consequently, pupils have access to experts in specialities such as behaviour management and speech therapy, most particularly in supporting full participation in literacy and numeracy sessions.
- 34 Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage children is good due to the additional space provided by the conservatory and the adjacent hall. Resources are good in most subjects and very good in religious education, music and information and communication technology. The school has an adequate number of teachers and a high number of effective support staff who contribute well to many school activities including the learning in lessons, the pastoral support programmes and the efficient implementation of the curriculum through, for example, running the library and maintaining the resources.

Care, guidance and support

The steps taken to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding. Support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good. The school involves pupils well in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is exceptional care which treats each child as an individual.
- Pupils' relationships with adults are excellent.
- The quality of, and support for, pupils' personal development are at a high level.
- Excellent support is available for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

- 35 Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements to this aspect of the school's work. Staff are very vigilant in safeguarding pupils' welfare. It is clear in this school every child does matter and this means that pupils have the greatest trust in

adults and relationships are excellent. Pupils feel very safe and happy. It is clear that the approach to pupil support, often using community links with external agencies, is enabling all groups of pupils to benefit equally from what the school has to offer and enjoy their learning.

- 36 Child protection, in its broadest sense, has the highest profile in everything the school does. For example:
- the outstanding approach to the early identification of risk to pupils, which triggers the working together of a wide range of external agencies;
 - the highly effective health and safety arrangements;
 - the secure, supportive and caring pastoral support is exceptionally well led by two members of staff, who have considerable detailed knowledge of the needs of families and children.
- If they have a problem, pupils are confident they can go to an adult and get help. On many occasions pupils were seen talking to staff, who listened carefully and always provided help or re-assurance.
- 37 Overall, there are very good procedures and practices for monitoring achievement, personal development, behaviour and attendance. This has a significant impact on the development of pupils' personal qualities. Staff cater for the individual needs of each pupil very well because they have very effective strategies to fully develop the potential of every pupil, particularly pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. Consequently, pupils are becoming increasingly independent, self confident and knowledgeable about themselves and healthy and safe living.
- 38 There is an effective, elected school council, which represents the views of pupils and the school takes their concerns seriously. The school equips pupils very well with the skills necessary to move on to the next stage in their education and become good citizens. Further, the very effective induction arrangements for pupils ensure that all are assured of a caring and sensitive beginning to their life at this school. For the youngest children, this is based on very good opportunities for parents and their children to get to know the school, supported by good information and home visits prior to starting. For the many pupils who start school at other times, the thorough assessment of each child ensures that an informed picture is identified early, they are welcomed and they settle quickly.
- 39 The needs of pupils with learning and other disabilities are very carefully assessed and individual education plans are diligently followed by staff. The coordinator ensures pupils who require further support have access to it. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive their full entitlement of support.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with the community is excellent. The school's partnership with parents and other schools is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The partnership and effectiveness of a very wide range of external links, both in the educational and extended community, has a most significant impact on achievement.
- The school's work to establish a partnership with its parents is very effective.

Commentary

40 The school has improved well the quality of the partnerships with the community, parents and other schools. The school very successfully helps parents to manage any concerns they have through, for example:

- providing before and after school care;
- having close and productive links with social services and a range of other dedicated agencies;
- recognising the social and academic challenges that high pupil mobility brings to the learning process.

Parents are very appreciative that their children receive the help and support they need.

41 Parents are kept very well informed by regular, well-presented newsletters. The pupils' annual progress reports are detailed and very effective in enabling parents to understand what their children need to do to improve further. Information for parents whose children have special educational needs is very good.

42 The school is doing all it can to encourage a strong partnership with parents based on mutual trust and confidence. The school is highly approachable, very welcoming to parents and fosters very good relationships with most parents. Consequently, most parents are committed to the school and a small number provide valued help in the school. Parents attend assemblies regularly and are most enthusiastic admirers of their children's achievements in performances.

43 The school is very willing to seek, value and act on parents' views and provides very good opportunities to help parents support their children's learning by:

- providing information on what topics are to be covered in lessons;
- setting up a very good range of courses for parents and regular in-school events that help parents understand how and what their children will be taught and how to help them at home.

However, some parents are still reluctant to fully embrace this partnership. Nevertheless, a small group of parents are committed to the Parents Association and arrange events, which raise significant funds used to support the pupils of the school. They have used these funds recently to provide physical education equipment and a digital camera for every class. Their support is much appreciated by the school.

44 The school has used every possible assistance from the community to break down as many barriers to learning as it can, particularly for individual pupils. This has resulted in a most significant impact on the attitudes, expectation and achievement of many pupils and helps to ensure that all benefit equally from what is on offer. For example:

- links with the secondary school, to which many transfer, are very strong and the arrangements for the transition are good;
- links with other local schools are being used to set up a network that is looking at the effects of pupil mobility on achievement. Members of staff will visit schools in Australia to view good practice in that country.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of key staff is very good. Governance is very effective. Management is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and senior colleagues have brought stability and rigour to the school.
- The school has a very clear and shared vision to go forward.
- The governing body and management team learn from their mistakes.
- Financial planning supports developments very well.

