

INSPECTION REPORT

CHERRY FOLD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Burnley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 133622

Headteacher: Ms Wendy Tracey

Lead inspector: Ms Margot D'Arcy

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 26th May 2005

Inspection number: 273223

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 382

School address: Cog Lane
Burnley
Lancashire
Postcode: BB11 5JS

Telephone number: 01282 426630
Fax number: 01282 832302

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr C Keene
governors:

Date of previous N/A
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This large school was formed in September 2002 from an amalgamation of four schools. One of these had been judged to be failing to give pupils an acceptable standard of education and another had serious weaknesses in aspects of its work. Until August last year, the new school operated on three sites. An associate headteacher dealt with issues such as finance, personnel and the building of a new school. Ten months ago pupils and staff moved into the new building and the current headteacher was appointed.

Most pupils are of white British heritage. There are very small numbers from other minority ethnic groups, mostly Asian and Black African and Caribbean. However, all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (40 per cent) is well above the national average, as is the proportion with statements. The range of pupils' needs includes: specific, moderate and severe learning difficulties; social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; speech or communication difficulties; hearing and visual impairments; and autism. Pupils are organised mostly into single age classes but some are in mixed age classes. One of these contains both infant and junior pupils (Years 2 and 3¹). The school also has two classes, the Sunshine Class (for pupils from reception to Year 2) and the Hive (for pupils in Years 3 to 6) that give varying levels of support to pupils with learning and other difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (68 per cent) is well above the national average. The area in which the school is situated is considerably disadvantaged both socially and economically. As such, the school is involved

¹ Throughout this report, where junior (Years 3 to 6) classes are referred to this includes the Year 2 pupils in this class. Where Year 2 pupils are referred to without further explanation, the comments relate to pupils in the Year 2 class.

in five government initiatives² that bring in additional funding to support schools working in challenging circumstances. The school makes provision for various community projects, including a family learning programme.

A high number of pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual admission and transfer times³. When children begin school, their attainment is very low.

² Excellence in Cities; Single Regeneration Budget; Sure Start; The Children's Fund; Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

³ This is termed 'mobility'.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23158	Ms Margot D'Arcy	Lead inspector	English Art and design
13448	Ms Dawn Lloyd	Lay inspector	
23276	Mrs Margaret Mann	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage History Music Religious education
11528	Mr Michael Wainwright	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Geography Physical education
27591	Ms Madeline Campbell	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus Limited
BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Boughton
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG22 9HQ

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school that is meeting pupils' needs well. Development in many areas is occurring at a fast rate in response to very good leadership and management from the headteacher and governors. Standards are well below average, but these reflect past underachievement and the significant barriers to learning that are faced by many pupils. These are being tackled well, however, as evidenced by good teaching in many classes and very good provision for the care and support of pupils and their families. These features are having a positive impact on pupils' learning, attitudes to school, and behaviour. The school's income and expenditure are high, but nevertheless it is providing satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Highly effective leadership and management ensure that the school is well focused on improving pupils' academic standards and all-round development.
- Pupils are not attaining good enough standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Weak speaking and listening skills hold pupils back in many subjects.
- From a very low starting point, nursery and reception children achieve well.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education and reach the expected standards.
- Teaching is good overall, with strengths in the juniors and in the work of support staff.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2⁴ is satisfactory overall but too variable; higher attainers in Year 2 are not challenged enough.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are provided for very well.
- The school provides a very good level of care for pupils and promotes their personal development very effectively.
- The school's very good links with the community are supporting learning.
- There are good links with parents and a very good range of support programmes for them.
- The school works very hard to improve pupils' attendance, but it remains well below average.

This is the school's first inspection so judgements about improvement are not made.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E - very low (in the bottom five per cent nationally)*

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

⁴ In this report, references to Year 2 relate to pupils in the infant classes, not those sharing a class with Year 3 pupils.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Only two sets of results are available for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils so it is not possible to determine any trends or form firm views about the performance of different groups, such as boys and girls. However, the results in relation to similar schools provide a valid indicator of achievement over time, being based on the results attained by pupils when they were at the end of Year 2. Inspectors' findings support the results in the table. While standards are well below average by the end of Year 6, given pupils' prior attainment they have achieved satisfactorily. Currently, pupils in the junior classes are achieving well in response to good teaching and improved curriculum provision. By the end of Year 2, standards are well below average. However, most pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving satisfactorily.

Throughout the school, pupils' basic skills in language, literacy and numeracy are insufficiently well developed to help them fully understand the work that they are given. Skills in ICT are also well below national expectations. The school's provision for these aspects is currently satisfactory and developing rapidly. Already, there is good provision for all of these features in the Foundation Stage⁵. Whilst many of these children do not reach the expected learning goals by the end of the reception year, in relation to their starting points they achieve well in all aspects of their work. In all year groups, pupils achieve well in religious education and standards are in line with expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is because there has been consistency in the way this subject has been led and managed for a number of years. Throughout the school, inspectors did not note any significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **satisfactory**. Attitudes to school are good and behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance is poor, however, and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

In challenging circumstances the school is providing pupils with a **good** education. **Teaching is good**, with strengths in many junior classes. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is mostly satisfactory, but is not always good enough to stretch higher attainers or help pupils make up lost ground. Support staff make a very good contribution to teaching and learning. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with a good focus on literacy, numeracy and the development of personal standards. The many pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. The school provides a high level of care, guidance and help for pupils and their families that draw well on its very good links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **very good**. The headteacher's excellent vision and drive are taking the school forward at a rapid rate. There is also excellent commitment by managers to ensure that all pupils are given the best chance possible to succeed. Senior staff support the headteacher well. Governors are committed and work very hard to help the school. They meet all of their legal obligations.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a good opinion of the school and are happy with what it provides. Pupils also like their school. They are particularly proud of the new building and say that they get on well with teachers and other staff.

⁵ The Foundation Stage relates to nursery and reception children

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in English, focusing particularly on speaking and listening skills, mathematics and ICT;
- raise the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 so that it matches that seen in other parts of the school and, in Year 2, provides appropriate challenge for higher attainers;
- continue the very good efforts to improve attendance and punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. However, standards are not yet high enough, being well below average in the core subjects⁶. In the main, this is because many pupils have significantly underachieved in these subjects in the past due to weaknesses in provision. Pupils' poor speaking skills also prevent them from achieving better standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- From a very low starting point, nursery and reception children achieve well.
- Throughout the school, basic skills in English and mathematics are insufficiently well developed.
- In the junior classes, good and better teaching is boosting pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and helping many to catch up on their learning.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils are achieving satisfactorily overall, but the rate of progress is slower than in other parts of the school and higher attainers in Year 2 are insufficiently challenged.
- Good provision for religious education allows pupils to reach the expected standards.
- In Years 1 to 6, standards in ICT are well below national expectations.

Commentary

1. When children begin school their levels of attainment are very low in most areas of learning. Standards are somewhat better in relation to children's large physical skills, such as their ability to run, climb and manoeuvre wheeled toys. However, when it comes to controlling and manipulating small equipment and materials and understanding healthy practices linked to eating, sleeping and hygiene, standards are also well below expectations on entry. In particular, children experience significant difficulties communicating orally and the social skills of many are considerably undeveloped. Consequently, teachers spend much time each day promoting learning in these areas, and to good effect. Although few children reach the learning goals expected by the end of reception, high quality teaching and the provision of a good range of learning experiences ensure that all make good progress. While children's standards improve at a good rate, by the end of reception they are still well below expectations in all areas other than creative development and aspects of physical development, where children reach the expected learning goals.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	11.9 (12.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	9.2 (10.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	12.3 (13.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

⁶ English, mathematics and science.

