

INSPECTION REPORT

BUCKSHAW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chorley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119205

Headteacher: Mrs K Stephens

Lead inspector: Mr J Hagan

Dates of inspection: 13th - 15th June 2005

Inspection number: 275277

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:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	185
School address:	Chancery Road Astley Village Chorley Lancashire
Postcode:	PR7 1XP
Telephone number:	01257 418862
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Lennox
Date of previous inspection:	January 2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized school with 185 pupils on roll, situated in Astley Village, Chorley, Lancashire. In some of the junior classes, more pupils have joined the school at different times than is normally found. Whilst the majority of pupils on roll are from white, British heritage families, 16 come from homes where English is an additional language; some of these are children whose parents work in the local hospital. Whilst some of them start school with little or no English, they are fluent in their mother tongue, which for most is Arabic. The school has a diverse intake and admits pupils from the full ability range; most show typical skills for children of their age. Some children are from professional families and others from less advantaged backgrounds but, overall, the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is more than usual for schools of this type. An above average number of pupils experience learning difficulties spanning a wide range of special educational needs; some classes have up to one third of pupils with a barrier to learning. The school runs a nurture group each morning, to support a small group of children with social and emotional problems. The percentage of children with statements of educational need is above the national average. The present headteacher took up post in January 2005. The school achieved the nationally recognised 'Investors In People' award in 2004; it was awarded the 'Chorley Race Equality Charter' in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1065	Mr J Hagan	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Science Physical education
32657	Mr N Thompson	Lay inspector	
33333	Mrs D Auton	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art and design Geography History Music
2810	Mrs C McBride	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. The quality of teaching is effective in helping most pupils to achieve well over time. The school is well led and managed and it provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a really good start;
- Pupils are really well looked after and the school provides them with high levels of care;
- Pupils behave well and work hard;
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used really well to support children's learning;
- The progress of pupils whose ability is slightly below average in writing and mathematics is not as fast as it could be;
- The school does not have a clear enough picture of pupils' achievement in each subject;
- Pupils are insufficiently involved in assessing their progress, and in contributing to the school's decision making processes.

The school's rate of improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The rate of progress made by the higher attainers in Years 2 and 3 in English and mathematics has improved. Standards in ICT are now much better and children achieve well. The provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage is better than it was, but more still remains to be done. The marking of children's work has not improved as much as could be expected.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The majority of pupils achieve well and reach average standards. The data in the table above needs to be treated with caution. Since they took the national tests in 2000 at the age of 7, over one-third of the class arrived new to the school at different stages. It is, therefore, difficult to judge how much value the school has added based on tests taken at 11 years. The number of children identified as having special educational needs is greater in some years than others; although they achieve well, they reach lower levels in national tests and this affects the school's overall performance. Inspection findings show that children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in all areas of learning. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English achieve really well. Pupils whose ability falls just short of average for their age could make better progress and achieve more, because their rate of learning is uneven, particularly in writing and mathematics. Children make marked progress in ICT; in other subjects, they progress well and reach standards that are typical of those seen in most schools.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Attendance levels are average and pupils are punctual. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good. Teachers are mostly successful in meeting pupils' needs. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is consistently good and children progress well. Pupils who are learning English are given effective support in developing their language skills. Most lessons offer enough suitable challenges for higher attainers and pupils with special needs, but they do not always pitch work at the right level for pupils who are close to the average for their age in writing and mathematics. Teaching assistants noticeably boost pupils' learning by supporting those who find work difficult or experience behavioural problems. In ICT lessons, teaching ensures that pupils are alert, motivated and keen to get on. Occasionally, too much time in lessons is spent with pupils listening to the teacher, rather than being engaged in 'hands on' activities. In general, teachers also expect too little of pupils regarding the neatness with which they present their work, or in evaluating how well they have done. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Good use is made of visitors to enliven children's learning, although there are fewer after school activities, or opportunities for children to take part in educational visits, than in many schools. The school looks after all pupils well, especially those with social or emotional problems. Relationships between staff and children are very positive.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher, senior staff and governors are good. There is scope for improving the work of subject leaders, who are doing well in many aspects of their role, but do not have a clear enough picture of children's achievement. The headteacher is already taking a strong lead and she has successfully addressed a number of issues in a short space of time. The governance of the school is effective; governors meet their statutory responsibilities and they are a very committed, hard working group. Together with the headteacher, they have gained an accurate picture of how well the school is doing, and take a prominent role in the school's decision making processes.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and children have positive views of the school; both feel comfortable approaching the staff if they have any concerns. Pupils really like the school's way of rewarding those who have tried hard each week; parents like the way that it provides their children with opportunities to choose, and experience, a range of additional activities. Some parents would like to see more opportunities for after school clubs, activities and visits to places of interest. Children enjoy coming to school and those who have joined the school at different times during the school year, say that they have been made to feel welcome.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise the achievement of children who fall slightly below average ability in writing and mathematics;
- Build a clearer picture of pupils' achievement in each subject; this means identifying more accurately the next steps for each pupil to take, particularly in writing and mathematics;
- Increase opportunities for children to become more involved in assessing their progress and contributing to the school's decision making processes.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well. Standards are average at the ages of 7 and 11 years.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get off to a very good start at school;
- Pupils from families whose first language is not English make good progress;
- Pupils whose ability falls just short of average do not achieve as much in mathematics and writing as they could.

