

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blackpool

LEA area: Blackpool

Unique reference number: 119595

Headteacher: Mr J Turkington

Reporting inspector: Sheila Pemberton
20810

Dates of inspection: 22-25 May 2000

Inspection number: 193447

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Street
Blackpool
Lancs

Postcode: FY1 3NX

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Gill Ward

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sheila Pemberton	Registered inspector	Under-fives Design and technology History	What sort of school it is How high standards are How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
Roger Williams	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents/carers
George Halliday	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Physical education	
Megan Spark	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Geography Music	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Barbara Rhodes	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Art	How good curricular and other opportunities are

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils:	244 - 118 boys, 126 girls (broadly average)
Number of four-year-olds:	15 in the reception class.
Pupils with English as an additional language:	1.6% (low).
Pupils entitled to free school meals:	30.12% (above the national average).
Pupils with special educational needs:	29.7%, 55 pupils (above average).
Pupils with statements of special educational needs:	2.1%, 4 pupils (above average).
Pupils in Year 6 who joined the school in the juniors:	12 (more than in most schools).
Average class size:	30.5

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides its pupils with a good education. It works with good understanding of the social problems faced by many families and their children and makes very good provision for pupils who have difficulties with their learning. It provides strong support for the high number of pupils who join the school at different times in the juniors and through good leadership and teaching makes sure that all pupils do the best they are capable of. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in information technology are high.
- It provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Most of the teaching is good or very good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development.
- It is very effective in the way it assesses pupils' learning in English and mathematics.
- Links with the community and other schools are very good.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and management for the school.

What could be improved

- The way that science is taught in some classes in the juniors.
- How the school keeps a check on the work of teachers in the classroom.
- The provision for five-years-olds in a class containing older pupils.
- The training and awareness of governors, teachers and pupils about issues related to child protection.
- The information provided for parents about their children's learning.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The headteacher and senior management team have tackled most of the weaknesses from the last inspection in February 1997 with good success. More effective ways are used to ensure that some subjects are taught regularly enough to maintain standards. Development planning has improved and places the school in a good position to finance and carry out necessary improvements. Pupils take considerably more responsibility for their own learning especially by using information technology in other subjects. Lesson plans contain clear targets for pupils to gain the special skills of subjects such as art, design and technology and geography. There is still room for improvement in the teaching of geography in the juniors. Although the teaching of science has improved, more work is needed in some classes in the juniors to carry out experiments and investigations. Pupils' behaviour has improved and is good. Standards have risen to a high level in information technology since the last inspection. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs has become very good. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good now.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	E	E	E
Mathematics	C	D	E	E
Science	D	E	E*	E*

Key

well above average above A

average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Inspection findings show that the grades shown in comparison with similar schools are inaccurate because of the high mobility rate and above average number of pupils with special educational needs. Despite the learning difficulties of many pupils, standards are improving in English, mathematics and science in Year 6. Although standards remain below those reached in most schools, they are explained by the fact that about a third of all pupils, mainly those who do well in National Curriculum tests in Year 2, leave the school before they reach Year 6. This reduces the number of pupils at the higher levels when pupils are tested at the age of 11. In Year 6 in 1999, half of the pupils who joined the school as juniors had special educational needs. Together with existing pupils, this meant that 40 per cent of the class had special educational needs. Such a large number of pupils with learning difficulties, which varies from year-to-year, pushes standards down and limits the school's capacity to do as well as other schools. Pupils who have been in the school since the reception class and those who joined it in the juniors did as well as they were capable of in English and mathematics. Standards in science are still not high enough. Pupils in some classes in Key Stage 2 do too few experiments and investigations to increase their understanding of the subject. There are few more able pupils in this year's Year 2 and as a result, fewer pupils reach higher standards. All pupils are very good at information technology. Pupils in Year 6 do better than most pupils in music. In Year 2, pupils reach good standards in geography.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Although some pupils have difficulties with their behaviour, most are well behaved. They are sensible and polite.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and pupils' relationships with one another and adults are good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Most of the teaching is good or better. Three per cent is excellent, 32 per cent very good, 35 per cent is good, 28 per cent satisfactory and two per cent unsatisfactory.

Strengths in teaching and learning: Good teaching helps pupils with special educational needs to do their best. Most of the teaching for children under five is very good and gives them a very good start in English and mathematics. Good use of information technology supports learning in other subjects. Teachers' very good knowledge of the curriculum helps pupils to understand the work. Teachers make very good use of the skills of classroom assistants to give pupils closer attention for their learning.

Weaknesses in teaching and learning: Some teachers lack the confidence to provide pupils with practical experiences to improve their understanding of science. When they are taught with older pupils, five-year-olds in their reception year miss out on some of the practical activities and resources they need to help them understand what they are taught.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school covers all subjects of the National Curriculum. Its curriculum is widened by a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities. The work provided for pupils in information technology is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	A high level of very good support improves the learning and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The extra help provided for bi-lingual pupils allows them to make the same good progress as other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Provision for their social development is very good. It is good for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Although the care taken of pupils is satisfactory, the school's awareness of issues related to child protection could be better.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership for the work of the school. The leadership and management of senior teachers are good. Existing systems to check the quality of teaching and learning need extending.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil all legal responsibilities. They are closely involved in planning the school's development and in managing its finances. Governors are conscientious and are very interested in the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Governors and the headteacher have good understanding of the school's performance.
The strategic use of resources	There is a generous number of teachers and support staff to teach a full curriculum. Most classrooms are spacious enough for a wide range of activities. Outside, the playground is too small and the lack of a field restricts pupils' physical development. Resources are mainly satisfactory and are used to good effect to improve teaching and learning. Shortages exist in equipment for the under-fives in a mixed age class. The school tries hard to get the best value from all spending.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are glad that their children are expected to work hard and do their best.• Parents believe that their children are making good progress in school.• They think that most of the teaching is good.• Parents are pleased that their children like school.• They are pleased that teachers help their children to become mature and responsible.• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.• Parents think that pupils behave well in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They would like the school to provide a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.• Some parents would like the school to work more closely with them.• They would like more information about how their children are getting on.