Commentary

- 45 Since the last inspection, there have been two changes of headteacher. There is plenty of evidence that the continued progress of the school stalled around three years ago and that the present headteacher and her senior management team have reversed that trend. It is a great credit to senior management and the governors that where mistakes were made, lessons have been learned and improvements put in place. Parents and pupils rightly identify the very strong qualities of the headteacher as being at the heart of the school's all round strengths.
- 46 The headteacher has significant strengths: dedication, strength of will and character, up-to-date knowledge and a clear vision. She leads by example and sets a high standard for quality in all that the school does. Her methodical approach means that the school focuses on ensuring that this complex and challenging school overcomes the barriers to learning that affect many pupils. For example:
- the effects of the very high levels of pupils' mobility are minimised by very high quality monitoring and tracking of individual pupils' achievements;
 - the above average levels of special educational needs are provided for exceptionally well;
 - the school is very successfully geared to developing highly effective partnerships with agencies that provide support for those who need it. This is particularly important for the very high number of transient families.
- 47 The school has a very good ethos. The headteacher, senior staff and governing body have very close and constructive relationships with the large staff, pupils and parents. They command the respect of all and work exceptionally hard to maintain the high levels of trust that are evident. Important factors in the development of this trust are:
- the high quality procedures for performance management;
 - the commitment to reforming the workforce so that teachers and their assistants can concentrate on developing pupils personally and academically;
 - the fair and well grounded analysis of overall teaching quality and the knowledge that improvements are still needed, such as greater opportunities for subject coordinators to monitor teaching.
- 48 Support and challenge for the headteacher and senior colleagues comes from a very committed and capable governing body. Governors are very well informed about all that goes on in the school and work towards and within the very clear and informative aims of the school. They make an effective contribution to the monitoring and evaluation of the school by visits and receiving detailed reports from staff. Statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.

- 49 Financial planning is very effective and this means that key educational goals are supported by realistic levels of resourcing. This has been very evident in the development of information and communication technology as a very important teaching and management tool. The surplus has grown and is earmarked for several developments that will improve management and accommodation. Furthermore, it is rightly needed to shield against any difficulties caused by the planned fall in the school population. The school has very effective procedures and practices for the securing of value for money in purchasing supplies and services.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,421,996	Balance from previous year	172,995
Total expenditure	1,401,305	Balance carried forward to the next	193,646
Expenditure per pupil	2,264		

- 50 The leadership of the school is successfully using its community links to focus on achievement for every pupil. Its vision and sense of purpose places the child as its focus. It is fully committed to using external agencies, integrated with its own resources, and realises that learning will not be effective unless the specific, individual needs of pupils are resolved. It has fully embraced the principles of promoting the interests of every pupil and ensuring that they achieve whilst enjoying being in the school. It can demonstrate the effectiveness of this priority and thereby inspire, motivate and influence staff and pupils.
- 51 There is very strong and effective leadership in special educational needs that seeks to achieve the very best provision for these pupils. The management of pupils with special educational needs is outstanding because the coordinator has an in depth understanding in this area and a very high level of competence. Management systems are well founded in the school's aims and delivered through excellent teamwork. The coordinator has a significant impact by monitoring provision, including teaching. The special educational needs governor has a high level of involvement in the school and this contributes to the good provision. The management of provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very effective.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There are currently 73 children in the Reception Year. The children are taught in two full classes and in one class that is shared equally with lower ability Year 1 pupils. The children all enter in September. There is good liaison with the main feeder nursery and a good induction system. As a consequence, the children are quickly settled and attending full time. The accommodation is good. Although the classrooms are small the teaching space is extended through the use of the adjacent hall and the newly built conservatory. The quantity and quality of the resources and the use made of them are good. The curriculum is well planned, covering all the areas of learning and it is presented in a manner that is interesting to the children. However, the planning for the development of spoken language has shortcomings, particularly that which would develop the children's skills of reasoning and thinking.

The teaching is good and promotes a good level of achievement. Children have a good and trusting relationship with all the adults in the classroom. Teachers are good at making the learning interesting. They use innovative approaches that stimulate the children to learn. The teaching assistants are well deployed and very effectively support the children's learning. Attainment on entry is generally well below the average expected for the children's age, particularly in spoken language skills. There are very good systems and records to monitor the children's progress and these enable the co-ordinator to monitor and raise standards. As a result, there has been sound improvement since the last inspection. The identification and support provided for the many children with special educational needs is very good. Children for whom English is not a first language are catered for well. All the children make good progress in their year in the Foundation Stage and they leave with standards that are, overall, below those expected for their age.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is very good and the achievement of the children is very good.
- Standards on entry are well below average, but most children make very good progress and attain the goals for this area of the curriculum by the end of the Reception Year.
- All staff are very aware of this aspect of the children's development and give it considerable prominence in their dealings with each child.