Commentary

1. In the Foundation Stage, children achieve well in all areas of learning; the majority meet, and some exceed, the goals for children their age by the end of the reception class. From here, the school enables most of them to build well on this firm start, and to reach average standards throughout the infant and junior classes in most subjects of the curriculum.
2. Judged by test results, the school's performance is better in some years than in others, because occasionally classes have a higher proportion of pupils with special needs. Of the current Year 6, for example, one-third is identified with learning difficulties. This affects results adversely; whilst these pupils achieve well, they do not always reach an average score in tests and this pulls the overall result down.
3. The school's performance in national tests presents a positive picture when compared to similar schools, but it recognises that it could do better in writing and mathematics. Dips in these aspects are related to weaknesses in teaching and learning, which arise from underdeveloped assessment procedures. This impacts on the progress of some pupils. The school analyses test data and performance in the national tests, but its procedures for tracking individual pupils' progress and teachers' use of assessment to plan for the next stages of learning are not as strong. The group of children who are just short of the average for their age in writing and mathematics could do better, if this aspect of the school's practice was improved.
4. Pupils who experience problems in learning achieve well. The school identifies them at an early stage and plans carefully for their needs, with individual education plans and good on-going support. Their self-esteem and confidence generally remain buoyant and they do as well as could be expected against their difficulties.
5. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English make very good progress in learning to speak, read and write in English. Many who attend the school throughout both the infant and junior classes reach above average standards by Year 6. This owes as much to the support and encouragement that they receive from home, as it does to the school's efforts. Their families are largely from professional backgrounds and have very high aspirations for their children.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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English	26.5 (26.5)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.2 (26.5)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.2 (28.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.3 (16.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.9 (13.3)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.6 (15.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Provision for their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance rates have improved and are now close to the national average. Pupils arrive at school in time for the start of lessons.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils from different backgrounds and cultures get on well; there is racial harmony;
- The majority of children engage well with their work, are industrious, productive and behave very well;
- Pupils are polite, considerate and kind to one another;
- The school could do more to take pupils' views into account.

COMMENTARY

6. The school has improved both attendance and punctuality since the last inspection. This has been achieved by speedily following up any lateness and through good liaison with the school's Education Welfare Officer. The pupils' behaviour both in and out of classes is good. They are polite to visitors and to each other and conduct themselves well.
7. The school draws on the cultural background of the pupils to enrich the learning of everyone. In religious education lessons, for example, those who are Muslim have the opportunity to explain and share with the other children the customs and beliefs that underpin their Islamic faith. Major religious feasts and events are celebrated, such as Ramadan and Eid. In other respects, however, the school could do more to acknowledge the religious practice and cultural traditions of these pupils. No provision is made, for example, for prayer. There are signs in both Arabic and English in the reception class, but elsewhere this is not evident. Cultural awareness is not extended as far as it could be through educational visits, although the school compensates to some degree through the use of visitors, such as performing theatre groups.
8. Children's attitudes towards each other are good. In one instance, during a class discussion, children showed admiration for the bravery of a child who had recently had to spend time in hospital. More opportunities need to be given, however, for pupils to

develop their creative thinking in some subjects. Their views are not regularly sought, either in the day-to-day running of the school or in proposed school developments.

9. Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

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	168	3	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching enables most pupils to progress well;
- Good use is made of ICT to motivate and engage pupils;
- Weaknesses in the school's procedures for assessment slow the learning of some pupils.

Commentary

- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and know them well; they show high levels of care for them and are sensitive to their individual differences and characteristics. They set high expectations for pupils' conduct and, by working closely with teaching assistants, they ensure that the behaviour of pupils who experience difficulties does not adversely affect anyone's learning.