The inspection confirms parents' positive views about the school. For parents who would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons, many of the clubs organised in the recent past received limited support from pupils and staff were often left with children whose parents failed to collect them on time. Parents who would like to work more closely with the school will be pleased to learn that the school provides a reasonable range of opportunities for them to become involved. Inspectors agree with parents who would like a wider range of information about their children's learning. This issue will be met by governors when they draw up an action plan for future development.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 On entry into school, the early achievements of four-year-olds in mathematics are below those of most children nationally. Their achievements in reading are also low but not quite as low as in mathematics. In their final term in the reception classes, children have made good progress in personal and social development, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their learning is very good in language and literacy. It is satisfactory in physical and creative development.
- 2 Standards for 11-year-olds in English and mathematics have deteriorated in National Curriculum tests over the last three years. Variations in standards are caused by constant changes to the school's population in Key Stage 2. Because of the comings and goings of pupils, the school is unable to predict the composition of pupils in Year 6 who will be taking National Curriculum tests. Standards were well below the national average in National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics in 1999 and very low in science. Higher attainment was almost non-existent in 1999. It was well below the national average in English and mathematics and there was no higher attainment in science. This lack of high attainment accurately reflected the best that pupils in Year 6 could realistically be expected to achieve.
- 3 Over the four years 1996 to 1999 combined, the performances of both boys and girls were well below the national average in English and science. Boys' performance was well below the national average in mathematics. Girls did slightly better in mathematics, but their performance was still below average. Despite the findings of the previous inspection, pupils' performance has remained below the nationally improving trend for all three subjects for the last four years. Pupils' performances were low in English and mathematics when compared with similar schools. They were very low in science.
- 4 Although these low standards appear to be unsatisfactory, they are explained by the school's particular circumstances. Situated in a socially deprived area, few children benefit from nursery education. Many families whose children are taught in the infants leave the area once they are able to move to more prosperous suburbs. About a third of all pupils, mainly those who reach the expected and higher levels in National Curriculum tests in Year 2, leave the school before they reach Year 6. This factor serves to lower standards in Key Stage 2, particularly at the level above that expected of 11-year-olds.
- 5 It is not uncommon for newcomers to the area to keep their children at home until a place is available at the school. This clearly restricts these pupils' learning. Half of the newcomers in Year 6 in 1999 had special educational needs and one of them had a statement of special educational needs. When the learning difficulties of new pupils were added to those of existing pupils with special educational needs and two other statemented pupils, this meant that 40 per cent of the class had special educational needs and a further group were low attainers. This situation, which varies from year to year, pushes standards down and seriously reduces the school's capacity to reach the standards expected of 11-year-olds in most schools. By tracking their achievements, it is evident that pupils who attended the school from the reception class to Year 6, most, apart from those with special educational needs, reached the expected levels in National Curriculum tests and made good progress. Pupils who entered the school in Key Stage 2 did as well as could be expected and reached a satisfactory level in the light of their earlier achievements.

- 6 With advice from the local education authority, the school set realistic targets for standards in English and mathematics in 1999 based on evidence gained from assessment and the analysis of pupils' achievements. Although these targets were lower than in most schools, they were met in 1999. As a result, the school has agreed and raised its targets for English and mathematics to a higher level in 2000. No targets have been set to raise standards in science.
- 7 For the same reasons, standards in English, mathematics and science remain below national expectations in the current Year 6. There are considerably fewer more able pupils in the class than in most schools. Since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the school's part in the National Numeracy Project, there has been some improvement in standards in mathematics. Because such a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs, this improvement is still not strong enough to bring their performance into line with that of pupils in other schools nationally. Although improvements are evident in pupils' understanding of science, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 5, standards in experimental and investigative science remain weak in some classes in Key Stage 2. In these classes, more challenge is needed for more able pupils and the needs of the less able require closer attention.
- 8 In 1999, the standards reached by seven-year-olds in National Curriculum tests in reading and mathematics were satisfactory and similar to those reported at the last inspection. Standards in writing were very good; they were well above the national average. More able pupils did well enough in reading and their results were close to the national average. Higher attaining pupils did much better in writing and mathematics, where a much greater proportion reached the higher level than in reading. More higher attaining pupils than in other schools achieved well above the average result in writing. These results were very good when compared with many pupils' low attainments on entry into school. Pupils' performances in all three subjects were well above the standards reached by pupils in similar schools. Standards were average in teachers' assessments of science in 1999, except for work with materials, where standards were high.
- 9 Girls in Year 2 did better than boys over the four years 1996 to 1999 together. Boys' performance was below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. Girls' performance was close to average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Apart from the fact that two thirds of Year 2 was composed of girls in 1999 there are no other obvious reasons for this variation in standards. Standards in Key Stage 1 took a sharp upward turn in 1999. They improved in mathematics but not as strongly as in reading and writing. A satisfactory number of pupils work at the level expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science in the current Year 2. However, there are fewer more able pupils in the class than in 1999 and as a result, fewer pupils are working at the higher level in all four subjects. This drop in higher attainment in Year 2 reflects the achievements of pupils from their entry into school.
- 10 Bi-lingual pupils and pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as other pupils in English and mathematics with activities planned to meet their needs. The school invests a considerable amount of additional support into pupils' speaking, reading, writing and mathematics and this is as strong in Key Stage 2 as in Key Stage 1.
- 11 In most classes there are many opportunities for pupils to improve their reading, writing and mathematics in different subjects of the curriculum. All classes make good use of information technology to support pupils' learning in mathematics. Mathematics programs are designed to benefit all pupils from their use. Work in science also allows pupils to use their mathematical knowledge. They compile tables, diagrams and bar charts to record the findings of investigations. Although pupils write in different forms in English, their writing is not always developed sufficiently in other subjects. Some teachers in Key Stage 2 encourage pupils to write and research information in subjects such as geography, history or religious education. Where this practice is not consistent, the rate of pupils'

learning is reduced, as they waste time filling in worksheets or copying from the board rather than developing their own writing.

- 12 Standards in information technology are well above those reached by most pupils at the ages of seven and 11. They have improved since the last inspection. A particular strength of learning lies in the use pupils make of information technology to support their work in other subjects. Many pupils are skilled at using the Internet and CD ROMs for research. Standards in art remain typical of those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds. The school has maintained satisfactory standards since the last inspection and they are rising in pupils' skills, techniques and the use of different materials. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have well-developed skills in drawing and painting.
- 13 As at the last inspection, standards in design and technology are typical of those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds. Improvements are evident in basic skills with tools and materials, greater accuracy in measurement and in cutting and joining materials. Pupils also judge the effectiveness of their models and how to improve them. Standards in geography have improved at Key Stage 1 and are now above those typical of most seven-year-olds. This good rate of progress is not maintained throughout Key Stage 2 and the standards pupils reach in Year 6 are only typical for their age. Learning in Key Stage 2 was described as *erratic* in the last report and a similar situation exists today. This is caused by the lack of leadership for geography to ensure the systematic development of pupils' skills.
- 14 Standards in history have deteriorated at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. Although they are satisfactory for 11-year-olds, pupils in Year 6 have covered insufficient work this year to get a rounded picture of life in Victorian times. Standards at Key Stage 1 remain typical of those expected by the age of seven. Standards in music are typical of those reached by most seven-year-olds and are above those achieved by many 11-year-olds. This represents an improvement since the last inspection at Key Stage 2 where good use of notation allows pupils to perform their own music on percussion instruments and to record it accurately. Many opportunities allow all pupils to sing to a good standard. Pupils in Year 2 find it difficult to keep the rhythm when clapping in a round.
- 15 Standards in physical education have been maintained at a satisfactory level for both seven and 11-year-olds since the previous inspection. Pupils take part in a balanced programme of gymnastics, dance, games, athletics and swimming. Almost all pupils in Year 6 swim twenty-five metres and many are much stronger swimmers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 16 Most pupils are enthusiastic, eager to learn and enjoy coming to school. They are well motivated, keen to do well, and concentrate effectively on their work. Pupils are interested in lessons and a large number take part in extra-curricular activities. They enjoy the challenge of tasks that demand effort and their attention only wanes if they have to sit and listen to teachers too long. They respond well in discussions and are willing to offer opinions and suggestions of their own. Parents are very satisfied with the attitudes and values promoted by the school and nearly all agree that the school promotes very caring attitudes.
- 17 Since the last inspection, pupils' behaviour has improved considerably and is now good. Most pupils are courteous and polite to one another and to adults. The good manners displayed by pupils of all ages are a noticeable feature of their behaviour. They hold open doors for others, go out of their way to help with directions, and answer politely when addressed. A few pupils in Key Stage 2 with special educational needs for their behavioural problems are sometimes inattentive in lessons, and this disturbs other pupils' learning. The school has worked hard to improve behaviour, and a new policy for the