Commentary

52 On entry to the Reception Year, many children have skills and attitudes that are well below those typical for their age. They make very good progress due to the emphasis that every adult places upon this area of the curriculum. The good procedures when the children start school effectively help them to become secure and happy. The classrooms are calm and orderly and the children are familiar with the routines and they know what is expected of them. They willingly take responsibility for their own actions and they recognise right from wrong to such an

extent that in wet playtimes, their behaviour in the classroom is as good as in the lessons. All staff have similar expectations and they portray a very good role model of listening and respecting the needs and views of others. This is transferred to the children. Adults involve the children in group tasks and in conversations and they also provided opportunities for the children to self-select their activities and to play with others. These activities effectively develop the children's social skills. The personal, social and health education programme of the school is extended into this year group and this has a good impact upon the children's confidence and emotional security. Throughout the day, adults encourage the children, raising their self esteem and this concern for their personal and emotional development is extended into all aspects of the curriculum, including the class assemblies.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of the pupils enter with standards that are, overall, well below average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Commentary

53 Although the majority of children make good progress and achieve well from a very low starting point, standards are below the average when the children leave the reception year. All adults are good at providing a continuous example of spoken language and they model the conventions of conversations well as they work with the children. This gives the children the opportunity to participate in a conversation and to express themselves confidently in daily activities. In contrast, there is less emphasis upon developing the children's language that requires them to organise, sequence and clarify their thinking and their ideas. Within the personal and social education programme children have the opportunity to speak in front of others. Adults provide good opportunities for the development of spoken language when the children 'dress up' and re-create and enact roles, but there were no observed examples of the adults joining in these activities to extend the children's spoken language.

54 There is a good emphasis within the teaching on the children recognising the sounds and shapes of letters and the initial sounds in words. The teaching is good and adults use a good range of approaches, including games such as bingo and rolling dough into letter shapes. These activities are particularly effective when used with the children who have special educational needs. Children are introduced to reading basic words. The higher attaining children are established upon the school's reading system and they have the phonic skills to work out unknown words. The children are developing good attitudes to reading and they thoroughly enjoy reading the computer generated 'books' that highlight each word. Adults develop the children's writing skills continuously and most children can write their own name and some recognisable letters. The higher attaining children are starting to write simple sentences.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strength and weaknesses

- The direct teaching is good.
- At times, the higher attaining children are not sufficiently extended by the taught activities. Computer programs to extend these children have recently been introduced.

Commentary

55 By the end of the Reception Year, standards are, overall, below the average from a generally very low start. The children achieve well but there is a substantial number with special educational needs who do not reach all of the Early Learning Goals. Teachers use computers well to develop the children's numeracy skills. They use these to help the children with their counting and to understand the concepts of addition and subtraction. The direct teaching seen was good. In one session the teaching assistant very effectively taught counting and the concept of subtraction through the counting rhyme 'five fat sausages' when the children made the 'sausages' from dough and they enacted the counting rhyme. However, the most able children could accomplish this task from the outset and it was not extended to fully develop their learning potential. There is a focus upon number and some of the higher ability children can count to 100. Using water and sand, children are given opportunities to explore capacity. Other aspects of the curriculum, such as developing mathematical ideas and mathematical terminology to solve problems, are not as well developed.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good and the children achieve well.
- Many activities link to a central theme to effectively extend the children's learning.

Commentary

56 Standards are well below average when the children enter, and, by the time that they leave the reception year, standards are overall a little below average. Within the classroom there is a good range of resources and activities to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, but the opportunities in the outdoor area are more limited. Teachers show the children how to use the computers in the computer suite and in the classroom and most can manipulate a computer and follow a program. Teachers present many of the activities as part of an overall theme. This successfully engages the children's attention and extends their learning. For example, through good direct teaching, a classroom assistant helped the children to observe using their sense of sight, smell and taste as they made porridge for the 'Three Bears'. Teachers also provide the children with opportunities to explore basic materials such as water, sand and dough. At other times, adults help the children to master the skills of using scissors and joining materials, such as when making bear puppets.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weakness

- Children make satisfactory progress in their large body movements and control and good progress in their small finger control, due to the good teaching that they receive.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support.

Commentary

57 The children achieve satisfactorily due to the overall satisfactory teaching that they receive. The majority of the children are on target to reach the expected standards by the end of the Reception Year. In a lesson in the hall, the children learn quickly how to respond and make different movements when prompted by music. Most could jump and run into spaces with satisfactory balance and control. Several found skipping difficult to manage. The teaching seen was just satisfactory and there was little development of the children's skills in skipping or of landing on their toes when jumping. The teaching assistant provided good support for the children with special educational needs and for the children whose first language is not English, successfully encouraging these children to participate in the activities. Outdoors, children ride bikes with appropriate control and balance for their age. Here, the teachers encourage the children to use the space and to take care, but there is little development of the children's skills with the wheeled toys in this teaching. Adults provide good opportunities to develop the children's fine finger movements through, for example, rolling and manipulating dough. Most children are reasonably adept at manipulating small objects such as construction toys and scissors and they display satisfactory control and take good care as they pour water into containers.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities to develop the children's creativity through music and through dance.
- No painting or other forms of visual creative development were observed being taught during the inspection.