11. The degree of motivation and engagement shown by pupils in lessons is markedly increased when teachers explain or demonstrate using electronic whiteboards or video clips. This is a relatively recent innovation for the school and teachers have taken up the challenge of incorporating it into their teaching to very good effect. It grabs pupils' attention and holds their interest exceptionally well.
12. Whilst most groups make good progress in their learning, weaknesses in the school's assessment procedures mean that it is slower than necessary on occasions, particularly for those pupils who are close to, but not quite at, the average for their age. This is most noticeable in mathematics and writing. Teachers need a more precise view of the stage that pupils have reached, so that the work they set is accurately matched to their needs. Without this, it is difficult for teachers to set targets for pupils or to encourage them to evaluate their own progress against them. A further knock-on effect is that marking of work is not related closely enough to areas for future improvement; on occasions it is too cursory.
13. Some teachers move work on at a notably faster pace than others, because children spend more time on activity. Where teaching is more ordinary, teachers spend too much time talking to the class.
14. Pupils for whom English is not the mother tongue are taught well overall. They are mostly higher attainers who rise well to the challenge of learning to communicate in English, sometimes from a standing start. Teachers recognise and use opportunities to draw on their contributions to offer a different cultural perspective; they liaise effectively with outside agencies to identify and meet pupils' needs when they arrive at the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0)	3 (9)	22 (69)	7 (22)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

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

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum provided is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the infant and junior classes. The school's provision for pupils with special needs is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a good range of rich and stimulating learning experiences;
- Extended school activities and support for more vulnerable groups of children ensure that they make the most of school;
- Insufficient opportunities are planned for curriculum enrichment, including educational visits;
- Pupils need more opportunities to make links in their learning between different subjects.

Commentary

15. In Years 1 to 6, all subjects are covered in sufficient depth although, with the exception of the Foundation Stage, the school could plan more careful links between different areas of learning.
16. The school has been successful in improving equality of opportunity for potentially disadvantaged groups of children through a number of strategies and initiatives. Additional learning support has been made available in all classes through the provision of teaching assistants. The Breakfast Club helps ensure that children have a healthy meal and a happy start to their day, so that they are better prepared to benefit from being in school. A Nurture Group supports children who are experiencing stress in their lives and helps to enable their inclusion in the school community. A club, at the end of the school day, provides care and enjoyable activities after school.
17. The school meets the special educational needs of its pupils well. This is achieved through a well co-ordinated approach, which involves early identification and intervention. This is taken further through good liaison with parents, well crafted individual learning plans and effective liaison with outside agencies. In class, good quality support is readily available; the quality of care offered raises pupils' self-esteem and gives them a sense of achievement.

18. Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is improving. A new scheme of work has been introduced to the school; whilst it is beginning to have an impact, it has not yet been fully implemented. However, teachers are giving pupils more opportunities to discuss matters that are relevant to their concerns, for example, in Year 6 as they prepare to transfer to a new school. Improved resources and staff subject knowledge have helped the school to improve its ICT provision, which is now very good.
19. The school has made good use of visitors, for example theatre companies, this year. Pupils and parents judged the residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre by pupils in Year 6 to be a successful venture. The school also provides a broadly satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities but the programme of visits to places of cultural interest is too limited. Opportunities to add interest and vitality to the curriculum need to be increased.
20. The learning environment in school is bright and attractive, with pupils' work extensively displayed. Classroom display is geared to support learning. Improvement has been made to the Foundation Stage outdoor area but further attention to this is required, so that the children may have improved access to outdoor play and learning through discovery out of doors. Although some resources for outdoor activities are available, they are not easily accessible for everyday use.

Care, guidance and support

The support, advice and guidance provided to children are very good. The care, welfare and health and safety offered to the children are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are sensitive to children's individual needs and pick up their concerns quickly;
- The induction programme for children joining the reception class is good;
- Child protection procedures are very good;
- The individual care provided for vulnerable children, particularly through the Nurture Group, is very good.

Commentary

21. Staff know the children well. They work hard at addressing the negative effects of any adverse home circumstances and are largely successful in lessening the effect on pupils' well being and capacity to learn. The Nurture Group provides a valuable additional resource for some children, who find difficulty integrating with their class, either because they have poor social skills or exhibit challenging and disruptive behaviour.
22. The school demonstrated the effectiveness of the application of its child protection procedure during the inspection by recognising a particular child's distress through the use of flash cards, an activity undertaken in a Nurture Group session. The headteacher quickly alerted other agencies to the possible risks in this case. The school provides a healthy and safe environment. Good use is made of the building and the outdoor areas to provide a bright and pleasant environment for learning and play.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has an effective partnership with parents. The links with the local community and high schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's partnership with parents of children who have special educational needs is good;
- Parents have confidence in the school.

COMMENTARY

23. There is a high degree of correlation between inspection findings and the views of parents. Those parents who attended the meeting with inspectors expressed a view that the school has an open door approach and that they are comfortable coming to school to discuss issues with staff. They like the formal open evenings and feel they are given plenty of time to discuss their children's progress. They are also happy with the quality of written reports. They feel that these are personalised and useful to them.
24. Not all parents are aware of the school's policy on homework and the school acknowledges there are some inconsistencies in its approach to this.
25. Parental questionnaires compiled for the inspection also show a high level of satisfaction in most areas. Parents noted that the school deals effectively with any issues related to bullying or harassment and that the staff treat their children fairly and encouraged them to become mature. They are particularly happy with the arrangements for induction of children into the school and feel the systems help their children to settle in quickly and confidently.
26. The school is effective in the way that it involves parents of children who have special needs. This is one reason why the school has a good reputation within the local area for its provision in this aspect.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher leads and manages the school well. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has made a good start in tackling areas for improvement;
- Governors provide strong leadership and are actively involved in the school's decision making processes;
- Whilst there is good subject leadership overall, there are aspects that could be improved.