management of behaviour is effective because it is applied consistently. Staff and pupils are aware of the school's high expectations and their combined efforts to improve behaviour are clearly working. The exclusion of pupils is infrequent, and when this sanction is used, it is fully justified and all required procedures are carried out correctly. Two pupils have been excluded for poor behaviour in the last school year and one in the current year.

- 18 Good levels of personal development and relationships are reflected in pupils' ability to work independently and in pairs or groups. This is an improvement to personal development since it was raised as an issue during the last inspection. They develop an increasingly confident approach to the school's life and work as they grow older. Older pupils benefit from consistent training for responsibility when they carry out their duties. They show good initiative when organising a talent show. Relationships are good. Positive interactions between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves, stimulate and improve pupils' learning. In science in Year 5, for instance, the rapport between teacher and pupils, and their resulting enthusiasm, led to very good learning about the body.
- 19 Since the last inspection, the rate of unauthorised absence has decreased, but is still above the national average. This is because parents who work in the tourist industry often take their children on holiday during term time. Attendance has improved and is satisfactory since it is now around the national average. As identified during the previous inspection, there is still an above average number of late arrivals at the start of the school day, and as a result, the disturbance this causes affects pupils' concentration in some lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 20 The quality of teaching has undergone considerable improvement since the last inspection and most is now good or better. Some of this is caused by changes to staffing in both key stages. Teaching of the basic skills of English and mathematics has improved as a result of extensive training to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers pay very close attention to raising standards in reading and writing during the literacy hour. When working with groups of pupils, all teachers make good use of the skilled support of classroom assistants. In this way, pupils get close attention to ensure that they do their best in reading and writing. In several cases, teachers make less use of opportunities to improve pupils' writing in different subjects. When this happens, some pupils waste time by filling in worksheets.
- 21 As a result of the school's involvement with the National Numeracy Project, teachers' knowledge and understanding of mathematics has improved to a good level. At the last inspection, many pupils lacked secure knowledge of number and their response to questioning was slow. Since teachers undertook intensive training, standards in mathematics have risen at Key Stage 2, many pupils are confident when calculating numbers at their own level and work at a much brisker pace.
- 22 The teaching of science is better than it was during the last inspection. Teachers in Years 2, 3 and 5 bring high levels of expertise to the subject. However, there are some teachers in Key Stage 2 who are still unsure of the importance of scientific investigations and experiments to pupils' learning. As the subject also lacks systems to assess and record pupils' learning, some teachers find it difficult to plan tasks at the right level to meet the needs of high and low attaining pupils.
- 23 Planning has improved to a good level since the last inspection. All lessons have clear objectives that link closely to the areas of learning for the under-fives and programmes of work for different subjects. A weakness still exists in planning to meet the needs of

children in the two reception classes. A lack of joint planning results in children in the mixed age class missing some of the essential practical activities that improve their learning. In addition to clear objectives, most lesson plans, with the exception of science in parts of Key Stage 2, include tasks to meet the needs of pupils of different ability and opportunities to assess pupils' learning. A particularly good feature of teachers' plans lies in the creativity of their approaches to different subjects. For example, high levels of motivation and interest are maintained when teachers provide opportunities for pupils to sing in different settings. Similarly, interesting projects and the involvement of members of the local business community raise pupils' enthusiasm for design and technology in Year 6. Most teachers now take care to plan activities that develop pupils' skills in subjects such as art, and design and technology. Their planning is less effective in some lessons in science and geography in Key Stage 2.

- 24 A strong feature of teaching lies in the widespread use teachers make of information technology to extend pupils' learning in other subjects. High levels of staff expertise result from training provided by the headteacher, who also raises standards by working intensively with pupils and providing work to match their needs. In addition to widening pupils' skills, planning for information technology has helped to meet an issue from the last inspection about independent learning. By providing very good opportunities for pupils to develop and share their mechanical skills, teachers allow them to become more responsible for their own learning. A common feature of many lessons is the systematic use teachers make of computers to improve pupils' spelling and mathematics. Pupils are taught to carry out research with a wide range of carefully chosen programs at levels they can read and understand. Information technology is used very effectively to support the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- 25 Teachers and classroom assistants are very aware of the difficulties faced by the large numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the school. As a result, they support them well either individually or in small groups in order to raise standards, particularly amongst the school's shifting population in Key Stage 2. Close teamwork between the special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and classroom assistants allows the co-ordinator to write clear individual education plans based on the needs of individual pupils. Teachers use the targets set by the co-ordinator very effectively to plan suitable work in English and mathematics. All support staff are fully aware of the objectives of pupils' plans. They use this understanding to set interesting and challenging tasks that have a very good effect on pupils' learning. The teaching of the co-ordinator is very good. Because she is very knowledgeable and well qualified, pupils maintain the success and motivation they need to improve their achievements and behaviour.
- 26 Strong emphasis is placed on good behaviour throughout the school. Teachers do well to compensate for the problems some pupils experience as a result of extremely difficult home lives. Teachers in the reception classes have very good control of pupils' behaviour. They achieve this by placing pupils' personal and social development at the centre of all activities. The effects of this are felt in Key Stage 1, where teachers maintain good behaviour among pupils through positive relationships and interesting activities. Some of the difficulties teachers encounter when providing first-hand experiences in Key Stage 2 relate to problems caused by a small group of pupils with special educational needs for their behaviour and attitudes to learning. Most of the time, teachers control pupils' behaviour effectively. In situations where persistent individuals find it hard to settle down to work, it takes firm handling and constant effort for teachers to ensure that these pupils do not disturb the learning of others.
- 27 Teachers make very good use of time, resources and the skills of classroom assistants to support pupils' learning. Lessons start promptly and most are conducted at a pace that suits pupils' needs. Where resources are limited, teachers do their best to borrow materials that bring pupils' learning to life. For example, pupils in Year 3 showed considerable interest when they handled replicas of Viking pottery that were borrowed

from a museum and made a model Viking village. The teacher in a mixed age class copes as well as possible with a limited range of resources for the school's youngest pupils. This sometimes leads to children in the reception group carrying out worksheet tasks at a stage when practical activities are more suitable to develop their learning. All lessons in English and mathematics throughout the school have an additional classroom assistant to support teaching and learning in the classroom. As a result of working and planning together, teachers ensure that pupils gain maximum benefit from this extra help.