2. Year 2 pupils' national test results in 2004 were very low⁷ in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, these results were well below average in reading and very low in writing and mathematics. Although the results suggest considerable underachievement when compared with similar schools (based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals) inspectors did not find this to be the case⁸. The poor test results reflect a number of negative influences that adversely affect pupils' standards and achievement, for example low attainment on entry, poor attendance and significant learning difficulties, including many social, emotional and behavioural issues. However, shortfalls in learning in the past have also played a part. Currently, whilst the quality of teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is mostly satisfactory, it is not compensating sufficiently for these barriers to learning. Although some good teaching occurs in Year 1, overall too many pupils, particularly in Year 2, are not catching up quickly enough. Higher attainers in this year group are not always challenged sufficiently.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.3 (21.1)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	24.2 (22.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.2 (25.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 68 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Year 6 pupils' national test results in 2004 were very low in English and well below average in mathematics and science. In all three subjects, however, the test results were much better than those achieved the previous year. Moreover, when the results are compared with those of similar schools (based on pupils' performance in the tests at the end of Year 2) they are broadly average, indicating satisfactory achievement over time. The improvement in the 2004 test results, whilst not providing sufficient evidence of a trend, was reflected in the good learning seen in lessons in many junior classes during the inspection. However, in many year groups, standards across the curriculum remain well below expectations for pupils' age. The barriers to learning listed earlier, along with a high rate of mobility, continue to have a negative impact so that, often, the good learning seen in lessons is not always retained. The situation is exacerbated by pupils' weak language and communication skills. These hold them back in a range of subjects and limit their performance in tests. The school is aware that this is an issue for pupils in all year groups and has taken some useful steps to address it. Whilst these are working well, the approach is not intense enough to drive up standards at the rate required.
4. The need to improve standards and give all pupils the chance to achieve their potential is at the heart of the school's aims and is clearly obvious to any visitor. To this end, the school is working extremely hard to counteract barriers to learning, for instance in its work with parents and the community and in the action it takes to improve pupils' attendance, behaviour, attitudes and well-being. The nature of many pupils' circumstances and difficulties means that this process does not always run without hitches, so improvements to standards are not always evident as quickly as in many other schools. Nevertheless, the school has got its priorities right. Its intense focus in the

⁷ In the bottom five per cent nationally.

⁸ It should be noted that the free school meal comparisons for this school are not completely reliable because the proportion of pupils taking these is particularly high.

last year on helping pupils to enjoy school, form effective relationships, behave appropriately and attend more regularly is providing the bedrock for better standards and achievement in the future. Coupled with good teaching, continuing improvements to the curriculum, and very good leadership and management, the school's capacity to improve is very good.

5. During the course of the amalgamation, there has been considerable disruption at many levels. However, there has been continuity in the co-ordination of religious education. This has enabled the subject to develop well, resulting in pupils making good progress and attaining the expected standards. However, across the school, pupils are not achieving as well as they might in ICT. In the main this is due to past weaknesses in provision. Some good action has been taken recently to improve the curriculum and resources for ICT. However, the school is aware that it still has to tackle the issue of giving pupils enough time and opportunities to develop and practise new skills as well as catching up on ones that they have missed or forgotten.
6. Overall, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Although there is very good provision for these pupils, for some there are frequent setbacks in response to factors beyond the school's control, such as absences, problems at home and issues related to their specific difficulties and conditions.
7. The school is well focused on raising standards and ensuring that pupils achieve their potential. During the inspection, no significant differences were noted between the standards and progress of girls and boys. However, the school is monitoring attainment by gender rigorously to detect and address any trends that might show up in the future. During the past year, the headteacher has ensured improved quality of teaching and the curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT. Whilst the provision for other subjects develops, these areas rightly remain priorities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave satisfactorily. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, is satisfactory. Attendance is poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory, in spite of the school's strenuous efforts to improve both.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show a good level of interest in school.
- Effective strategies to promote good behaviour and relationships are having a positive impact.
- The school works hard to promote pupils' personal standards, but insufficient use is made of assemblies to promote spiritual development.
- Very good efforts are being made to improve attendance and punctuality.

Commentary

8. Most pupils enjoy school and are keen to participate in lessons and extra-curricular activities. This is because of the school's success in promoting very good relationships between staff and pupils, the tireless efforts that are made to support pupils' care and well-being, and the hard work that is done to make lessons interesting and fun.

9. Many pupils behave well in lessons. Although the behaviour of a minority can sometimes be unsatisfactory it generally does not disrupt the learning of others because teachers manage behaviour well in a firm but caring way. Clear rules that pupils understand and accept are implemented effectively. Pupils who have particular behavioural difficulties are given additional support to help them manage their behaviour, with short withdrawal periods proving effective. Overall, the atmosphere in lessons is conducive to learning and disruptions are minimal. Lunchtimes and play times are well organised with a good level of staff supervision. During the inspection, there were no signs of oppressive behaviour; pupils know that bullying will not be tolerated and that any incidents will be quickly dealt with.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	369	16	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0

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

10. Although there were 16 fixed term exclusions last year, these were imposed only as a last resort in the face of pupils being a danger to others or disrupting the learning of others. The number of exclusions so far this year has been reduced significantly. Given that many pupils only began working together as classmates ten months ago, and taking into account some of the rivalry that existed between the schools that amalgamated, the impact that the school has had on improving standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes is very good.
11. Pupils' personal development is promoted very well in all aspects of school life. Lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education make a particularly positive contribution to standards and achievement. The youngest children are given good guidance about right and wrong and, throughout the school, staff work hard to give pupils the necessary support and personal guidance about friendships, conflicts, respect and tolerance. In lessons, pupils are required to take turns, make choices, share resources and work together in differently-sized groups. Most respond positively to these expectations, which support them in achieving satisfactory standards in the areas of moral and social development. The recent election for the newly formed school council was a big event that added to pupils' social development, giving them a good insight into democratic processes. A residential visit for older pupils is thoroughly enjoyed and used well to foster independence, responsibility and teamwork.
12. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, with some good incidental provision being made in lessons such as religious education, science and ICT. For instance, Year 5 pupils were fascinated and amazed by the many different kinds of Bibles brought into a religious education lesson, especially one that had been in use since 1888. However, the good potential offered by assemblies is not capitalised upon satisfactorily. No atmosphere is created, for example, through lighting, music or giving pupils something interesting to look at. Whilst pupils are requested to close their eyes during prayer, there is little thoughtful reflection; worship is frequently disturbed by the loud ringing of the electronic bell or by noise from the kitchen.
13. There has been little time for pupils to experience many visits or visitors to enhance their cultural experiences. The school is aware of this shortcoming and is addressing it. Year

6 pupils talked excitedly and knowledgeably about their visit to Eden Camp in connection with work in history. Religious education contributes well to pupils' cultural development, with very good resources, including a wide range of artefacts for the major world religions studied. In geography, pupils discover about their home environment and the lives of people in other countries. In literacy, stories from various cultures are read, and in food technology pupils see and taste fruit and vegetables from around the world.

Attendance

14. Attendance is well below that found in most primary schools; the level of authorised absence is average but unauthorised absence is higher than in most schools and too many children arrive late. A rigorous monitoring system identifies pupils whose attendance and punctuality cause concern, so that the school's extensive support mechanisms can be implemented. Phone calls, personal visits by support workers and the education welfare officer, and a system of target setting for pupils themselves, are effective in helping some families. The school does all it can to persuade parents that it is important for their children to attend regularly. Rewards and incentives for pupils, such as certificates and the celebration of birthdays in school, have proved successful. However, many parents fail to understand the close link between good attendance and good achievement. As such they are not supporting the school's efforts to bring about improvement by getting their children to school regularly and on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	1.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides pupils with a good education that promotes their all-round development. The teaching is good and the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for. Care, guidance and support for pupils and their families are very good. There are very good links with the community that support pupils' learning, personal development and welfare.