Commentary

27. The headteacher has taken difficult decisions, which have resulted in immediate improvements; she is leading staff well in reviewing the effectiveness of what the school does and has introduced new working practices that have brought about improvements. One example of this is the way in which the school handles issues related to pupils' behaviour. The decision to extend the scope of the work of the teaching assistants is also having a positive impact on the overall ethos of the school; they are now engaged in lunchtime supervision and make a significant contribution to improving the overall quality of care and support given to the children. The headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of parents, who feel that the school is well led. Her working partnership with the governors is developing well.
28. Governors make best use of their expertise and experience to support the school. They have a good understanding of how the school is doing, because they keep a

careful eye on what is achieved and the impact of any decisions made on outcomes for pupils. For example, the decision they took to fund and establish the nurture group is a good example of a very positive step taken by the governing body, to support children with social and emotional problems. They debate the school's results and have a good grasp of what standards are like and the reasons for this. The inspection confirms that the school's evaluation of its work is mostly accurate; the most important issues facing the school have been identified.

29. The headteacher and governors have shown a strong commitment to staff's well being. They have, for example, adapted the accommodation to provide staff with a suitable and quiet area for them to plan and prepare their work. Relationships throughout the school are good. There is a strong team ethic and staff work well to support one another.
30. Staff and pupils get on well together but the school could do more to seek the views of children and engage them in the decision making processes.
31. The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Whilst the leadership and management of different subject areas and aspects of the school's work are good overall, there is scope for improvement. Subject leaders have identified issues to address and taken action to remedy weaknesses. However, they do not have a clear enough picture of achievement, because there has been too little detailed information about the school's performance to allow them to spot trends or analyse pupils' performance until recently. Assessment procedures are not rigorous enough and, therefore, it is difficult for them to answer the question 'Are all children doing as well as they can in this subject?'

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	545,225	Balance from previous year	85,168
Total expenditure	566,533	Balance carried forward to the next	63,860
Expenditure per pupil	10,932		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in all the areas of learning;
- Children achieve well;
- While the classroom accommodation is good, the provision for outdoor learning activities requires improvement.

Commentary

32. Children's attainment on entry to school is broadly the same as most their age. At the end of the Foundation Stage, most reach, and some exceed, the expected goals in all areas of learning. Most children have had the advantage of attending pre-school educational provision, with a majority having attended the independent nursery that operates on the school site. The staff in the nursery and reception class have achieved good levels of communication and this is beneficial to the children, particularly at the point of transition. The school also engages the assistance of parents in determining what the children already know, understand and can do when they enter the reception class. The school has made efforts to establish continuity of provision between reception and Years 1 and 2 and the children benefit from this good collaborative practice.
33. Learning activities in the reception class are planned imaginatively and provide a good range of rich and stimulating experiences. The reception teacher has a clear understanding of each individual child's needs, based on a detailed assessment of their levels of ability and rates of progress. Well planned activities build on what the children have already learned, and this enables them to make progress and maintain their natural interest and curiosity. Time is managed well, so that the pace of learning is lively, with a good variety of activities across the school day. There is a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Opportunities are taken whenever possible to reinforce learning in reading, writing and number, in activities in other curriculum areas, such as the counting games that are undertaken in physical education lessons. The children respond very well to high expectations for their behaviour. The teacher and nursery nurse in the reception class work as an effective team and this enhances the quality of the teaching they provide.
34. Since its last inspection, the school has made some improvement to its provision for outdoor activities and play for children in the reception class. More remains to be done, however, in order to bring the provision up to the appropriate standard, so that the children's full entitlement to learn through play may be assured.
35. Children are achieving well in their **personal, social and emotional development**. There are very good relationships between adults and children in the reception class. The children interact and co-operate happily with each other and show that they are comfortable and secure in school. Routines are firmly established, children understand

what is expected of them and conform to those expectations. They are interested in the work of the class and respond very well in whole class discussions, where they will listen to each other's contribution and take turns to speak without interrupting. Staff provide positive role models for the children.