- 28 The use teachers make of information from assessing pupils' learning has improved. Because of the high proportion of older pupils who join the school with no information about their earlier learning, continuous assessment is especially thorough in Key Stage 2. As a result, teachers carefully provide work in English and mathematics that matches pupils' needs with the intention of raising standards. They also raise pupils' awareness of their learning by targeting essential improvements. Some inconsistency still remains in marking pupils' work. While some teachers provide clear comments and guidelines for improvement, others are willing to accept work that lacks good handwriting and careful presentation. As a result, some pupils' work is careless and untidy. The homework habit is established very effectively in the reception classes with helpful guidance for parents who find it difficult to support their children's learning. While most teachers provide homework, it is not always easy for parents to help their children at home. Parents are pleased with the quality of teaching in the school and appreciate the efforts teachers make to improve the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

- 29 The curriculum has been maintained at a suitable level for most pupils since the last inspection. Provision for four-year-olds is good. It incorporates all areas of learning that enable children to make good progress towards the recommended objectives for five-year-olds. It also provides a secure foundation for work in the National Curriculum. The school's provision for reception children in a new mixed age class is restricted by a lack of many of the resources needed to provide them with relevant *first hand* activities. The school has taken care to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies with the care needed to meet pupils' needs. By taking part in the National Numeracy Project, the school is beginning to raise standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- 30 The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the recommendations of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils benefit from satisfactory programmes about the misuse of drugs and for health education. The governing body's current policy is not to provide sex education, but it recommends that if related matters arise they should be addressed spontaneously. New policies for drugs and sex education await the approval of the governing body.
- 31 Provision for equal opportunities is mainly satisfactory. Most pupils have equal opportunities to learn and make progress. They are valued as individuals and extra-curricular activities are open to all. Some difficulties arise when a shortage of resources limits the access of children in a mixed age class containing children in their first year in school to the same full programme of opportunities available to children in the reception class. Clear policies and programmes of work for all subjects are reviewed and amended when necessary. At the time of the previous inspection, work in science, design technology, history and geography, was organised for restricted periods through *blocked* time. This practice has now been withdrawn to allow pupils to study all subjects on a more regular basis.
- 32 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. It is very good and conforms to the National Code of Practice. The curriculum is organised well to

meet pupils' needs both in the classroom and in small groups outside the class. This is an improvement since the last inspection that has been brought about by the school's determination to raise standards through carefully considered additional spending on support staff. Pupils with special educational needs have full and equal access to the curriculum and are integrated well with other pupils. Teachers plan work, which closely matches pupils' needs in reading, writing and numeracy. Their learning is organised carefully so that after the introductory part of lessons, any sessions taught outside the classroom follow the same lines as those in classrooms. Frequently, pupils with special educational needs remain in class with good support from classroom assistants and materials tailored to their needs. Very clear statements and individual education plans direct pupils' learning.

- 33 As at the time of the last inspection, provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The last report commented that the interest pupils took in some activities was very modest. This is no longer the case. A lunchtime choir practice is very well attended and makes a good contribution to the quality of pupils' singing. Opportunities are provided for pupils to increase their musical expertise by learning to play brass instruments and keyboards. Similarly, a newly formed and growing club allows pupils to practise their skills with computers. All these activities take place at lunchtime. Football and netball practice occur once a week immediately after school; the school also enters a reasonable variety of sporting competitions and events. Some parents would like a wider range of activities for their children. Given the restricted space for sporting activities, and the problems the school has encountered in ensuring that pupils are collected by their parents from after-school clubs, extra-curricular provision is adequate for a school of this size.
- 34 Since the previous inspection, the school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education has improved and is now good. Its Christian ethos and close links with the Church contribute significantly to pupils' personal and social development. The school's main charity this year, as last, is *Streetlife*, which provides support for homeless people, a significant problem in Blackpool.
- 35 The school's provision for spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Social development remains a strength and is very good. Spiritual development is promoted thoughtfully in daily assemblies and in religious education. The headteacher, teachers, clergy and visitors, such as those from the *Blackpool Schools and Youth Work* group, lead collective worship. They make time for hymns, a meaningful story and a quiet prayer. The quality of worship is particularly high in Key Stage 2. Older pupils greet the congregation sincerely with *Peace be with you*. They sing the school hymn *Time to be still* tunefully and others, such as *Spirit of God*. Leaders set a calm and receptive atmosphere and allow ample time for prayer and reflection. These assemblies are deeply spiritual occasions. The school maintains very strong links with the church. Pupils in Year 6 know that St John's Church is a *holy and peaceful place of worship*. At the close of morning and afternoon sessions some teachers share a moment of prayer with pupils. While pupils benefit spiritually from religious education, there are few opportunities for spiritual development in other subjects.
- 36 Good provision is made for moral development. Teachers provide a strong moral code with clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour based on Christian values. The difference between right and wrong is taught from the earliest age so that pupils as young as six write, *It is better to tell the truth*, and *Sometimes two people want the same. If that happens, please take turns*. By the time they are 11, pupils are encouraged to consider wider moral issues. In English, for example, they debated the rights and wrongs of poaching. The teacher then linked pupils' ideas with the carefully weighed judgements that Jesus made. Even very young pupils are considered mature enough to set rules for their class. This helps them to consider the need for rules and encourages self-discipline.