Teaching and learning

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- There are strengths in teaching in the junior classes, particularly in English and mathematics.
- In Years 1 and 2, teaching is generally satisfactory, but its quality varies too much.
- Support staff make a very good contribution to teaching and learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs.
- Many pupils' limited language skills and other difficulties mean that they sometimes only make modest progress even when teaching is good.

Commentary

15. There are particular strengths in teaching in the Foundation Stage and in most junior classes. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory overall, but is too variable. Moreover, this quality is not always good enough to help pupils overcome past underachievement and the many barriers to learning that they face. Some good teaching of English occurs in Year 1, but there is a lack of challenge for higher attainers in the Year 2 class. The teaching of mathematics and science in both of these year groups is satisfactory overall, but higher attaining pupils in the Year 2 class are not challenged enough. The management of pupils' behaviour is generally effective in these year groups, but there are some weaknesses in Year 2. Here, the pace of lessons is frequently too slow and the limited range of methods used often causes pupils' attention to wander and their behaviour to deteriorate. During the inspection, the good impact of support staff in this class was crucial in keeping pupils' behaviour in check and helping them to concentrate. These staff also had a particularly good impact on pupils' learning when they were teaching small groups.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	16 (30%)	24 (45%)	11 (21%)	2 (4%)	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.

16. Children in the nursery and reception classes are taught very well. Teaching is never less than good and in half the lessons it is very good. This highly effective teaching is characterised by a very good team approach and planning of good quality. Staff interact very well with children, promoting effective learning at every opportunity. Good use is made of assessment information and the staff's thorough knowledge of children to match work to their specific needs. Consequently, learning moves forward at a very good rate.

17. In the junior classes, most of the teaching is good and almost a third is very good. There is particularly effective teaching in English and mathematics, including teachers finding good opportunities for pupils to use and develop literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons thoroughly so that all pupils' needs are addressed. They explain new ideas clearly, using subject specific vocabulary and clarifying the meaning of words that pupils may not have come across before. In whole-class sessions there is good involvement of many pupils, with teachers modifying their questions to pupils' different abilities so that all can be involved and experience success.

18. These strong features, plus teachers' good use of a variety of methods and the brisk pace they set in lessons, often produce good learning. However, the barriers to learning faced by many pupils sometimes prevent them from benefiting as well as they might from good teaching. Frequently, good learning in lessons is not retained so reinforcement of earlier learning is often required. External factors, such as absenteeism, mobility or problems at home, often play a part in how well pupils learn, so that there are examples of the quality of pupils' work differing considerably at different times for no apparent reason. The limited vocabulary of many pupils is another barrier. Often they fare better with questions that require very simple answers. When more open-ended questions are asked, many falter and have difficulty expressing their thoughts. This has a knock-on effect when pupils come to record work so that weak

writing skills are not the only difficulties they encounter. Some, understandably, become frustrated and their application and behaviour dip. This said, inspectors saw considerably good attitudes and behaviour in many junior classes. These have resulted from the intensive focus that the school has given to promoting attitudes and behaviour during the last year, including teachers' management of behaviour.

19. There is good teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Most teachers make good use of pupils' individual education plans when planning work for them. Lessons in the Sunshine Class and Hive are taught very well. In class lessons where the overall quality of teaching and learning is only satisfactory, this group often learn well because of very good support from teaching assistants. Without disrupting the flow of the lesson, assistants often provide additional explanations to pupils and encourage them to listen well and take part. When leading activities with small groups, most assistants achieve an effective balance between helping pupils and challenging them.
20. The school has produced some good systems to assess pupils' progress. Once comprehensive data for every pupil over a number of years is in place, this should enable the school to effectively track the value added to each pupil's learning. Currently there is good analysis of annual test results that has led to action to improve identified areas of weakness. The data is also analysed to check on the relative performance of groups, such as boys and girls and minority ethnic pupils; the possible impact of absences is also taken into account. The good systems to assess and measure the progress of pupils with special educational needs are being extended to others in Years 1 and 2 so that even very small steps forward can be recorded, celebrated and used to plan the next stage of learning.
21. Teachers' evaluations of pupils' learning are helping them to match work more accurately to their needs. Currently, this is being done satisfactorily, with instances of good practice in many junior classes and in the Foundation Stage. Whilst the marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall, there are some inconsistencies. The best examples, many of which occur in English, are where teachers celebrate pupils' successes, but also tell them how they can do better, for example 'keep trying to put commas in the correct places'. A start has been made in involving pupils with special educational needs in assessing their own progress, so that they are aware of what they have achieved and how they can move on.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of opportunities to meet the needs and interests of pupils. Opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory and improving swiftly. The standard of accommodation is very good and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well across the curriculum, but the promotion of speaking and listening skills is not intensive enough.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.
- There are strengths in the curriculum and resources for religious education.
- Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good curriculum.
- The provision for pupils' PSHE is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are provided for very well.
- The accommodation is very good, but there are some issues with the hall.

Commentary

22. In the past ten months, much has been done to address previous shortcomings in curriculum provision and ensure that there is a whole-school approach to planning. As such, the curriculum in all subjects meets national requirements. Rightly, English and mathematics have received the most attention, resulting in some particularly effective provision for reading and writing. There is some good practice in promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills, for example, through the 'talking partners' initiative where pupils discuss work with a partner before answering questions. However, given that pupils' weak language skills have a negative impact on reading and writing standards and often prevent them from benefiting as well as they could from good teaching in a range of subjects, this aspect does not have a high enough profile. Curriculum provision for ICT is currently a priority. Recent improvements have been made to planning and resources, but the school is aware that pupils need more opportunities to develop and practise skills across the curriculum.
23. The curriculum for religious education is good. Good planning and very good resources for this subject have been developed continuously because there has been stability in co-ordination. In other subjects, the planning of learning experiences for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, with some good links made between subjects to make learning more meaningful. In particular, literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well across the curriculum, which is providing good support for the development of basic skills. Nursery and reception children are provided with a good range of experiences across all areas of learning. Here, there is a very good emphasis on practical work and structured play, and a good balance between directed activities and those children choose for themselves.
24. The school is currently providing a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and this aspect is developing quickly. Pupils enjoy, and remember good detail about, visits and visitors, and are eager to participate in after-school clubs.
25. A strength in all year groups is the provision for pupils' PSHE. Lessons in this subject and circle time⁹ sessions play an important part, for example, in helping pupils understand how to be healthy, develop safe practices for instance through sex and drugs education, form good relationships, and learn how they can be part of and contribute to the wider community.
26. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The very good support that they get from teaching assistants and the additional facilities of the Sunshine Class and Hive ensure that they are given every opportunity to be fully included in the learning experiences offered. Additional support programmes are also used well to enable pupils with learning difficulties to catch up.
27. The accommodation is very good, but the acoustics of the hall are causing problems. Quiet talk and sounds are difficult to hear and loud sounds reverberate; automatic fans add to the difficulties. However, pupils are rightly very proud of their new school, which is bright and spacious, with attractive displays that celebrate their achievements. Outdoor provision for the youngest children is very good. The number and quality of teaching and support staff are good overall. Resources are satisfactory. There is some

⁹ Where pupils sit in a circle and discuss issues

imbalance across subjects as resources are built up, but in all cases they are sufficient to support at least satisfactory teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school's procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are very good. Support, advice and guidance are good overall, with strengths in the support for pupils' personal development and in the provision for those with special educational needs. Pupils' involvement in the work of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Support for the individual needs of pupils and their families is very good.
- There are good arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety.
- Pupils' views are sought and valued.