36. In **communication, language and literacy**, the children achieve well. Literacy is very well taught. Children make good progress in recognising letter sounds and building words. Many of them are growing in confidence as independent writers. Reading and writing activities provide good opportunities for children to practise their skills and to encounter a range of literary experiences. In one lesson observed, children were learning to differentiate between 'ee' and 'ea', with the teacher using the poem 'The Sea' to help illustrate the teaching points. Children showed that they understood what a poem was and that they were able to respond to and enjoy rhyme and rhythm. In addition, frequent incidental opportunities to develop reading and writing skills are taken, for example, in the 'spooky shop', where children were happily writing recipes for magic spells, and in the 'travel agency', where (as part of a summer holiday topic) children were selecting holidays from the simplified brochure the teacher had helped them make; they thoroughly enjoyed working out costs, filling in booking forms and issuing tickets to each other. Speaking and listening development is good. Staff support this by taking opportunities to encourage the quieter or less able children to articulate their ideas during role play and creative activities. Whole class discussion is a regular feature of the day in the reception class and the children have learned that every contribution is valued. Everyone is enabled to join in by the sensitive and supportive approach of the teacher and nursery nurse.
37. Children make good progress and achieve well in **mathematical development**. A lesson observed was typical of the successful practice in this area of learning. It featured a range of activities to support the development of counting and adding on in 2's. The teacher's use of a Noah's Ark and its animals captured the children's interest, as did the singing game that accompanied it. The inventive activities which followed allowed the different ability groups within the class to make progress at their appropriate rate and level. There was scope for children to make choices between activities. Extension work was available for a group of very able children, who maintained their interest and absorption in the topic throughout the session. The nurture group, supported by a classroom assistant, took part in an activity out of doors, which provided opportunities for learning through physical activity and which met the learning objectives of the lesson successfully.
38. Children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** is varied on entry, as they come from a range of social backgrounds. The cultural heritage of the small number of bilingual children is given recognition in the reception class, with some signage in Arabic. All the children have been taught to respond and greet the teacher at registration time in a number of languages, including Arabic, and they enjoy choosing from this vocabulary at the start of each session. In a lesson observed, children were seen to be enjoying good opportunities to broaden their knowledge and interest in the natural world, through a cross-curricular topic, 'Under the Sea'. The lesson was very successful in developing their ability to explain correctly, using appropriate vocabulary, why creatures in the school pond wouldn't be able to live in the sea. Children recounted information about sea creatures and were using reference books to help them make sea creature models as accurately as possible.
39. The children's **physical development** is in line with expectations for their age. Lessons feature well planned activities to support the development of skills such as throwing. Children work hard in their lessons and make good progress in developing all aspects of physical skills. They listen carefully to instructions and respond well. Very good teamwork on the part of the teacher and nursery nurse is notable; both join in activities with the children, modelling and assisting throughout lessons. This is

particularly helpful to the children who are less able or confident in this area of the curriculum.

40. Children's **creative development** is in line with that expected for their age. It is enhanced through well planned activities involving writing, colouring, cutting and model making. Singing and action games are frequently used at 'carpet time' and at other times, for example when getting changed for physical education lessons, to good effect and children enjoy these very much. A range of role play opportunities is available in the classroom and role play is often used to encourage the development of empathy for and understanding of others' feelings and points of view.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue make rapid progress in developing language skills;
- Higher attainers and pupils with special needs achieve well;
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are not robust enough.

Commentary

41. The results in the national tests at the age of 7, show that the school's performance has improved since 2002. When measured against schools whose pupils are from similar backgrounds, results were well above average in 2004. The school noted, however, that boys were not doing as well as girls, with far fewer of them reaching higher levels in reading and writing. Action has been taken to improve resources so that boys can be more readily engaged, but the impact of this intervention is yet not clear. Inspection findings show that most pupils reach average standards and that there are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls at the age of 7.
42. When compared with schools whose pupils are from similar backgrounds, test results at the age of 11 show the school's performance to be consistently above average in English, with more pupils reaching higher levels than in similar schools. The school correctly identifies that this positive picture masks the weaker achievement of those pupils who are close to, but not quite at, the average level when tested. The weaknesses in pupils' writing are corroborated by inspection findings, which show that they stem from underdeveloped assessment procedures.
43. The school procedures for identifying the next steps for each pupil to take in their learning are not effective enough. Whilst the quality of teaching is good overall, some pupils could make better progress in lessons and teaching quality could be raised even further. Teachers are not clear about where pupils need to go next, or the precise gaps in their knowledge. Consequently, work is not always matched well enough to their needs and those who are falling just short of the expected standard do not always make enough progress.

44. Higher attainers are strongly motivated to achieve; they progress well and confidently complete more lengthy pieces of writing. Pupils of very low ability and those with special needs receive effective support and cope with their work; those who are just shy of average do not always build up a strong enough head of steam, and find it hard to produce an extended piece. There is scope for improvement in the quality of teaching for this group, including the setting of more precise targets for their next stages of learning.