- 37 Provision for pupils' social development is very good and is a strength of the school. Very good relationships contribute strongly to the development of positive social behaviour. Staff encourage pupils to work co-operatively and fairly in lessons, especially in subjects such as science and physical education. In games, pupils understand the need for rules, abide by them and play fairly. Teachers guide pupils towards taking responsibility for themselves and for others. They give pupils increasingly responsible monitorial duties as they get older. For instance, by the time they are 10 or 11, pupils look after the school office at lunchtimes, get the hall ready for assemblies and share in the welfare and education of younger pupils. The teacher in Year 5 provides opportunities for pupils to use digital devices to communicate with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 6 write stories and read them to pupils in Key Stage 1. Monitors look after younger pupils during wet play times. The school takes pupils' social development very seriously. It provides a programme of specific guidance in social skills for pupils it considers to have extra needs.
- 38 The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Through curricular planning, pupils are provided with many opportunities to learn of their own and other cultures in subjects such as art, English, geography, history, music and religious education. In the literacy hour, for instance, teachers select texts with interesting links to different cultures. Visiting musicians from a local secondary school perform for the whole school and introduce pupils to a variety of instruments and to their highly successful Steel Band. A visiting scriptwriter from a local theatre helps pupils to understand drama and to write their own plays. Opportunities are planned for them to experience live theatre and to meet actors. Pupils learn mainly of the Christian tradition in religious education, but are also introduced to other world faiths. Recently, a Muslim visitor was invited to give pupils insights into Islam. Teachers link subjects effectively when pupils study Aztec and African art and then create their own work. The school has very strong links with schools in Europe through its connections with the Comenius project. This makes a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural awareness.
- 39 The school's very good links with the community have improved from a good level since the previous inspection. It is at the forefront in the educational use of the Internet and Intranet in forging useful links with schools in various parts of the world. Examples of pupils' work are placed on the school's website for others to enjoy; this currently includes a report by a pupil in Year 5 about *The Adventures of the Hobbit*. An outward-looking policy leads to a great variety of visits by pupils, and of visitors to support pupils' learning. Pupils have visited Rivington Pike, as part of a field study in geography, and a resources centre for history to bring the subject alive by acting in the role of Vikings. A resident artist helped pupils from Year 6 to make model planets and masks for Blackpool Puppet Festival, and pupils in Year 4 made *plays in a day*, at a local art gallery. Links with the business community bring design and technology to life when representatives from local firms join pupils in Year 6 in a project to build a theme park on *Enterprise Day*. Pupils are given the opportunity to view art in its wider sense with visits to a local art gallery and by taking part in a local *Young Seaside's Competition*. Pupils in Year 5 improved their learning by taking part in a national initiative, *Maths 2000*. Visits to the public library allow pupils access to a wider range of books and to occasional story-telling sessions.
- 40 Since the last inspection, the school has developed its links with partner institutions further, and they are now very good. Blackpool and the Fylde, and Southport Colleges both run courses at the school for parents, and work experience is offered to students from secondary schools and training establishments. Regular contacts with a local nursery and playgroup help to form children's first favourable impressions of school. Close links with a local secondary school afford use of its facilities for science and games. These links make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 41 At the last inspection, provision for pupils' welfare was satisfactory. Since then, some important aspects of safety have not been maintained. Training in child protection has fallen behind and has not been given to all staff. The teacher responsible for child protection has not had recent training. While the restrictions of the school buildings conspire against ideal arrangements for the emergency evacuation of pupils and staff, the priority given to car parking, which obstructs gates and restricts passage, is inappropriate and unwise. During fire drills, however, the building can be cleared in less than two minutes. The recent re-organisation of classrooms has led to the re-allocation of fire exits to different classes, but notices to this effect have not been posted. The school lacks its own written health and safety policy to provide guidance for staff.
- 42 The school satisfactorily monitors attendance, and as a result, there has been a significant improvement in attendance since the last inspection. Good record-keeping has contributed to this improvement, as have satisfactory links with the educational welfare service.
- 43 Procedures for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour, and for eliminating poor behaviour are good, and have improved since the last inspection. The school's behaviour policy is thorough and specific. A significant initiative to provide individual behaviour plans for some pupils is working well. These pupils help one another to attain their targets by encouragement and reminders on a personal and friendly level. A social group support system operated by the school is a very effective way of improving behaviour for the pupils involved. After a lesson in physical education, a pupil in Year 2 told the rest of the class what rules to observe when returning to the classroom from the hall. Considering the number of pupils in the school and the relatively cramped playground area, the fact that there are only a very few, isolated cases of bullying is proof of the effectiveness of the school's efforts.
- 44 Educational and personal support and guidance for pupils are good, and the school has improved the satisfactory standards found at the last inspection. Support and personal guidance are particularly strong and supportive to their confidence when pupils first start school. The use of assessment and teachers' flexibility in addressing pupils' personal needs and improving their behaviour has a good effect on their learning. The assessment of incoming pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, ensures that no time is lost in giving pupils work that challenges them in English and mathematics. Because of this brisk response, new pupils with special educational needs have instant support for their learning and behavioural difficulties. High levels of classroom assistance and the setting of targets for pupils' learning and behaviour underline the school's commitment to raising standards.
- 45 Pupils with special educational needs are supported by very good procedures for assessing and recording their learning and personal development. By using information from assessment, teachers pitch work at the correct level to raise standards. The school makes very good use of the services of the local education authority's educational psychologist and advice about behavioural support. Teachers employed by the local education authority keep regular checks on pupils' progress. As a result, pupils receive good support in lessons and sensitive guidance about controlling their behaviour. The continual monitoring and analysis of progress help teachers to update pupils' individual education plans and to provide them with further work at a suitable level.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 46 Parents' satisfactory views about the school, are as they were at the time of the last inspection. Most parents are supportive and appreciate the part the school plays in their children's development. A significant minority of parents stated they did not think the school worked closely with parents. The inspection found that the school works hard to involve parents, and initiatives such as the recent *Parents as Educators* and the current *Basic Skills in English and information technology* courses contribute successfully to these links. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and their parents took part recently in a four-week course entitled *Parents' Role in Drugs and Substance Education (PRIDE)*. This initiative was run effectively by a teacher to raise parents' and pupils' awareness of issues related to the abuse of drugs. Its success was evident when pupils presented what they had learned at a school assembly.
- 47 Teachers in the reception classes put a lot of effort into encouraging parents to become involved in their children's learning by sending books home to establish the habit of homework. A series of guidelines is sent home to help parents to deal with any problems they may encounter. As a result, many families work with their children to improve their reading. They sometimes help their children with enjoyable numeracy activities.
- 48 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in their children's learning from the time their needs are identified and are kept informed of their children's progress at all stages. The school reviews individual education plans regularly and parents are encouraged to take part in reviews. They are particularly pleased with the way the school involves them in their children's education, and the care they are given by the school.
- 49 A number of parents help regularly in school, and others respond to requests for help on special occasions such as school fairs and sporting events. A small group of parents who run the *Parents' Teachers' and Friends' Association* has bought televisions and video recorders. The association is a focus for parental and community support through functions and events. A significant number of parents are dissatisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress. Inspection findings confirm parents' views in that, while annual written reports are adequately detailed, they are written in language that is not always easy to understand. As at the time of the last inspection, parents lack information about the topics to be covered each term, despite the fact that they receive termly newsletters. This aspect of the information provided for parents is unsatisfactory.
- 50 Many parents find it difficult to contribute to their children's learning. The school does its best to improve this situation. It specifically aimed a *Parents as Educators* course, which attracted 10 parents, at helping them to assist their children's learning at home, and to understand what happens at school. With very strong encouragement and advice from the teacher in the reception class, parents of younger children get into the habit of reading with their children at home. Home-school agreements with parents and pupils have not been evaluated to discover the effect they have on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 51 The headteacher's leadership is based on good knowledge of the school's strengths, awareness of the challenges it faces in raising standards and a clear view of its needs for improvement. This understanding results from the considerable amount of time the headteacher spends in classrooms supporting and training teachers, and helping pupils. Following intensive personal training, the headteacher took on the co-ordination of information technology. This grew from the headteacher's view that the skilled use of computers provides an excellent means of improving pupils' learning and helpful additional support for pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, the headteacher raised staff expertise to a high level through training and increased the

resources available for teaching. As a result, with very good provision and high standards in the use of information technology, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of most subjects.