Commentary

28. One of the school's priorities is to promote in pupils the positive attitudes and good behaviour that are essential to effective learning. It does this very well. The very good pastoral care provided by class teachers is supplemented by input from an extensive range of specialists, whose work dovetails to ensure that every possible need of pupils and their families is met. The Sunshine Class and Hive provide effective support for pupils with behavioural or personal difficulties. They work flexibly, so that staff can respond to specific needs, be they short or long term. This approach prepares pupils to integrate better into class activities. Child support workers give one-to-one attention to pupils, either in class or outside lessons. They use a range of strategies to help pupils build up their confidence and self-esteem. Family/school liaison workers give invaluable support to parents and carers, supplementing their own expertise by calling on the services of external agencies for advice and help on issues as diverse as housing, health and parenting skills. Overall, this means that the school can deal with any circumstance that affects a pupil's ability to learn. Staff know pupils and their families very well and show genuine concern for their welfare. As a result, pupils and their parents build very good relationships of trust and confidence with adults in school. This, in turn, means that pupils feel secure and are able to benefit from their education.

29. Thoughtful attention is paid to health and safety requirements. There are regular checks of the building and grounds, and staff are constantly vigilant so that any potential hazard is identified immediately and appropriate action taken. Risk assessments are undertaken for all activities, including educational visits, and teachers are careful to follow safe practices in lessons such as science and physical education. Pupils are very well supervised at all times and the school has introduced procedures to minimise risk, for example, in regulating movement around the building. There are good arrangements for first aid and routine medical care. Individual medical plans ensure that pupils with known problems, such as food allergies, can be looked after properly. Procedures to ensure child protection are very good and all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to this. In preparation for an application for the Healthy Schools Award, work has begun on a programme to encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

30. Although the school council is in its early stages, pupils already feel that the school listens to their views and values their opinions. They have completed questionnaires and discussed issues informally with the headteacher. Class councils have allowed pupils to consider matters of concern to them, which are then fed back by teachers to

senior management. The school is particularly keen to involve pupils closely in future developments that affect them directly, for example by including a pupil as a member of the working party looking at the relationships aspect of PSHE. The new school council, with members from reception to Year 6, has already given rise to much excitement and anticipation. Each classroom is already equipped with a list on which pupils can enter their suggestions for topics to be discussed, and the newly elected councillors are looking forward to making their voices heard.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good and improving. There are very good links with the local community and liaison with other schools and colleges is good. Provision of educational support for parents and carers is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Educational programmes for adults effectively help parents and carers to support pupils' learning.
- Very good links with the local community enrich pupils' learning and personal development.
- An increasingly fruitful partnership with parents is encouraging them to become more actively involved in school life.

Commentary

31. The school is not externally funded to offer family learning. However, with the help of staff and resources from Burnley College and Lancashire Adult Learning the school has made its own arrangements to offer a variety of educational programmes for parents. These range from general interest courses that allow the participants to get to know one another and to feel comfortable with their surroundings, to accredited courses that offer qualifications in numeracy, literacy and ICT. The adults who take part in these value them highly, because their confidence has been boosted and their self-esteem enhanced. In addition, the courses have helped parents and carers to understand and support the work that their children are doing in school. Other courses offered include parenting skills and a very successful family literacy course, where both parents and pupils (currently those in Year 5) learn together. Although the programmes presently cater for small numbers, there is great potential for expansion as word about their success, and the enjoyment they bring to participants, spreads. Links with the local community are developing rapidly.

32. As well as using the local area as a curricular resource to support work in geography, history and science, the school benefits from special relationships with local firms and organisations. The Hive and Sunshine Class hold a daily breakfast as part of the provision for developing pupils' social skills. This is sponsored by a local bakery, which not only provides the food, but also allows representatives to visit each half term to discuss pupils' targets with them. These visits are an excellent opportunity for pupils to practise social skills and provide an incentive for them to achieve their targets, since success will often result in a special treat. Burnley Football Club offers coaching to pupils, as well as providing an out-of-school educational facility, where pupils can work on improving their ICT and literacy skills. A housing association has organised an innovative project in which pupils learn about horticulture and their local environment through planting hanging baskets for their homes. Religious education and PSHE lessons are supported by clergy from local churches, who regularly take assemblies and by BEST, an evangelical group who specialise in work with schools. Such profitable

links with external organisations help pupils develop an awareness of life outside school and provide a valuable contribution to their personal and social development.

33. The school is very keen to develop a positive partnership with parents. A wide range of helpful information is provided for them, covering everyday school issues, details of what children will be learning and the progress that they are making. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress and are regularly invited into school to review this with teachers. The headteacher's weekly newsletter is written in a warm, friendly style, and day-to-day informal contacts with teachers and support staff encourage parents to approach the school with confidence. A well-equipped, comfortable room is specially designated for parents to enjoy a daily 'drop-in' to meet staff and other parents for a chat and a coffee. Parents are beginning to respond to these efforts to welcome them into school. A parents' forum now meets regularly. Its members act as a channel for communicating parents' views to the governors and senior management team. They have also begun targeted fund-raising for the benefit of the children. The school is hopeful that more parents will now come forward to play an active part in supporting their children's learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership, management and governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership and motivational skills of the headteacher are underpinning significant improvements to provision and standards.
- The headteacher, governors other managers are successful in ensuring an excellent commitment to inclusion.
- The school has identified exactly the right priorities for improvement.
- There is good leadership and management of key subjects and areas.
- Governors are well involved in the school's work and provide very good support.

Commentary

34. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. Although only in post for a relatively short time, she has given this new school a real sense of identity and had a significant impact on improving standards and provision. Whilst there still are many things to accomplish, the headteacher's excellent clarity of vision and sense of purpose have been pivotal in identifying the right priorities to move the school forward. Whilst much emphasis continues to be given to promoting pupils' personal standards, such as behaviour, and providing for their social and emotional well-being, the headteacher has not lost sight of the need to raise standards. Tackling and breaking down the barriers to learning experienced by many pupils are evident in the school's excellent commitment to inclusion. This underpins the drive to ensure that all pupils are given the best chance possible to reach their potential.

35. The school's commitment to continuous improvement is evident in their involvement in an intensive support programme with the local education authority. This is having a very beneficial effect at many levels. The good focus that has been given to promoting basic skills and the rigorous checks that have been made to improve teaching were clearly evident during the inspection. Key priorities are clearly addressed in the school's detailed improvement plan, which is a very good document to guide improvements and measure the extent of progress toward these.