Commentary

58 Standards are well below average when the children enter. They achieve well and by the time that they leave the reception year, standards are below average in the children's use of imaginative language. In dance lessons, the teachers choose lively and well matched music that stimulates the children into moving appropriately. They encourage the children to interpret the music as they move. In the lesson seen, the teacher gradually developed the children's movements as they enacted the story of 'The Three Bears'. Boys and girls alike were fully involved. The teaching seen was good and the children made noticeable gains in their learning. In music lessons, the children develop a sense of rhythm and the skill of listening to the music as they wait

to play their percussion instrument. In both of these lessons, there were too few opportunities for discussion by the children. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for imaginative play, where the children can develop their own ideas and take on various roles.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Teaching is often very good in Years 5 and 6.
- Too little is done to develop and use pupils' skills in spoken English.
- Pupils have too few demanding opportunities to read and write to support their learning in other subjects.

Commentary

- 59 Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement, particularly in relation to:
- the well-equipped and well-run library;
 - the very good variety of enrichment activities;
 - the strong initiatives to develop phonics work, and the impressive range of strategies for pupils who find literacy difficult.
- 60 Attainment in English is below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. This represents very good achievement overall as the attainment of most pupils is low when they join the school, and many face significant barriers to learning. Of those who stay at the school from reception to Year 6, almost all make the progress expected and many do much better than that. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as the higher attaining pupils in relation to their capabilities. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress in learning English. The many pupils who join the school at a late stage do very well. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The school has very strong systems to assess, support, value, include, track and challenge very different groups so that they all achieve very well overall. Achievement is not entirely consistent. Currently it rises in Years 5 and 6, but is falling for the higher attaining pupils in Year 2. It broadly reflects the quality of teaching.
- 61 Attainment, on the other hand, varies from year to year according to the particular character of each intake and the number, always high, of pupils who join it at a late stage. The school's test results in 2004 illustrate such fluctuations. In Year 2 the results fell, particularly in reading, and were well below average. At the same time, results in Year 6 rose significantly and were above average. Pupils now in Year 6 are unlikely to maintain this level although their achievement is the same. Inspection evidence confirms the school's very good tracking information in this regard.

- 62 Standards in reading and writing are average in Year 6, but below average in Year 2. However, pupils who remain at the school from reception to Year 6 do better than this, and a large proportion reach the higher than expected levels. The school provides very well for pupils with very different needs to develop secure basic skills in literacy and to maintain good attitudes to books and writing in their lives. Very little is left to chance, and the quality of learning opportunities, resources, support and assessment is high. The library and librarian make a good contribution. By the end of Year 6, pupils choose and read books with informed and confident skill. Most pupils detect the different layers of meaning in a fiction text. The higher attainers pick out words that influence the way they 'see' a character. Pupils' response to non-fiction texts is less secure, especially in their understanding of how to extract information. In writing, the more able pupils in Year 2 are currently achieving less well than other pupils. In Year 6, different groups of pupils have all made very good progress through the year across a range of skills. Work is matched well to need, and different pupils write coherent short texts in different styles based on given models. Good opportunities to write longer texts are infrequent. The higher attaining pupils expand their stories with good control of character, structure and imaginative detail, but lack opportunities to write extended reports and arguments.
- 63 The school recognises, as a present priority for development, the need to improve pupils' speaking skills in order to support all learning. Standards are lower in spoken English than in literacy. Planning for speaking and listening lacks coherence and the range of methods are often limited. Except for some good work in drama, the planned changes are at a very early stage, and speaking, listening, reading and writing seldom interact and support each other in lessons as well as they could. Progress in this area tends to be assumed rather than orchestrated; assessment is relatively limited, and few targets are set to help spoken English keep pace with curricular demands.
- 64 Teaching and learning are good. The strengths outweigh the weaknesses. It is the consistency of this quality, particularly in meeting very different language needs, that mainly accounts for the strong pattern of achievement. All but two of the twelve lessons seen were good or better. The very good lessons were all in Years 5 and 6. Common strengths across the school are:
- the high quality assessment information that is used very well to enable each pupil to learn at their own best rate;
 - teachers keep the learning objective in view throughout so that the lesson builds new learning in a clear and focused way;
 - the management of behaviour, time and resources is very good;
 - teamwork that includes the very good support staff is a strength.
- Almost all teachers are using the new interactive whiteboards effectively as a teaching tool. However, there are also some common shortcomings that relate to providing good opportunities for pupils to use their own talk to explore and explain their new learning. This restricts pupils' engagement; slows their progress in speaking, and limits teachers' opportunities to check and reinforce learning as the lesson moves on. As a result, many pupils are not sure how to improve their work, and inconsistencies in marking and the use of targets add to this problem.
- 65 Leadership and management are very effective. The consistently high level of achievement across such a wide range of needs owes much to the work of the subject leaders. They are very capable and committed. They make rigorous use of the very good assessment information that they gather to monitor the performance of the subject across different groups and areas. On this firm basis, they identify clear