- 52 Working closely with three senior teachers, the headteacher has tackled most of the weaknesses identified during the last inspection with good success. Staff were involved in resolving an issue connected with the way that subjects such as history and geography were taught in *blocks of time*. After careful consideration, more effective ways were introduced to ensure that these subjects were covered with the regularity needed to maintain standards. Development planning is much clearer now and contains the elements needed for successful school improvement. Each committee of the governing body has its own targets for development. Once priorities are agreed with the headteacher, governors use them as a basis for budget planning. This places the school in a good position to finance and carry out essential changes. When targets are set and financed, the headteacher and governors keep monthly checks on the progress and effectiveness of spending and its effect on raising standards.
- 53 The school now pays strong attention to personal development. As a result, pupils take considerably more responsibility for their own learning than at the time of the previous inspection. The good pace of children's learning in the reception class is now apparent throughout the school. Very strong emphasis on staff training through the school's success in reaching the *Investors in People* standard, coupled with piloting the National Numeracy Project and the resulting improvements to teaching are responsible for pupils' good progress in English and mathematics.
- 54 Lesson planning is now based successfully on the objectives for pupils' learning set out in programmes of work. It places greater emphasis on the specific skills of art, design and technology and geography, although there is more room for improvement to this aspect of geography in Key Stage 2. There is also a continuing need for improvement to standards in science in Key Stage 2. Although improvements to teaching are evident, the teaching of the experimental and investigative skills is not strong enough in some classes in Key Stage 2.
- 55 The headteacher and co-ordinators for different subjects have made a good start to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Co-ordinators have made inroads into observing teaching following the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These recent initiatives, together with analyses of pupils' performance, are influencing the direction of teaching and learning. The school still has some way to go in using monitoring in a more structured way to provide better information to plan improvements, the training of teachers and further raising standards. Without more rigorous monitoring, the training planned for individual teachers is not founded on information that pinpoints their particular needs. Although all staff are trained effectively to meet national initiatives, their teaching lacks the personal targets for improvement that will help them to raise standards.
- 56 The governing body fulfils all statutory requirements. Since the last inspection and with several new members, governors have maintained their good understanding of all issues concerning the life of the school. Working closely with the headteacher, and the local education authority, the governing body shows its knowledge of pupils' achievements by setting realistic targets for their performances in National Curriculum tests. Governors' strong interest in the school is directed successfully towards ensuring that its mission statement is reflected in its work. Their informed commitment has extended their links with different classes and co-ordinators to supporting the implementation of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. The dedicated leadership of the chair of governors provides strong motivation for governors to support the school in providing all pupils with a good quality of education.

- 57 The school's very good provision complies fully with the Code of Practice and fulfils all legal requirements for pupils with special educational needs. The management of special educational needs by the co-ordinator is of very high quality. The co-ordinator works very efficiently and effectively to ensure that all staff understand the Code of Practice. As a result, teachers are well aware of the school's procedures and use them effectively to identify and support pupils at an early stage. When pupils enter the school other than in the reception classes, close attention is given to their achievements. No time is lost in assessing the learning and providing support for pupils with special educational needs who are new to the school. In awareness of the need to get best value for all spending, governors employ a good number of support staff to assist with the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Staff carry out their duties very effectively through very good teamwork and leadership. The school uses all funding for special educational needs to good effect on pupils' learning and well-being.
- 58 The headteacher is knowledgeable about financial management and the school secretary is efficient in maintaining day-to-day financial control. This ensures that when ordering resources and equipment the school looks for the best price and also takes into account the quality of goods and after-sales service. The headteacher, secretary, and a financial support officer from the local education authority carry out monthly checks on the school's finances. The last audit report (June 1995) concluded that the school's systems provide efficient and effective financial management.
- 59 The school makes good use of specific grants and other funding. Through good financial management, the headteacher and governors make sure that there are sufficient funds to support new initiatives. With the intention of getting the best value from all spending, the school is committed to raising standards by keeping teachers' training up-to-date. The need to boost the learning of some older pupils to improve their performances in National Curriculum tests is another example of money well spent. Very effective induction of newly qualified teachers, which provides them with half a day each week to organise their work, is also part of the school's determination to gain the maximum value from their appointments. Comparisons are made when employing supply staff between the actual costs and the charges made by agencies that may provide the service at a better price. Funds from the National Grid for Learning provide equipment for the very effective use of information technology in teaching and learning. Subject co-ordinators audit resources and are responsible for the purchase of new equipment within a specified budget. Consequently, funds provided for specific purposes are used correctly and according to the principle of best value.
- 60 Because of the governors' determination to raise standards and to cope with the changes to classes caused by the arrival of new pupils in Key Stage 2, the school employs a generous number of teachers and support staff. Teachers are suitably qualified and there is a good balance of experience and expertise to teach the full curriculum. With guidance for their professional development from annual appraisals by the headteacher, staff have a clear understanding of their roles and work supportively as a team. Each year, the school provides helpful training for students from local colleges.
- 61 Resources have been maintained at a satisfactory level since the last inspection. The range and quality of equipment available for information technology and for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The headteacher always looks for good value when purchasing new computers. As a result, the number and quality of computers and software are plentiful and appropriate. Some inadequacies exist in resources. These include a lack of suitable resources to broaden the learning of five-year-olds in a mixed-age class. Some of the equipment in this class is worn and needs replacing and supplementing. Also, some of the equipment for physical education needs replacing. Although library books are in short supply, loans from the public library make up for this shortfall.

- 62 Since the last inspection the school's accommodation has improved. It now has an extra classroom that allows for a reduction in the number of children taught in the reception classes. As a result, the sizes of infant classes are now more manageable. Pupils benefit from the use of a new room for information technology and the school has valuable extra space for storage. Current refurbishments to the hall will improve the indoor accommodation for physical education. Although there is no library for pupils to develop the skills of research and library classification, this is partly compensated for by with visits to the local public library.
- 63 Inevitably, many characteristics of a Victorian school remain and there is a need for constant maintenance to the buildings. While most classrooms are spacious, the large number of pupils in one or two classes gives a crowded feeling. This is particularly noticeable in Year 5, where large desks limit the teacher's ability to move around easily to work with different groups of pupils. A small playground and lack of immediate access to a field have a detrimental effect on pupils' physical development. There is also a lack of outdoor provision for the physical development of the under-fives. The school is very clean and tidy so that pupils and staff work in a pleasant environment.

64 WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Governors, headteacher and staff should:

raise standards in science at Key Stage 2 by

- planning work to challenge the most able pupils and to meet the needs of the less able
 - setting targets to raise standards
 - providing clear procedures to assess pupils' learning
 - improving some teachers' understanding of the subject through training
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to carry out investigations and experiments
- (paragraphs 6, 7, 22, 44, 54 and 94 of the main report)*

develop existing systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms by

- establishing formal procedures for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and its effect on standards
 - using the information from monitoring to plan teachers' individual needs for training
 - incorporating targets for improving teaching and learning into development planning
- (paragraphs 55, 83, 91 and 101 of the main report)*

provide children in their first year in school who are taught in a mixed-age class with suitable experiences by

- ensuring that teachers plan together more closely to meet children's needs
 - developing children's learning through practical activities rather than using worksheets that are often unsuitable for their age
 - providing them with the same high-quality resources that are available in the reception class
- (paragraphs 23, 27, 31, 61, 65, 70 and 72 of the main report)*

In addition to the key issues identified above, two less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

Ensure pupils' well-being by raising awareness and training governors, staff and pupils about issues related to child protection.