36. The school is unusual in having a second headteacher as well as a deputy, both of whom do not have a significant teaching commitment. During the headteacher's first year in school, this enhanced provision has been very useful in allowing her to focus unwaveringly on key improvements without the distraction of dealing with some of the more mundane day-to-day issues. These senior managers have been significantly involved in managing pupils' behaviour and developing curriculum provision and assessment. The good information that they have been able to give the headteacher about parents and staff has helped her in handling many related issues. However, in the light of the school's improved position, the structure of senior staffing is rightly being reviewed.
37. Subject co-ordinators are committed and keen to make an impact. Their roles are developing in line with the school's priorities. Some very positive effects are being seen in subjects where teams share co-ordination responsibilities, such as English and mathematics. This results in good communication about standards and provision in different phases of the school and clear agreement on priorities for improvement. The co-ordinator for ICT also has a good insight of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and is clear about what needs to be done to improve standards. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed well. The co-ordinator ensures that there is a high awareness throughout the school of these pupils and their specific problems. Their standards, achievement and the provision made for them are monitored well. There is good leadership and management of religious education and the Foundation Stage is led and managed very well. In both of these areas there has been continuity of leadership during the upheaval of amalgamation, with the impact being seen in pupils' good achievement.
38. Governors are a very effective team. The varied expertise and experience of the chairs of the different committees are particularly useful when discussing the school's work in different areas, its priorities, and important decisions about how the budget should be used. This core group of governors are closely involved with the school and have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They keenly monitor the school's work and, in their role as a critical friend, regularly challenge it to improve and account for its performance. Governors are key players in shaping the school's development.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,530,410	Balance from previous year	252,994
Total expenditure	1,688,220	Balance carried forward to the next	95,184
Expenditure per pupil	4,466		

39. Since it was formed in 2002, monies from the school's involvement in various government initiatives have augmented its budget. The local education authority has also provided additional money to address issues such as the split site and enhanced staffing costs. These have now ended and the large reserves have been used to balance this year's budget. Staffing costs have been significant, but will be reduced considerably in the forthcoming financial year (2005 to 2006). The school's current surplus is now only marginally above national recommendations. Very careful monitoring of the budget occurs, with full involvement of governors and the local

educational authority. All spending decisions are made with pupils' interests at heart and to ensure that value for money is achieved.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

40. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs, is very good. By the end of the reception year, however, few children reach the expected learning goals in the areas of personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and knowledge and understanding of the world. This is because they begin school with very low levels of attainment in these areas. However, very good teaching and good learning experiences ensure that all make good progress. Consequently, by the end of reception, children have achieved well in relation to their starting points. Good achievement is also evident in creative development and physical development, where children reach the expected goals by the end of reception.
41. The Foundation Stage is led and managed very well. There is an effective team approach, with individuals taking responsibility for particular elements of the curriculum. Knowledgeable and dedicated staff provide very well for children's needs, including making good use of comprehensive assessment information in all areas of learning. Overall, the very good accommodation and resources are organised well to promote effective learning and children's independence. The attractive outdoor area is used particularly well to promote children's physical development, but its potential to support learning in other areas is not capitalised upon enough.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in this area are constantly promoted through very good teaching and learning experiences.
- The very good relationships engendered by staff help children feel safe and motivate them to try hard.
- There are good opportunities for children to develop independence and initiative.

Commentary

42. The emphasis that is continually placed on developing children's personal, social and emotional development underpins the whole curriculum and is working well. Children have formed very good relationships with the staff and are keen to please them. As such their behaviour is very good. Social skills are developing well, for example children show that they have learned to take turns and share. Through well-planned circle time activities, children learn how to treat each other and to know the right and wrong way to behave; for example, nursery children pass round their special puppet, handling and cuddling it carefully. Reception children positively glow with excitement as they peer into a Golden Treasure Box to find 'something special', which turns out to be their own faces in a mirror. Such experiences also do much to promote children's self-esteem. They respond well to opportunities to be independent; for instance when self-registering and preparing for physical education. Children also react quickly to the 'tidy up music' which alerts them to finish the task of their choice and go to a specific learning area. Staff

continually interact with children and have high expectations of their behaviour. They are good role models, treating the children with courtesy and respect and creating an environment where children develop confidence and feel secure.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in response to very good teaching and a good range of activities.
- Speaking and listening skills are promoted well in all areas of learning.
- Children are developing good attitudes to books.

Commentary

43. Teaching is very good. Staff use a wide range of strategies to promote children's language and literacy skills across the whole curriculum. The development of speaking and listening, rightly, has a high profile. Whilst children have learned to listen quietly they have difficulty answering questions or expressing views because their spoken language is so underdeveloped. Often they will point out their answer using picture clues, but few will readily answer in a phrase or sentence. The good opportunities that children have for pretend play are also supporting progress in this aspect. In these situations staff interact well with children, extending what they say to provide a model for them and to widen their vocabulary.

44. Basic reading and writing skills are taught effectively. Nursery children gain an awareness of letter sounds, for example through singing repetitive songs and rhymes. In reception, children's good achievement is evident when they work out missing letters from the alphabet and build simple words such as 'hot' and 'shop'. Teachers tell and read stories well so that children's attention is captured and their interest maintained. As such, they have good attitudes to books and enjoy browsing through them. They have been taught to handle books carefully and join in with repetitive stories. Children's early mark-making is encouraged and celebrated so that they are made to feel like 'writers'. By the end of reception, most children write their names legibly. They also produce isolated letters and, with support, simple words. A few make good attempts at writing short sentences.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are achieving well in response to very good teaching.
- Imaginative learning experiences promote children's good progress and enjoyment of mathematics, but insufficient use is made of the outdoor area.

Commentary

45. Counting skills and work with numbers are promoted throughout the day in many activities. Displays in classrooms are used well to further number recognition and mathematical vocabulary. Nursery children achieve well in sorting and matching activities based on number, colour and shape because of the very good help that they get from teaching staff. Activities, such as baking, give good opportunities for counting and weighing. Imaginative activities planned for water and sand play give children

experiences in collecting and recognising small and large objects and developing an awareness of capacity through their use of different sized containers. By the end of reception, the significant amount of practical work that children have experienced gives them a good grounding in basic mathematical ideas of number, shape, space and pattern. Pretend play is often structured well to promote children's understanding of mathematics in everyday life, for instance as they count and buy tickets to ride in their class bus. The timeline of daily activities helps children to understand 'morning' and 'afternoon' and the different times at which things happen. The wide range of imaginative activities promotes children's enjoyment of mathematics and supports their good achievement. Planning could be effectively extended to make use of the outdoor area to support learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality teaching and a wide and interesting range of activities promote very good learning.
- Children are developing particularly good skills in ICT.
- Early scientific skills of observation are developing well.
- Good quality displays support children's knowledge and understanding of their world.

Commentary

46. Most children have very limited experiences and poor general knowledge, but achieve well through the high quality teaching and the wide range of activities provided. A particular strength is children's rapidly developing skills in ICT. Good opportunities are planned for them to engage in ICT activities in class and the computer suite. Children are learning to handle the equipment with respect and control. They readily access a variety of programs and use the mouse and keyboard confidently; for example, using a mathematics program, the children controlled the mouse to place a specific number of sausages or eggs on a plate. There are plenty of opportunities for making and building so that children learn about different methods of joining materials. Early scientific skills are developing well. Children show great interest and wonder as they watch their caterpillars develop into butterflies and their bean and potato plants grow. As children share their experiences about themselves and their families and explore their immediate environment early geographical and historical awareness is promoted. Displays, including a good range of photographs, help children to remember important past events, such as when they first came to school or dressed up for a special occasion. Children show enjoyment when listening to Bible stories and are learning about important religious events, such as christenings. They know that a church is a place of worship.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop confidence and appropriate physical skills in the outdoor area.

- Staff challenge and support the children well.
- There are very good resources to promote children's large movements and body control.
- A good range of activities is provided to promote children's small movements.

Commentary

47. Through very good teaching, thoughtfully planned activities and good access to a well-equipped outdoor area, children's co-ordination skills, such as climbing, balancing and jumping, develop well. In this aspect of physical development, standards by the end of reception are as would be expected for children's age. Outdoors, a wide range of equipment is provided, so that children have good experiences in pedalling and manoeuvring wheeled toys on the well-marked out undulating areas. Teaching staff make sure that children listen carefully to instructions and challenge them well. They make suitable points about health and safety, without suppressing children's imaginative play. No indoor physical education lessons were seen but the children have regular opportunities to use the spacious hall as part of their programme of physical development. Children's dexterity in manipulating and controlling small equipment, such as pencils, brushes and scissors, is promoted well in a variety of contexts. Whilst they make good progress, by the end of reception, their skills in handling and using such equipment are generally below those expected.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of reception, standards are in line with expectations.
- Good resources and learning opportunities help children to experiment creatively.
- Children's work is displayed effectively, boosting their self-esteem and confidence.