priorities for planned action. Improvement plans are clear and systematic, and are carried out well through staff training, new resources, curricular innovations and better uses of information and communication technology.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 66 English and the rest of the curriculum currently support each other satisfactorily. The school is working to improve its effectiveness in this area and some good practice is evident. For example, work on non-fiction texts in literacy lessons often links well with learning in other subjects, and pupils have very good opportunities in class assemblies, circle time and school productions to develop their speaking skills in different ways. Stronger links with information and communication technology are beginning to make a significant impact on pupils' language skills. Groups of Year 6 pupils could not explain at the expected level how they would use the books and systems in the library to find, gather and present specific information to support their learning in science or geography. Also, pupils' writing skills are not used consistently well in subjects such as history and religious education, and tasks do not clearly match pupils' actual language needs.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 5 and 6.
- The pupils use their mathematical skills and knowledge well to solve problems.
- Assessment systems and procedures are very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- In some lessons there is an overuse of direct teaching.

Commentary

- 67 Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below average in mathematics. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well, but their attainment is below the level expected and this reflects the well below attainment on entry. As pupils move through the school the rate of progress accelerates because of the good and often very good teaching and the very high expectations particularly in Years 5 and 6. In 2005, Year 2 pupils' attainment is likely to be below the expected level and in Year 6 pupils are on course to reach the expected levels. Twenty five percent of pupils in Year 6 are likely to achieve above the national expectations in 2005. This is a significant achievement for the school and reflects the high quality of the teaching they receive. The introduction of setting in Years 2 to Year 6 provides very well for the range of pupil abilities and has successfully provided more challenging work for the higher-attaining and talented pupils. Throughout the school, pupils respond enthusiastically and show very positive attitudes and confidence as they work to find the solutions.
- 68 Teaching and learning in mathematics are good in the infant classes and very good in the junior classes. The main strengths are:
- the secure understanding of the numeracy strategy and its positive impact on pupils' motivation;
 - teachers plan interesting lessons across the different elements of the subject;

- teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and expect them to work hard;
- the effective use of interactive whiteboards is raising standards.

There is a high focus on consolidating and extending learning through challenging problem solving activities and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement and understanding of mathematics. All lessons are thoroughly prepared to meet the needs of all pupils and significant attention is given to ensuring activities are planned for pupils with special educational needs and extended tasks for higher-attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well because of the very good additional support they receive. The staff are very reassuring, prompt pupils' confidence when attempting new learning and generate the pupils' desire to learn.

- 69 The subject co-ordinators provide very good leadership and management. They have an in-depth knowledge and tremendous enthusiasm for the subject. They have made a key contribution to the improvement in the subject since the last inspection. The provision in mathematics has improved through their effective monitoring and evaluation procedures and the implementation of many initiatives to raise standards. Assessment procedures are rigorous, informative and make a significant contribution to the provision. Excellent systems are in place to track pupils' performance. The effective use of information and communication technology is making a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 70 The pupils have adequate opportunities to use and develop their mathematical skills as part of their work in other subjects. This helps to develop their awareness of the practical uses of mathematics. There are links with science, design and technology, information and communication technology, geography and history.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis upon practical work, but these skills are not developed systematically as the pupils move up the school.
- Systems for assessment are not yet strong enough to track the pupils' progress and establish expected targets.
- The quality of teaching in Year 6 helps the pupils to progress quickly.
- When the lesson planning is insufficiently detailed the higher attaining pupils are inadequately challenged.

Commentary

- 71 Standards are below average in Year 2 and around average at Year 6. This is similar to the standards reported in the previous inspection. In 2004, in the national tests, standards at Year 6 were above average when compared to all schools and those with a similar intake. The attainment of the higher attaining pupils was average. The pupils generally work hard and their work is well presented, indicating good attitudes to their science learning. The pupils confirm this in discussions. Overall, the achievement of the pupils from when they enter the school to the point of them leaving is good. The teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in the Years 3 to 6. Consequently, pupils achieve satisfactorily up to Year 2, and well in the Years 3 to 6.