45. Bilingual pupils have excellent support from home and are highly ambitious. By the time they leave the school, they are often among the highest attainers.
46. The leadership of the subject is good, but its management requires improvement. The subject leader identifies issues to address and takes action to remedy weaknesses; she also leads strongly by example, with very good teaching and classroom practice. Weak assessment procedures are, however, undermining her efforts to evaluate the progress made by groups or individual pupils. Consequently, the overview of standards and achievement in the subject is not as clear as it should be. In a similar vein, it is also hard for her to judge the effectiveness of steps that have been taken to address underperformance or improvements in teaching and learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Pupils use their literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects. Teachers make sound use of natural links between subjects to provide opportunities for pupils to use reading and writing to good effect. In Year 2, for example, having read a book together, pupils wrote about the characters and events and made detailed tourist information brochures to tempt visitors to an island, which was the location of the story. In the junior classes, pupils develop their reading and writing skills in subjects such as history. They research and select appropriate information and write factual accounts of past events or stories based upon them. In Year 5, for instance, pupils created their own version of Aesop's Fables as part of a study on Ancient Greece.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Higher attainers and those with special needs achieve well;
- Work needs to be better matched to the abilities of children who are in the groups that are close to, but still below, the average for their age;
- Children respond well to teachers' expectations to produce a large volume of work;
- The systems for assessing pupils' progress and using the information to plan the next stages of learning for some pupils could be improved.

Commentary

48. The school's performance in the national tests at the age of 11, for three of the last four years, has been average. When compared with similar schools, the performance over time is impressive, often being well above average. Inspection findings indicate that the school's performance in this year's national tests at the age of 11 are not likely to be as good; standards overall will probably drop because far fewer children will reach the higher Level 5 than was the case last year. In Year 6, approximately three fifths of pupils are working at the national average and a small number are achieving the higher Level 5. This class has not performed as well as previous year groups in the national tests because more of them are identified as having special educational needs. Standards are average at the age of 7. The majority of pupils currently in Year 2 are in line to achieve the national average and to achieve the higher Level 3.

49. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory but some children could achieve more. The school has identified this issue and realises it could do better with children whose ability is close to the average for their age. The weaknesses arise from underdeveloped assessment procedures, which impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning in some aspects of mathematics. Whilst the quality of teaching is successful overall, it is not wholly effective, because teachers are not always clear about where pupils need to go next or precisely where there are gaps in their knowledge. Consequently, because this is not well established, work is not always matched closely enough to the needs of these pupils. Too often the work they do is the same as that planned for the higher or lower attainers and is, therefore, sometimes too hard or too easy.
50. The best and more consistent teaching is seen in the older juniors. Here, pupils benefit from the school's decision to use the expertise of the deputy headteacher to teach both Years 5 and 6. It is also seen in the infant classes. Some of the teaching in the lower juniors is more ordinary and at times is lack lustre.
51. Whilst most children develop an understanding of place value by the time they are 11, they are less secure when this is applied to decimals. Overall, children make good progress in their understanding and use of mathematical vocabulary. Resources are used well to support learning and teaching assistants are very effectively deployed to support individuals or small groups. This helps children with special needs, in particular, and also those for whom English is an additional language; as a result, they are able to cope well with the challenges they face. They gain confidence and achieve well. ICT is also used effectively to support teaching and learning. Teachers make colourful demonstrations on interactive whiteboards and explain the concepts they want pupils to understand. This often helps pupils to grasp a point or to see mathematical patterns more readily. The marking of work, and children's involvement in assessing their own work or that of their peers, are areas that could be improved. Marking often consists of little more than a tick and when corrections are identified, they are not always followed through to see, for example, that the pupil has realised their mistakes and improved their understanding.
52. Children enjoy their mathematics lessons, complete a large volume of work and try hard to improve their understanding of the subject. Sometimes, worksheets are used injudiciously and this reduces opportunities for children to record answers using different methods. Parents feel their children do well and that they are well informed of their children's progress.
53. The subject is well led and managed. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the level of challenge for higher attainers at the end of Key Stage 1 and in lower Key Stage 2, and is now using ICT effectively to support pupils' learning in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects are satisfactory. Typically, they draw graphs to show the results of science experiments and measure objects to support their work in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well led and managed;
- There is a strong emphasis on the use of practical activities;
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the principles of a fair test;
- Marking of pupils' work could be improved.