Commentary

48. Through very good teaching, children achieve well in this area and reach the expected goals by the end of reception. Ample opportunities are given for children to express themselves through painting, drawing, model making, music and creative play. They throw themselves wholeheartedly into this work and enjoy it immensely. Children's work is displayed very well and celebrates their efforts. For instance there are many large examples of collages and composite paintings, some illustrating favourite stories, such as 'Bears in the Night'. A good range of musical instruments enables children to experiment with sounds and extends their listening skills well. For example, reception children listened carefully to a recording of different sounds and matched them to objects connected with the sea and the beach. The activity was then extended to give children opportunities to play instruments that imitated these sounds. Children have learned the words and tunes to a variety of songs and rhymes. Teachers remind them to listen to the accompaniment and to sing without shouting. Children respond well and sing with enjoyment. Drama and pretend play, such as the Post Office corner, café and home corners, and the good range of dressing-up clothes, provide many opportunities for children to show creativity. The very good interactions of staff with children support their enjoyment and promote learning across a range of areas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whilst standards are well below average, over time pupils have achieved satisfactorily.
- Pupils' weak speaking and listening skills limit their progress in English and other subjects.
- Good teaching in junior classes and in Year 1 is helping pupils overcome past underachievement, but in Year 2 higher attainers are not challenged enough.

Commentary

49. By the end of Years 2 and 6, inspection evidence and the most recent test results (2004) show that standards are well below average. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are especially weak and limit their learning in other aspects of English and across the curriculum. Despite well below average standards, given their earlier attainment, pupils have achieved satisfactorily. Currently, pupils in the junior classes are achieving well in response to good teaching. There is also some good achievement in Year 1, but in Year 2 some higher attainers are not being challenged enough.

50. In many classes, pupils listen well, reflecting the interesting content of lessons, the impact of teachers' use of different methods, and the good work that the school has done to improve behaviour. However, whilst most pupils listen carefully and have satisfactory understanding, many have great difficulty responding orally, for instance answering questions that require more than a simple answer or expressing thoughts and views. Teachers work hard to get pupils to contribute in this way, but it is a stumbling block in many lessons and limits teachers' insight of how well pupils have understood the work covered. Weak speaking skills also affect the quality of pupils' recording so that they are constantly battling, not only with skills such as spelling, grammar, punctuation and organisation of written work, but also about *what* to write. The impact on reading is evident. Whilst many of the oldest pupils read accurately, limited vocabulary prevents them from understanding as fully as they might. Expression suffers and deeper meanings are not picked up. In research tasks, pupils have difficulty picking out the exact information that they need from a lengthy text.

51. Teaching is good overall, with some particularly effective teaching in junior classes. Most teachers make good use of assessment information to plan work that meets pupils' different needs. They include many pupils in whole-class sessions, thereby giving all the opportunity to succeed. Where teaching is not as effective, pupils become restless because the pace is too slow and the methods used rarely vary. Questioning focuses on a small number of pupils and higher attainers are not challenged enough. Lack of challenge was also evident in pupils' written work.

52. Teachers recognise the difficulties that pupils have expressing themselves orally and in many lessons provide good opportunities for them to discuss work with a partner before answering questions. This is working well and helping to raise pupils' confidence. Circle times are also making valuable contributions to pupils' development in this aspect, as is the effective way that many teachers extend pupils' oral responses. However, whilst a good range of reading and writing experiences is provided, a more intensive approach is

needed to improve pupils' speaking skills. In the long term this should reduce the need to rely so much on worksheets, many of which are currently being used to provide pupils with a structure for writing. Although marking is satisfactory, it is not consistent. Some very constructive marking was seen in a number of junior classes and in Year 1, but there are instances of cursory marking that gives pupils very little information about what they do well or how to improve.

53. Leadership and management of English are good. There has been a good focus on developing the subject over the past year and significant strides have been made. The school has worked very well with local education authority advisers to analyse planning, pupils' work and test results. This has enabled them to identify areas of strength and weakness and put in place good action to improve standards. The team approach ensures that all co-ordinators have a good insight into standards and provision in all phases of the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Good efforts are made to promote pupils' language and literacy skills in other subjects. Subject-specific vocabulary is generally promoted well; for example, pupils are encouraged to explain their strategies for tackling mathematics tasks. Research work, using books and the Internet, is planned in a range of subjects. Pupils experience different types of writing, such as instructions in design and technology, factual reports in science, letters in history and accounts in art and design.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils are achieving at least satisfactorily but standards are not yet high enough.
- Teaching in junior classes is good overall.
- Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but higher attainers in Year 2 are insufficiently challenged.
- Classroom assistants are having a very good impact on teaching and learning.
- Useful assessment systems help teachers to match work to pupils' needs, but marking is inconsistent.
- Insufficient use is made of classroom computers to support learning.
- Numeracy skills are being promoted well in other subjects.

Commentary

55. Inspection evidence and the most recent test results (2004) show that the standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 are very low and by the end of Year 6 they are well below average. However, given their starting points and the high proportion with special educational needs, they have achieved satisfactorily. Many Year 2 pupils are insecure in their knowledge of number, such as pairs that make 20; a few are still unsure about number pairs to ten. Pupils lack confidence and rely heavily on adult support to guide them, particularly in recording work. In Year 6, pupils add pairs of two and three-digit numbers, but whilst a few calculate mentally many have to write the numbers down to achieve correct answers. Across the school, many pupils have

difficulty explaining their methods because their vocabulary is limited and their ability to articulate their thoughts is weak.

56. Teaching is good overall. Throughout the school, the range of attainment in classes requires very careful planning of lessons, targeting of questions and modification of work to provide suitably for all pupils. These features are addressed well in junior classes. Similarly, in the oral and mental parts of lessons, these teachers use correct mathematical vocabulary and constantly encourage all pupils to contribute. During the inspection, teaching in these classes was never less than good and half the lessons were very good. This is having a particularly positive impact on learning, but catching up on past underachievement is taking time. In the three infant classes catering for pupils in Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory. However, this standard is not having a strong enough impact on counteracting past underachievement. Moreover, higher attainers in the Year 2 class are not being sufficiently challenged.
57. In junior classes pupils are challenged well, with teachers maintaining a good pace to retain their attention and enthusiasm. A very good lesson in Year 6 included many good features. Pupils were challenged and required to explain and share their strategies to clarify their own thinking and help others. During mental work, the teacher ensured that pupils understood and used the required vocabulary of addition. The tasks set increased in difficulty so that as pupils gained in confidence they could take on further challenges. The work, which was based on costing holidays, was realistic in terms of addressing issues that pupils might encounter in everyday life. The lesson supported these pupils' positive views on mathematics, that is, "teachers make it fun".
58. Teachers and pupils benefit from the strong support of teaching assistants. Teaching assistants know what pupils are expected to learn and provide helpful guidance, particularly to those with special educational needs. During oral work, teaching assistants ensure that pupils maintain attention, give additional explanations where necessary, and encourage the more diffident pupils to take part. In the Sunshine Class and Hive, the very good relationships between adults and pupils result in particularly effective learning. In the Hive, for example, pupils in Year 4 and 5 with significant learning difficulties were effectively helped to apply their knowledge of weighing and measuring when making cakes.
59. In lessons where teachers have access to interactive screens some effective use is made of ICT and some good links are also made in lessons in the computer suite. However, during the inspection, very little use was made of classroom computers to support learning in mathematics.
60. Good assessment systems have been set up. Once data over a number of years is recorded, the information will assist the school in making accurate forecasts of future results and setting challenging targets for different groups. Day-to-day assessment, such as teachers' lesson evaluations, helps to ensure that work builds on what pupils have learned. Generally, this aspect is working well, but inconsistencies in marking mean that pupils are not always sufficiently aware of how they could do better.
61. The subject is led and managed well. The team approach is effective in ensuring that all involved are well aware of the standards, achievement and quality of provision across the school. The co-ordinators have worked effectively with the local education authority and overseen many improvements. There is good awareness the main strengths in mathematics and where improvements are needed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Good use is made of opportunities in other subjects to reinforce pupils' mathematics skills. In geography, Year 4 pupils produce pictorial diagrams and graphs to illustrate how they spend their time. In science, pupils in Year 2 produce a table of results to show the growth of plants. In many year groups, ideas about pattern and shape are reinforced effectively in art and design activities as, for example, when lower attaining Year 2 pupils moulded modelling material into different sizes and shapes, and Year 3 pupils explored repeating patterns.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whilst standards are well below average, improvements are evident and achievement is satisfactory overall.
- There is good teaching of science in the junior classes.
- In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory overall but work for higher attainers is not always challenging enough.
- A good emphasis is placed on investigative work and the use of correct scientific language.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are being promoted appropriately in science, but there is scope for greater use of ICT.