- 72 The pupils with special educational needs and those of lower attainment are well supported by the many teaching assistants. Around 15 per cent of the pupils do not reach the expected levels by Year 6. In part, this is due to the high mobility rates, with pupils entering the school later than the usual times. The higher attaining pupils are seldom challenged beyond the rest of the class and consequently could achieve higher. Teachers are provided by the co-ordinator with questions specifically for the higher attaining pupils, but the work set for these pupils in the lessons is seldom at a higher level than the rest of the class.
- 73 The pupils enter the school with below average standards and they make expected progress in Year 1, due to the teachers' clear explanations and interesting activities. In this year group, the teaching is good and the pupils learn to use their senses to observe and to record their findings. In Year 2, where the teaching is predominantly satisfactory, the momentum is not maintained and the teachers do not fully emphasise the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to be taught.
- 74 In Years 3 to 6, the teachers have sufficient knowledge to teach effectively and they use computer generated whiteboards well to hold the pupils' interest. The development of the pupils' scientific enquiry skills is not consistently taught. The idea of a 'fair test' is emphasised in many year groups, but other aspects of the curriculum, such as developing predicting skills and interpreting results, are underdeveloped. Whereas some teachers are receptive to the pupils' ideas, many lessons seen were too teacher dominated, with the pupils having insufficient opportunity to develop their own ideas and to work independently. The exception was in one Year 6 class where the teaching was excellent. In this class, the pupils were given opportunity to select their own investigation and equipment and to learn by trial and error how to use their equipment to achieve their planned intentions.
- 75 Teachers emphasise and use scientific vocabulary well and the pupils develop familiarity with this terminology. However, with the exception of the one excellent lesson in Year 6, they do not plan opportunities for the pupils to use this vocabulary and the pupils have difficulty expressing themselves when explaining scientific principles. In Year 4, the pupils are taught well to record in a scientific manner, but this system is not continued in the older classes. The teachers' marking is generally satisfactory, with some comments to help the pupils' understand their strengths and areas for development. However, at times, some inaccuracies in diagrams that indicate a lack of understanding are accepted and not followed through.
- 76 The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management. She provides good resources to support the teachers and to help develop their knowledge and their questioning skills. Systems to record the pupils' learning are in place, but this information is not used sufficiently to plan for the various ability groups in the class or to set targets and to track the pupils' progress. There has been insufficient opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor the teaching. The school has good resources for science orientated information and computer technology but there is insufficient use of these resources by the pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good subject leadership is the driving force behind the much-improved provision.
- Most pupils are achieving very well and standards are rising.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Technical support is excellent.
- Teachers' use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects is not yet consistently effective.

Commentary

- 77 Improvement has been good since 1999, when the last full inspection required the school to raise standards and the quality of provision. Early in 2004 a monitoring report by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors recognised many significant improvements, but also identified ten areas for further development. Improvement in the last twelve months has been very good in almost all these areas. Major investment has brought resources up to nationally recommended levels, at least. In addition to the upgraded suites, all classrooms have computers and almost all have interactive white boards. Good software resources are in place to support learning in all branches of information and communication technology and in key skills across the curriculum. The subject leaders, strongly supported by the headteacher and the school's excellent technical officer, have worked very hard to secure best value from this investment. For example, they have ensured that information and communication technology supports management and workforce reform as effectively as it supports the curriculum. They have also worked hard and skilfully to improve teaching and learning in information and communication technology by training and monitoring the work of colleagues across the school; by improving the systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress; by developing the quality of the school's website, and by using this to give staff ready access to curricular guidance and the more complete profiles that are now available for all pupils. On this strong basis, the capacity for further improvement is good, particularly in standards.
- 78 Standards are rising rapidly and are significantly higher than the levels reported a year ago. This is because the improved quality of provision enables pupils to achieve very well in relation to their capabilities, opportunities and prior attainment. Taken overall, standards are at the levels expected of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 2, pupils exceed the expected level in some branches of the subject. For example, in a good lesson on control, a class showed good confidence and skill in planning and giving instructions to make programmable toys follow more and more complicated routes. In equally good lessons in Year 6, most pupils learned very quickly how to design increasingly complex circuits, linking switches and delays so as to make an on-screen robot perform a series of actions. For many pupils, hesitant skills in using keyboard and mouse slow the pace of work. This is because not many pupils have opportunities to practise such skills at home and, until recently, such opportunities were infrequent in school.
- 79 Teaching and learning are good overall. Good training and better resources have improved the ways in which teachers teach and, consequently, pupils learn. Teachers and support staff now work confidently and effectively in the two suites. Confidence is strengthened by excellent technical support that insures them against technical error or breakdown. Very good curriculum guidance supports planning, and teachers are skilful in developing pupils' skills in a carefully structured way.

Because many lessons build learning in progressive 'layers' of challenge, higher attaining pupils are able to move to a more advanced level within the same core task. Teachers are also developing good methods for prompting pupils to support and challenge each other as they work together on tasks, though at times the role of less able pupils becomes too inactive. The very good support given to pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve very well. Occasionally, however, when pupils seek help, support staff tend to deal with the problem for them rather than helping them to explain and resolve it for themselves. Teachers' skilful use of interactive white boards in classrooms raises the quality of learning because of the extra clarity, pace and visual impact that they bring. However, teachers use them mainly as a teaching tool and the pupils' role is not yet as active as it could be.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 80 This too is a strongly improving area of provision, which one of the subject leaders has done much to promote. Very good portfolios of pupils' work across the school reflect this improvement. These also advance it further by showing what can be achieved. Work in the information and communication technology clubs also promotes the wider uses of pupils' growing skills, and in most lessons, teachers' use of the interactive white boards demonstrates such wider uses in different contexts. However, too little use is made of computers in classrooms. When they are used, the emphasis is more on the information and communication skill than on its use to support learning, for example by moving text around on screen to develop writing skills.