Commentary

55. The school's performance in the national tests (2004) for 11-year-olds dropped to below average, when compared with all schools, for the first time in the last four years. The school's performance has fluctuated between well above average and average over the last four years. Inspection findings indicate that the majority of pupils are on course to achieve the national average (Level 4) and approximately one-fifth are on course to achieve the higher Level 5. Whilst the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 may be significantly reduced when compared to last year, there are more pupils with special needs in this year's group. Standards at the age of 7 are average. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
56. The curriculum is well designed to ensure that each aspect of science is covered thoroughly, and that children have plenty of opportunities to engage in practical experiments. This helps them to achieve well and improve both their knowledge of scientific facts and the skills needed to be a 'scientist'. Pupils enjoy their lessons, particularly those that involve them in experiments and investigations. Through the many experiments they do, children develop a really good understanding of the principles of fair testing. Children for whom English is an additional language achieve well. They settle quickly into school and are well supported during their science lessons. Children with special needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
57. The school's self evaluation of its work in science is accurate. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. A notable strength is seen in the contribution the subject leader makes to the quality of teaching, which is good overall. She uses her own expert knowledge to provide detailed guidance for staff on how to best plan and teach different aspects of the subject. This helps those who are less confident to feel very secure about what they need to teach and what pupils need to learn. The impact of her guidance is seen in lessons in the way teachers use questioning techniques; these challenge pupils and make them think more deeply; they promote and develop pupils' understanding and use of correct science vocabulary. The quality of marking of pupils' work is an area where improvements are needed. It does not focus strongly enough on telling children how well they have done or how they might improve their work. Teaching assistants provide good support for different groups of children and this enables them to be fully involved in the lessons.
58. Children enjoy their science lessons and participate with great interest and enthusiasm. Whilst there are some good examples of children assessing their own work, there needs to be a more consistent approach to this aspect of their personal development.
59. The strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained and the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in science has been improved. Whilst they also have opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in their science work, links between other subjects, for example design and technology, could be improved and used to reinforce and help them see the relevance of what they learn in science to other aspects of their work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject has progressed from a position of weakness to one of the school's main strengths since the last inspection;
- Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in some of their work;
- Assessment procedures are weak.

Commentary

60. The school has pushed forward in acquiring new resources and staff have embraced the opportunities for training enthusiastically. As a result, the quality of provision has seen a marked and impressive upward shift.
61. Standards are average overall at the end of both key stages; teachers' good subject knowledge is giving them the confidence to provide more challenging and adventurous work. Consequently, pupils mostly progress well; motivation and enthusiasm among pupils for the subject is high. They respond to the challenges set and even those with a strong background of computer experience at home, say that they are learning new skills and improving their knowledge.
62. Teaching is of consistently good quality and very good use is made of computer software resources. Support staff make a good contribution to lessons; they are briefed well and provide an effective pair of extra hands, especially for pupils with learning difficulties. All teachers set out clearly what it is that they expect their class to achieve during ICT lessons. They take every opportunity to use facilities, such as electronic whiteboards, to engage and hold pupils' attention.
63. In the infant classes, pupils build well on the skills they have acquired in the reception class and, by Year 2, they are reaching higher than average standards in handling information. Most are able to use databases to classify and identify different objects. They have a good understanding that care needs to be taken when framing questions.
64. In the junior classes, pupils cover the full range of the curriculum and make good progress in all aspects. By Year 6, they are confident and competent users of ICT to research information from the Internet and other sources.
65. The teacher with responsibility for ICT has moved the subject on commendably. She leads by example and provides a very good role model through her own teaching. There is room for further improvement, however, as pupil progress is not assessed rigorously enough; pupils' progress could be even faster if teachers knew how far they had already come. This weakness also makes it difficult for the subject leader to be fully effective in her role, as she has no means of checking on whether all pupils are doing as well as they could.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. Good use is made of ICT to develop work in other subjects. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to use a good range of technology, including computers and digital cameras, in their work. Their proficiency in using computer searches, for example, enables them to find out information for their work in history and geography; pupils in the infant and junior classes all make very good use of ICT, to present their story and poetry writing in a lively and colourful way.

HUMANITIES

67. Only two lessons in **history** and one in **geography** were observed. There is not enough evidence to make a judgement on the overall provision in these subjects.

68. Discussions with pupils and an examination of their work indicate that standards in history and geography are typical of those seen in most schools. In Year 2, pupils have produced some impressive work in geography, through a comparative study of their own locality with a remote Scottish island. Year 6 pupils have contrasted their local study with investigations into life on a Caribbean island. Work in history in Year 2 has included a study of everyday items from the past. Pupils were captivated by a lesson on toys of the past and several of them were able to bring in family toys to add to the display in the classroom. The learning of history in the junior classes is too heavily reliant on textbooks and worksheets, with too few opportunities for independent learning and research. Although the volume of pupils' work output is good, there is less evidence of interest and enjoyment than is the case in Key Stage 1.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching enables pupils to compare aspects of their own experiences to those of other people;
- Pupils of different faiths share their experiences;
- The assessment of pupils' progress requires improvement.