Commentary

63. Inspection evidence and the most recent test results (2004) show that by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are well below average. Standards reflect pupils' low attainment on entry, past underachievement, and differing learning experiences before coming to Cherry Fold. Currently, however, whilst standards could be higher, pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Learning experiences, including a good focus on practical and investigative work, are having a positive impact. Together with good, and sometimes very good, teaching, these aspects of provision bode well for improved standards in the future.

64. Appropriate to their age, pupils are developing skills in carrying out investigative work and recording what they have learned in a variety of ways, including tables, graphs, charts and written commentaries. There is a good emphasis on using correct scientific vocabulary; for instance, older pupils correctly use terms such as 'separation' and 'filtration' to describe an experiment. While pupils' investigative reports contain predictions and results, they are not particularly good at writing up their conclusions.

65. Pupils' work shows that, overall, teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. However, there is a difference in the quality of learning of Year 2 pupils in different classes. In the split class of Year 2 and 3 pupils, higher attainers are effectively challenged and learn well as a result. However, potentially higher attaining pupils in the other Year 2 class complete the same work as others, with no additional challenge built in to stretch them. The quality of teaching and learning in the junior classes is good overall, and sometimes very good. Where teaching is of this high standard, teachers' subject knowledge is very secure. Learning is also supported well when teachers clearly explain the purpose of the

lesson and where it fits into earlier learning. Whilst pupils enjoy the practical aspect of science, their ability to refine ideas and procedures is limited. Consequently, their perseverance with investigative work sometimes breaks down so they do not benefit as well as they might from good teaching. For example, Year 6 pupils were eager to construct a pressure pad switch to light a bulb, but were less enthusiastic in refining the circuitry.

66. Teachers capitalise satisfactorily on opportunities to promote literacy and numeracy skills in science. For instance, pupils in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class labelled the different parts of a plant and wrote their own predictions about what they thought would happen in an investigation. Numeracy skills are reinforced through opportunities that pupils are given to measure and record their findings, such as the distance a toy car travels on different surfaces or the time it takes for solids to dissolve. The school is aware that the use of ICT to support work in science is currently limited, but there are plans to develop this.
67. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The subject is not a main priority for development. However, an informed statement of the current position regarding standards and provision has been made, with appropriate action identified to secure improvements, for instance to pupils' understanding and use of scientific vocabulary and adapting work to pupils' different attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below expectations because of weaknesses in past provision.
- Some good improvements to provision have occurred recently.
- The subject has rightly been identified as a priority for development and the subject leader is working hard to improve standards.
- Teaching is showing good improvement, but not all staff are confident in using resources.
- ICT is not being used sufficiently well across the curriculum.

Commentary

68. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are well below expectations. In the main, this is due to the limited and vastly differing range of experiences that pupils have had in the past. As such, pupils' levels of confidence and competence vary across year groups and there are many gaps in their knowledge and skills. The school is working hard to address the situation, but until a few months ago the ICT suite was not fully resourced or operational and curriculum planning for different year groups was not being implemented consistently.
69. The subject co-ordinator has been successful in reviewing the curriculum to ensure that learning experiences for different year groups build on what has already been covered. New resources, such as interactive whiteboards, are being acquired and all classes are now timetabled to use the very new computer suite. These resources are having a very strong motivational impact on pupils. As such, they try hard in lessons and their confidence is growing. For example, Year 6 pupils have gained confidence using the

Internet for research tasks. They know how to use a search engine to answer questions that they have been set, but lack the skills to refine their enquiries to sift out the most relevant information. The use of interactive whiteboards in some classes is also proving effective. These often help to maintain pupils' interest and attention and so support better learning. A significant improvement to the provision is the increased confidence that many teachers have in using ICT. Overall, this is being seen in good quality teaching. There are some weaknesses in Year 2, however, where the teacher's lack of confidence hinders learning.

70. In the most effective lessons, staff clearly explain the learning intentions to pupils, which keeps them focused. New skills are demonstrated effectively so that pupils quickly apply them on computers. For example, pupils in a split Year 2 and 3 class entered scientific details about mini-beasts onto a database and then used the recorded information to answer questions. Teaching assistants play a significant part in helping pupils to learn, supporting whole-class lessons in the suite or managing groups who have been given an ICT-based task to complete in, for example, a literacy lesson. Pupils clearly enjoy working in the ICT suite and most behave well. Younger pupils share equipment sensibly, but occasionally some older pupils find it difficult to work co-operatively, which slows learning.
71. Whilst there is some good teaching and planning of learning experiences, the limited time that pupils have in the computer suite and infrequent use of classroom computers are not compensating sufficiently for past underachievement. Consequently, achievement continues to be unsatisfactory.
72. There is good leadership and management of ICT. The co-ordinator has produced a detailed improvement plan. This recognises the need to increase the use of ICT in classrooms and identifies a termly review of how effectively the ICT suite is being used. Some good improvements to what was, until recently, unsatisfactory provision are beginning to work their way through the school, with younger pupils demonstrating better understanding and skills than some older ones. Within the school, there is a good focus on raising standards and to helping pupils and staff gain more confidence in using the resources.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. The school recognises that promoting the use of ICT across the curriculum is currently an area of weakness. Some useful work was noted in English, science and mathematics, with some relevant links also being made in subjects such as art and design. However, these links, and the use of classroom computers, are inconsistent in different year groups so do not support the continuous development of skills.

HUMANITIES

74. Work in **geography** and **history** was sampled so no secure judgements are made about provision, standards and achievement.
75. No lessons in **geography** were seen. However, pupils' work shows that they receive a satisfactory range of experiences. Themes, such as those in Years 4 to 6 where pupils learn about rivers, mountains and climate, are covered well. Not all pupils are keen on the subject, but Year 6 pupils are aware of the purpose of geography. Some spoke with interest and knowledge and gave clear explanations, for example of six-figure grid references.