(paragraph 41 of the main report)

Improve the quality of information provided for parents by

- making sure that annual reports to parents about their children's learning are written in clear language that is easy to understand
- providing information about what pupils will learn in school so that parents can help them at home.

(paragraph 49 of the main report)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	30	36	29	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		244
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		61

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		55

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999 [98]	12[15]	22[21]	34[36]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12[10]	12[11]	12[11]
	Girls	17[21]	20[21]	19[20]
	Total	29[31]	32[32]	31[31]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85[86]	94[86]	91[86]
	National	82[80]	83[81]	87[87]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11[11]	12[11]	12[14]
	Girls	17[21]	19[21]	18[21]
	Total	28[32]	31[32]	30[35]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82[88]	91[88]	88[88]
	National	82[81]	86[86]	87[86]

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999 [98]	17[22]	17[13]	34[35]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8[8]	10[8]	10[11]
	Girls	10[6]	10[6]	9[7]
	Total	18[14]	20[14]	19[18]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53[40]	59[40]	56[51]
	National	70[64]	69[58]	78[69]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6[11]	8[11]	9[14]
	Girls	9[10]	9[10]	9[11]
	Total	15[21]	17[21]	18[25]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	44[60]	52[60]	53[70]
	National	68[65]	69[65]	75[71]

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	202
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.1
Average class size	30.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	175

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	363126
Total expenditure	367758
Expenditure per pupil	1539
Balance brought forward from previous year	25369
Balance carried forward to next year	20737

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Number of questionnaires sent out:

214

Number of questionnaires returned:

69 (32.2%)

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
1 My child likes school	55	36	6	3	0
2 My child is making good progress in school	57	39	0	1	3
3 Behaviour in the school is good	30	51	7	3	9
4 My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	38	42	16	3	1
5 The teaching is good	58	35	4	0	3
6 I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	28	43	16	12	1
7 I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	52	30	13	3	1
8 The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	55	41	1	0	3
9 The school works closely with parents	26	43	23	6	1
10 The school is well led and managed	35	43	9	4	9
11 The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	45	42	4	0	9
12 The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	19	25	25	13	19

4 (5.8%) parents made additional comments

Strongest point:

- It is easy to approach the school to ask for information; teachers listen to what you have to say.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 65 During the inspection, 15 four-year-olds were taught in the reception class together with six five-year-olds. The oldest five-year-olds are taught in a mixed age class with the youngest pupils from Year 1. The main setback to this situation is that the recently formed mixed-age class lacks the high quality resources available in the reception class. As a result, children miss some of the practical experiences suitable for their age. Also, too many children in the mixed age class, who lack experience of nursery education, carry out tasks that involve the use of worksheets before they are ready for them. This is particularly problematic for many children as their early achievements in mathematics on entry into school are below those of most children nationally. Their experiences of reading are also low but not as low as in mathematics.
- 66 Much of the emphasis teachers place on children's early learning is directed towards their personal and social development. Both teachers and classroom assistants spend a lot of time encouraging good behaviour and work hard to ensure that children learn to control their behaviour. This pays dividends when children learn to conform with rules and conventions. *Patience* is a key work that all children learn in the reception class. Most of them learn quickly that they are now part of a larger group and must wait their turns for adult attention. As a result, many pupils make good progress or have reached the expectations for the personal and social development of five-year-olds. One of the main advantages of a small reception class is that children thrive with the high levels of care available. While some children complain loudly when asked to share materials and to work with others, most are aware of more appropriate attitudes and are worried when no one helps the teacher to tell a familiar story.
- 67 The teacher's very good understanding of how to teach reading and writing has a very good effect on children's learning in the reception class. Teachers' planning of work from the National Literacy Strategy is very thorough. It lists simple spelling programs for use on computers, how assessments will be carried out and sets targets for pupils with special educational needs. A small group of more able children in both classes read very well. They are confident and articulate and read a wide range of simple stories. These children read and write at the first level of the National Curriculum. They are beginning to write phrases and to spell accurately.
- 68 Teachers put a lot of effort into ensuring that children identify the names and sounds of letters and that they understand that print carries meaning. As a result, children of average ability are approaching the standards expected in language and literacy for five-year-olds. Low attaining children and children with special educational needs make up and tell their own stories from the pictures in their books. They still have a long way to go before starting to read and several find it difficult to form letters.
- 69 The special educational needs teacher has very good knowledge of the problems young children encounter with their learning. This is used effectively to provide very good support for children who need help with spoken language and find it difficult to begin to read and write. Children enjoy the close attention they get when working with the special educational needs teacher. They concentrate well and get through a lot of activities in a short time.
- 70 Children under five in the reception class are introduced to mathematics through a series of well-planned activities. They are encouraged to count everyday objects in many situations and to learn rhymes that improve their understanding of addition and subtraction. By the time they are five, a reasonable proportion of children do well for their

age by counting, sorting and adding numbers up to 10 competently. They know the names of simple three-dimensional shapes and recognise events that happen at different times of day. Too much of the learning of reception children in the mixed-age class is recorded on repetitive worksheets. This results from the lack of a wide enough range of resources and limits the time available for essential *first-hand* activities. Worksheet tasks do not always ensure appropriate sequences of learning and there are too many of them to improve children's practical understanding of mathematics.

- 71 Most children widen their knowledge and understanding of the world considerably. Their progress towards the standards expected for five-year-olds is good. Clear planning allows children to explore and identify features of the living world and to record their observations. This was evident in a lesson about dandelions. Children were keenly interested in the topic and showed high levels of concentration when sharing information books and watching a video. As a result of looking at dandelions through microscopes, children produced attractive and carefully observed drawings. The teacher used a lot of praise to encourage children's efforts when showing examples of their best work. Some children echoed her praise, *Magnificent*. A classroom assistant working with a child with a statement of special educational needs made sure that the child was involved in all possible activities.
- 72 By using existing resources creatively, the teacher in the mixed-age class, encouraged children to design and make suitable and interesting houses for characters such as *Sleeping Beauty* and *Batman*. They developed their ideas effectively by drawing the materials they intended to use for their models. Because the new classroom lacks a wide enough range of resources, too much of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is dependent on the completion of worksheets at too early a stage. Most children make good use of computers to write their names in different styles, sizes and colours.
- 73 Children's co-ordination improves in lessons where, for example, they make imaginative movements to music wearing *big clowns' shoes*. They follow instructions from their teacher to make good use of the space available in the hall when they hop, jump, walk and skip with reasonable balance and control. When children in the mixed-age class use the floor to slide and equipment such as ropes and ladders for climbing, they often have too little time in the hall to improve their skills to a high standard. Limitations to children's physical development lie in the lack of space and suitable resources available on an everyday basis for their use in the playground. Despite this, children make satisfactory progress towards the levels of physical development expected by the time they are five.
- 74 Reception children thoroughly enjoy clapping and clicking their fingers when performing to music. As a result, they learn to keep together and to change the rhythm and dynamics of the music with great effort. They change smoothly to different tempos as they tiptoe and stride around the room. Some of the art displayed in the mixed-age class is linked to children's knowledge of the names and properties of two-dimensional shapes. Their progress towards expectations for their age is satisfactory.