Commentary

69. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus and pupils make satisfactory progress. The different elements of the agreed syllabus are covered and, throughout the school, pupils have sufficient opportunities to study different religions and to relate what they learn to their own experiences.
70. In the infant classes, pupils steadily gain a better understanding of the range of celebrations in different faiths. Work in the junior classes builds on this, so that by Year 6 they have developed a sound knowledge and understanding of key beliefs and practices of the religions studied, and they know the correct terminology associated with them.
71. Teaching is good and lessons include interesting activities, which draw on pupils' own experiences. In one lesson, for instance, Year 6 pupils entered into a spirited role play about the way in which their responsibilities increased as they grew older. Teachers encourage pupils to share their experiences and religious practice with the class. For example, from the Muslim faith, a Year 6 pupil brought in artefacts related to prayer; in another, a Year 2 pupil described her experience of fasting during Ramadan and the celebration of the Eid. In choosing to study Islam, the school acknowledges and celebrates the faith of one of its significant minority groups.
72. Pupils respond well to the chances they have to discuss and compare aspects of their own experiences to those of others. In the infant classes, they talk about different celebrations and the meaning of these to each other within religious traditions. Junior aged pupils consider aspects related to identity and experience in making sense of who they are, and in reflecting on what makes them happy or sad.
73. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school adapts its curriculum well to new initiatives, but the assessment of pupils' progress is not rigorous enough to evaluate the impact of its changed approaches to teaching.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. Not enough lessons were seen to make judgements on the overall provision for **art and design** and **design and technology**. Only one lesson was seen in **music** and only two lessons were seen in **physical education**.
75. Discussions and an examination of folders of work in art and design show that children work in a wide range of media in both two and three-dimensions. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their work in this subject. Children work with a variety of materials and are able to draw from memory, observation and imagination. The quality of the folder work indicates that there is progression in skills and that pupils are encouraged to take a pride in, and produce good quality, work.
76. In design and technology, evidence from pupils' work and photographs shows that they cover a good range of topics and explore the processes of design and making well. In the junior classes, for example, pupils plan carefully and develop their ideas in plans and sketches when making products such as fabric slippers. Infant age pupils design and record their ideas prior to making sandwiches. Pupils at both key stages work with a good variety of materials and components, and make sound progress in using tools and equipment. By Year 6, pupils safely use drills, clamps and junior hacksaws, for example when constructing toys incorporating wheels and axles. Pupils' work is not as strong in evaluating the processes used or the products made and more could be done to strengthen this aspect of their work.
77. During the music lesson seen, the children listened carefully, interpreted sound sequences and invented their own, using un-tuned percussion instruments. They went on to successfully perform the sequence they'd composed together. The portfolio for the subject shows examples of composition work done in each key stage and examples of children's recorded musical ideas, in both graphic and notational form. Based on this evidence, standards are typical of those seen in most schools. The class teacher, who took the lesson observed, is also the subject co-ordinator and has very good subject knowledge. She is introducing a new scheme of work into the school and is supporting her colleagues in its implementation.
78. Physical education is well represented in the curriculum. The school's outdoor accommodation is good and is well used to ensure children participate in the full range of games activities. In the two lessons seen, good use was made of resources to enable all pupils to practise and improve their skills. They achieved well, because the teacher's subject knowledge was secure and it was well used to set challenging activities for the class. Teachers act as good role models, pupils respond well and all are appropriately kitted for their physical education lessons. They understand the need to warm up prior to taking physical exercise. Swimming provision is good enough to ensure that pupils achieve well in this aspect and, at the age of 11, virtually all of them meet and some exceed the expectations for their age. It is a similar picture for pupils in Year 5, who are just reaching the end of their swimming lessons. The residential trip for older junior pupils to an outdoor pursuits centre, enables those who take up this opportunity to experience a range of sporting activities that would not normally be accessible during school time. Pupils say that they particularly enjoy their games lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

79. The school has shown a clear commitment to raising the profile of personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE); each class now has a daily lesson. This ensures that pupils spend sometime each day considering important matters, such as the effects of bullying, or topical issues, such as the impending transfer of Year 6 pupils to the high schools. The quality of the sessions varies, with some of them being particularly good. The use of a visiting theatre group and stories help to focus pupils on important issues and gives them a basis for debating and sharing their views on issues such as bullying. Teachers try hard to get pupils to consider and share their feelings, and to assist them to identify strategies that might help them cope with particular situations. Resources, such as video clips and ICT, are used well to motivate and interest pupils. Whilst there are opportunities for children to have discussions, these are not always as successful as they might be, because the groups are sometimes too large and not managed effectively enough to enable all of them to have a worthwhile experience. In the better sessions, the staff focus the discussion on practical situations, and they help pupils to understand how they might respond in different circumstances. Pupils are, therefore, comfortable in each other's company and are relaxed about sharing their thoughts and feelings in front of others. The school gives junior aged children fruit each day, at no cost, as part of its drive to help them realise the importance of healthy snacks, as well as running a breakfast club that enables them to get a good start to the day.

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

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