76. Only one lesson in **history** was seen in Year 1, which was very good. Here, pupils' developing understanding of past lifestyles was illustrated well as they discussed photographs of seaside holidays, methods of travel and clothes from the past and compared them with those of the present. In Years 3 to 6, pupils study a range of topics, including the Celts, Romans, Egyptians, Tudors and Greeks, as well as events leading up to Hitler's regime and the consequences. Year 6 pupils talk eagerly about their visit to Eden Camp to see exhibitions about the Second World War. They show empathy for the plight of Jewish people during that time and are beginning to ask why and how these things happened. Throughout the school, timelines help pupils to understand the influence of different monarchs and when, how, and why key events that have shaped history occurred. Work in history provides good support for pupils' literacy skills and cultural understanding. Across the school, pupils' work shows good coverage of the curriculum and discussions with them suggest that history is a subject that they enjoy.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Across the school, pupils achieve well and reach the expected standards.
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge provides good support for learning.
- A well-planned curriculum and very good resources motivate pupils to learn.
- Some good links are made with English, but more use could be made of ICT.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

77. Pupils are achieving well. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' recorded work reflects the difficulties many experience with writing. However, discussions with them show that they have gained sound knowledge and understanding of the areas covered.

78. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing a secure understanding of the events in Jesus' life and sequence, accurately, the Easter story and parables such as 'The Good Samaritan'. By the end of Year 2, they attempt to write their own versions of happenings and, for example, link their understanding of being a good friend with the betrayal by Judas. Pupils learn about the various festivals celebrated by different religions as well as special events, such as christenings. During Years 3 to 6, the curriculum widens and pupils learn about the main features of worship and practices that are special to Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. Pupils show good knowledge of Bible stories and understand the importance of the Qur'an for Muslims and the code of practice for Buddhists. By the end of Year 6, they have a sound knowledge and growing appreciation of the similarities and differences in the beliefs and practices of the wide range of religions that they study.

79. Teaching is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and encourage pupils to express their views in various ways. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils worked hard to convey the differing views of the disciples through role-play. Pupils enjoy lessons, which are enhanced by a very good range of resources. These include books, artefacts, videos, puppets and pictures for each religion taught. A priest from a local

church and an evangelical team are frequent visitors that enhance the provision. Pupils' own religious beliefs are capitalised upon. For instance, pupils explained how they learned to handle, with care, the Qur'an after having this explained and demonstrated by a Muslim pupil. Whilst some good links are made with subjects, such as English, which develop pupils' language and literacy skills, the use of ICT to support learning is at an early stage of development.

80. During the course of the amalgamation the co-ordination of religious education has remained the same. The knowledgeable and committed co-ordinator has continuously developed the provision and ensured that the subject retains a high profile. Regular and useful checks are made on the quality of pupils' learning and the work covered. Good assessment procedures have been implemented. In addition to end of unit assessments, each teacher assesses the attainment of every pupil and these are externally verified by SACRE¹⁰.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

81. Work in **art and design** and **music** was sampled so no secure judgements are made about provision, standards and achievement.

82. No full **art and design** lessons were seen, but other evidence shows that pupils cover an appropriate range of activities and produce work in two and three dimensions. Some good links are made with other subjects. These include: history, where older pupils have studied the artwork of the Bayeaux Tapestry; mathematics, where Year 1 pupils have focused on circles to produce portraits inspired by Paul Klee's work 'Head of a Man'; and older pupils making and decorating containers in design and technology. During the inspection, part of a Year 2 lesson was seen in which pupils applied themselves very well to extending the content of a small photograph. Their finished work showed good creativity and use of colour and line. Sketchbooks have been introduced for all pupils in Years 1 to 6 to help them practise skills and techniques.

83. **Music** is at an early stage of development. A commercial scheme is being used to support the teaching of all aspects. A good range of songs is covered giving pupils opportunities to explore different rhythms and styles of music. The quality of singing in assemblies and in some religious education lessons is enthusiastic and mainly tuneful. In discussions, pupils use correct terminology for notes, such as crochets and quavers. They show enjoyment when describing how they have performed for others and explain some of the simple compositions that they have created with instruments. However, pupils' knowledge of music and their skills in listening to and appraising it are limited. Pupils have sung carols at the local church at Christmas but, currently, there is little additional provision, such as extra-curricular activities, to promote standards and achievement. There are many missed opportunities in assemblies to develop pupils' appreciation and skills, for example by playing music by a particular composer or in a particular style as pupils enter and leave and finding a few minutes to talk to them about this.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

¹⁰ Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

- Although standards are well below expectations, pupils are achieving satisfactorily.
- There is some good teaching of design and technology in junior classes.
- Pupils enjoy the subject, but do not show sufficient accuracy with practical activities.

Commentary

84. Although only two lessons were seen, pupils' work and discussions with them show that standards are well below national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is due to past shortfalls in provision that have left pupils with underdeveloped knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are now given a satisfactory variety of 'design and make' opportunities but, for example, show low levels of accuracy in measuring and have limited knowledge of products and materials.

85. Pupils enjoy the subject, but show a preference for practical work as opposed to planning tasks. Infant pupils make moving vehicles from cardboard cartons and show an awareness of how to make their structure more rigid. They know that wheels need an axle to turn and learn how to incorporate this into their work. Older pupils in Year 5 design and make slippers, but many find accurate measuring and cutting of materials difficult. Year 6 pupils design and make model fairground rides, choosing from a variety of materials. Whilst most produce a finished product, many lack the skills and perseverance to modify, refine and improve their work.

86. No teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2. In the two junior lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good. Teachers were enthusiastic and motivated pupils well. Teaching assistants provided good support, particularly for pupils with special educational needs.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whilst there is some good teaching of basic skills, the overall quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education, but do not always behave as well as they can.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to compete against other schools.

Commentary

87. Lessons were seen in games and athletics. In these aspects, standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with national expectations. The standards attained by Year 2 pupils are below expectations because of weaknesses in teaching.

88. The subject has not yet been a priority for development. Consequently, there is variation in the quality of teaching and learning. In a Year 6 games lesson, teaching was good. The teacher showed good subject knowledge, maintained a brisk pace and was a very good role model for pupils. Clear demonstrations of throwing techniques were given so that when pupils applied themselves they showed at least satisfactory skills. Whilst the lesson was managed well and the teacher had high expectations of pupils' behaviour, some had difficulty co-operating with others. When required to work in small groups they

did not show appropriate sporting attitudes or the good standards of behaviour seen in other lessons. In a Year 3 games lesson, pupils showed better self-control. The teacher had high expectations and increased the challenges in skills practices so that pupils learned well. Occasionally, as in a Year 2 lesson, teachers rely too much on the support of teaching assistants because their subject knowledge is insecure. This lack of confidence slows the pace of lessons so that pupils lose concentration and do not achieve as well as they can.

89. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about physical education and explain how they are taught correct skills. The school has provided a good number of opportunities outside lessons that have allowed pupils to compete successfully against other schools. These include netball, football and cross-country running. Overall, however, whilst pupils are learning subject-specific skills, physical education is not making as strong a contribution as it could do to pupils' personal development.
90. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is encouraging other staff to be more involved. However, there has been no opportunity to check on colleagues' work or to support them where necessary, for example by working alongside them to model good practice.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

Provision in PSHE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in PSHE is making a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Activities are helping to promote speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

91. Pupils receive regular lessons in PSHE and the subject is reinforced through, for example, circle time, religious education lessons and assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to think about their feelings and the impact of their actions on others. Provision plays an important part in developing the social and moral skills of pupils and the school uses it well to influence behaviour and promote self-esteem. The interactive nature of many of the activities provides good opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills. This was seen in a good lesson in Year 6 where pupils explored the theme of friendship and resolving conflict. Pupils participated in a game in which they suggested ways of overcoming conflicting situations. Pupils' good attitudes and thoughtful responses showed that they took the session seriously. The school council is in its infancy so as yet it has made a relatively small contribution to pupils' understanding of citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (Ethos)	4
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
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	3
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).