HUMANITIES

- 81 The school's work in **geography and history** was sampled. Only two geography lessons were seen. Brief discussions were held with subject managers. School planning was analysed. Work on display and in pupils' books was analysed. As a result, no overall judgements are possible about provision, achievement, standards teaching and learning, or leadership and management. However, the work seen was of sound quality. Pupils use their literacy skills adequately to support learning in geography and history. The broad curriculum promotes the use of geographical and historical enquiry skills. Pupils' learning and experience is extended by:
- in geography: visits that illustrate local and contrasting features;
 - in history: visits to sites of historical interest and museums;
 - well-informed visitors, who visit to provide information from their personal interests.

Subject coordinators are keen and well prepared. However, because these subjects have not been priorities for development there has been little direct monitoring of teaching and pupils' work. There are sound whole school strategies for the assessment of progress and achievement in the subjects.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school maintains a strong focus on learning about a range of faiths.
- Effective teaching is strongly supported by a very good range of resources.

Commentary

- 82 Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the strengths identified in the last report, most particularly in standards, achievement and teaching and learning. The subject continues to make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The range and amount of resources have improved, especially those supporting multi-faith work. By Years 2 and 6, standards meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils achieve well, including those in the various groups in the school.
- 83 By Year 2, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of Christian festivals such as harvest, Christmas and Easter. They make particular progress in their learning about Judaism, Islam and Hinduism and this is promoted by good teaching and intelligent use of artefacts, posters and information and communication technology. Furthermore, this subject helps them to know themselves better through the work on feelings, kindness and special possessions.
- 84 By Year 6, pupils have built strongly on the knowledge, skills and understanding gained earlier. Particularly noteworthy is the work done on helping pupils to understand themselves and their unique heritage. This is a very important part of the school's intention to develop pupils' self esteem and confidence. Consequently, there is very useful work on simple rites of passage and the commitments humans make to family and school. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of religions is developing well, particularly in Christianity, Buddhism and Sikhism.
- 85 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lessons observed, there was a range from excellent to satisfactory. Across the school, lesson planning, on-going assessment, use of resources and the focus on developing pupils' understanding of themselves and their peers were consistently effective. In the outstanding Year 6 lesson the strongest points were:
- the very good method of challenging pupils to act out the findings of their research about Siddhartha;
 - the high quality way the teacher questioned pupils about their knowledge and understanding of Buddhism. Subsequently, making high demands of pupils' speaking and listening skills as they framed answers;
 - the very brisk pace, quality of resources and collaborative working made this a very lively and enjoyable lesson to be a part of.
- 86 Leadership and management are good. The coordinators have a clear vision for the development of the subject and this is promoted by the good management of the curriculum and resources. Assessment is good and developing. Although the contribution to the use and development of writing skills is just satisfactory, the contribution to the development of spoken language is good. Monitoring and evaluation are sound, with good work being done in the checking and developing of teachers' plans and in providing advice. However, the coordinators have not observed lessons.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were seen in **art and design** and **design and technology**; it is therefore not possible to make a judgment about provision. An analysis of pupils' work on display and in

portfolios indicates that standards are likely to be in line with those expected in both subjects by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

The school decided to implement a cross curricular approach to these subjects. Art and design, and design and technology are closely linked with science and ICT. The pupils' learning is enriched by many visitors to the school. A visit by an Architecture Workshop engaged pupils in Year 4 working together to construct a Viking Long Boat. A display of artwork based on Aboriginal Art in the hall reflects the impact on pupils' work when they worked with a visiting artist. Older pupils benefit from a visit to a local high school to use their facilities and to work with a specialist teacher. These subjects are given a strong emphasis in the last few days of each term when all pupils are involved in activities related to themes.

In **physical education**, insufficient teaching was seen to make a judgement about provision. In the two lessons seen:

- in Year 5, the teaching was satisfactory with a very good range of appropriate resources and good emphasis on developing skills. The warm-up for the lesson was too short;
- in Year 6, the teaching was very good and the standards in athletics were around those expected for the age of the pupils. The teacher provided a good range of activities to gradually develop the pupils' skills.

The coordinator has had a significant impact on the school's work and this has been recognised by the local education authority and in the acquisition of national awards. The main strengths are:

- a curriculum that is very well planned to incorporate sports, dance, gymnastics and athletics, with a suitable balance for each aspect of the curriculum;
- a rich and varied range of activities outside lessons;
- three-quarters of the pupils currently have their 25 metre swimming badge;
- there are innovative assessment systems.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of singing is very high in junior assemblies, and the work of the choir is excellent.
- All pupils enjoy very good opportunities to achieve and use strong performance skills.
- Good teaching across the school enables all pupils to learn consistently well.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

87 By the end of Year 6, attainment in music is above the level expected for this age. In the major area of singing, standards are high. In other areas of the subject, such as using instruments to accompany singing, standards are broadly typical. Most pupils join the school, whether in reception or at later times, with low attainment. They go on to achieve very well overall, because of consistently good teaching and a wide range of very good opportunities to learn and perform out of lesson time and often out of school. In singing, the achievement of older pupils is particularly high, and junior assemblies and hymn practice are impressive and moving occasions, because all pupils join in wholeheartedly and with educated voices. The quality of the large

school choir is outstanding and is rightly held in high regard in the town. The two coordinators conduct the twice-weekly practices with infectious enthusiasm and strong musical expertise. The pupils work hard to reach the very high standards set and they enjoy a rising sense of achievement and self-esteem. Their singing is near perfect in pitch and diction, and shows a full and confident command of a very varied repertoire of songs that often have demanding rhythmic, harmonic and melodic features.

- 88 In lessons the teaching is consistently good, with some very good features. This is because the coordinator teaches every class from Year 1 to Year 6. As a result all pupils benefit from her specialist expertise and learn the different elements of music. She sets and achieves high standards because she is able to explain and demonstrate exactly what she wants each class or pupil to learn. She instils enthusiasm and a confidence to succeed, often in pupils who are not used to success. Because she teaches across the school and assesses learning continuously, she is able to monitor and speed up progress; to include all pupils, and to help them to discover and develop their talents, whether vocal or instrumental.
- 89 Provision outside lessons is very good. Almost all pupils benefit from and participate in a wide variety of productions and performances. The choir performs on local radio and at many venues around Blackpool. These include churches, rest homes, the Town Hall, the Grand Theatre and the Opera House. Music combines well with dance and drama in school productions such as 'The Wizard of Oz' and 'Oliver'. Infant pupils have performed 'The Manger Tree' at Christmas, whilst all pupils perform to celebrate festivals such as harvest or Remembrance Day. Pupils also have good opportunities to work with visiting musicians. Like the choir's repertoire, these visitors represent different cultures and musical traditions. The overall range and quality of musical provision contributes very significantly to pupils' good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- 90 The leadership and management of the subject are very effective and this is the main reason that there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The coordinator has a clear, well-informed, ambitious and imaginative vision for its development. She knows what can be done and works tirelessly to get the best from all pupils. Her capacity to maintain improvement is reflected in the improvements already made, with the strong support of senior managers. Resources are much better and the dedicated music room makes them more accessible. Teaching is more consistently effective. The range of curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities is wider, more inclusive and more effective. As a result, standards are higher and rising.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good assemblies promote knowledge and understanding of people and society.
- Every effort is expended to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Important aspects of this subject are very well taught through other subjects.

Commentary

- 91 Since the last inspection, there has been a very good improvement in this area of the school's work. The school has recently restructured the programme and, as a result, the curriculum is very good. Management and staff recognise that academic achievement needs to be supported by a rigorous programme of personal and social education, so that barriers to learning are significantly reduced.
- 92 Assemblies are high quality. Teachers focus on important themes, such as 'care'. Great value is placed on these occasions and the level of preparation and performance is exemplary. Stories are at an appropriate level of challenge and, often, music provides a calming and soothing backdrop. Pupils are invited and expected to make a contribution, sometimes through describing their own experiences.
- 93 The school rightly recognises that a significant proportion of its pupils lack confidence and display low self-esteem. This may have been caused by moving schools or because of some event in their life. All staff are on the look-out for signs of a problem and there are well-trained people, both inside and outside the school who can, and do, make a difference. However, the school does not just wait for problems to arise, but takes action in lessons to improve matters, for example, by talking through personal issues in circle time (class discussion). Throughout the school, rewards and praise are very important and effective means of showing pupils that they do achieve on a daily basis. Furthermore, a group of 'gifted and talented' pupils talked confidently to inspectors about knowing they have a gift or a talent and described how their skills are extended.
- 94 In the very full plan for this work, it is clear that some aspects are taught in lessons for other subjects. Good examples of this effective way of working are:
- in English, teaching Year 4 pupils how to use the library, with full attention paid to borrowing and returning books. Good development of independent skills;
 - in science, Year 2 pupils learned about human growth and used extensively their own memories and experiences. Year 5 pupils learned about how a varied diet helps to keep us healthy;
 - in religious education, pupils in all classes learn about a range of religions. Equally, they discover aspects of their own character and how it can grow.
- 95 The coordinator leads and manages the subject very well. She actively promotes training and has a clear vision for future developments. The school is rightly proud to have just received the Blackpool Healthy Schools Award at Level 3.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
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	1
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	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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