ENGLISH

- 75 By the age of 11, standards in English are low and are below those reached by pupils of a similar age nationally. However, pupils in Year 6, who have attended the school since they were in the reception class, make good progress and reach satisfactory standards. Many of the considerable number of pupils who join the school in Key Stage 2 have special educational needs and this depresses standards in Year 6. Although a high enough proportion of pupils in this year's Year 2 work at the level expected for their age, fewer pupils than in 1999 are reaching the higher levels in reading and particularly in writing. This is because the early achievements of this group in English were lower than those of pupils in the current Year 3. Nevertheless, pupils in Year 2 are achieving the

best they are capable of. The school reached the target set for English in 1999 and has set a higher target for 2000.

- 76 There has been a good improvement to pupils' ability to listen carefully since the last inspection when it was considered to be barely satisfactory to a position where it is clearly satisfactory. Many children enter the school with poor spoken language but, by the end of Key Stage 1, improve their skills to such a good extent that their achievements are satisfactory for their age. Standards improve because of teachers' strong emphasis on speaking and listening and as a result, good progress is maintained throughout Key Stage 1. Teachers throughout the school provide many opportunities for the development of language so that pupils become competent in the use of clear language. This is especially helpful to bi-lingual pupils. The strong emphasis teachers place on developing the vocabulary suitable to different subjects enables pupils to express themselves accurately by the time they are in Year 6.
- 77 Standards in reading and writing are low at Key Stage 2 but the school is striving hard to drive standards forward through tightly focused support and by rigorously checking pupils' progress. Work during the literacy hour has a significant effect on standards. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress in learning to read. They pay close attention to print and are alert to spelling patterns and the structure of sentences. Pupils enjoy a range of books that develop their competence in reading and writing. Their learning is good, and even very good in well-organised lessons that provide skilled, direct and imaginative teaching of the basic skills. By the end of Key Stage 1 many pupils read at the level expected for their age confidently and with expression. Lower attainers are unable to achieve the required standard. Pupils have good appreciation of literature and non-fiction and show a developing interest in poetry.
- 78 At Key Stage 2, a few pupils read with expression and understanding. The wide range of literature teachers use during the literacy hour increases pupils' interest in reading. Although the school has no library, teachers do their best to meet pupils' needs through an appropriate range of books in classrooms, and through the support of the local library service. All classes except Year 6 visit the library regularly to use library classification systems in a high quality setting. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to borrow books from an excellent range. All pupils read regularly and frequently to the teacher, and some read with their parents at home. This is very effective in building confidence and interest in reading.
- 79 Good teaching in Key Stage 1 has a significant effect on pupils' knowledge of grammar and their understanding of the language. Most pupils use their knowledge of the sounds of letters effectively to spell. The writing of many pupils in Year 2 improves at a good rate when their stories and character profiles display a growing use of descriptive language. As they become more skilled, higher attaining pupils begin to express their ideas effectively. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work with concentration to complete an acceptable amount of work in the time available. The good relationships existing between pupils and teachers in Key Stage 1 make pupils more confident learners.
- 80 At Key Stage 2, a significant number of pupils do not achieve the standard in writing expected of 11-year-olds. Many of the pupils who have attended the school since the reception class achieve satisfactory standards. Several pupils, who are more able, write clear narratives, factual accounts and poetry. Many pupils find it difficult to write with the variety of language and accuracy expected for their age. There are still many pupils in Year 6 who cannot write clear sentences with sufficiently good standards of presentation, punctuation and spelling. Working in small groups in *booster* classes has a good effect on the learning of pupils supported through this initiative. Pupils who receive additional support for reading and writing in small groups, make very good progress and greatly enjoy the work and attention. They are very proud of their achievements. Bi-lingual pupils and pupils with special educational needs are very well catered for and make good progress towards the targets of their individual education plans. Teachers plan work to

meet their needs both in class and in groups outside the classroom.

- 81 Pupils enjoy the literacy hour and respond well to its familiar routines. Although they write in different ways during the literacy hour, pupils' writing is not always developed sufficiently in other subjects. Good links with a local theatre motivate pupils as they work alongside scriptwriters to produce their own versions of *Alice in Wonderland*. Most teachers encourage pupils to write in subjects such as science, geography, history or religious education. Several teachers allow pupils to copy writing from the board or to complete undemanding worksheets; this has a detrimental effect on their learning. Many older pupils in Key Stage 2 rarely show any initiative in checking or extending their work. A few of the more able pupils are often satisfied with a minimum of work.
- 82 A strength of teaching lies in the very effective use teachers make of information technology to support pupils' learning. The most effective lessons are well-planned, with clear explanations of their targets, and a good structure for pupils to model their work on. Good lessons are characterised by strong relationships between teachers and pupils that ensure pupils are valued and know what is expected of them.
- 83 Teachers' assessments of pupils' learning are thorough and rigorous. Information from analysing the results of regular tests in Key Stage 2 is used effectively to plan learning and to agree specific targets with pupils. Teachers use detailed records of progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening to plan the next step of pupils' learning. The co-ordinator works hard to raise standards through a focus on writing and clear targets that allow pupils to take responsibility for their learning. No formal systems exist for the co-ordinator to check the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Continuing emphasis on reading and on writing in different subjects, coupled with good teaching and leadership will ensure that the school continues to help pupils do their best.

MATHEMATICS

- 84 Standards for 11-year-olds in 2000 have risen considerably since 1999 but are still slightly low at the expected and higher levels. Although standards appear to be unsatisfactory, they are explained in that over a third of the school's more able pupils move to schools outside the area before they reach Year 6. A significant group of less able pupils and pupils with special educational needs replaces them. This regularly brings standards in mathematics below the national average for 11-year-olds. The school's agreed target for mathematics in 1999 was met and has been increased to a higher, more challenging level in 2000. The school is in line to meet this target. Satisfactory standards are maintained for seven-year-olds, but fewer pupils work at a higher level than in 1999. This is because tests on entry to the school show that there were fewer pupils with high mathematical ability in the current Year 2 than in many schools.
- 85 The subject is managed very effectively by the co-ordinator whose very good knowledge of mathematics stems from recent training in the National Numeracy Strategy. The co-ordinator led training for all staff when the school took part in piloting the National Numeracy Project. This early involvement with the National Numeracy Strategy, together with a commitment to raising standards, has contributed very effectively to improvements in teaching and in pupils' positive attitudes to the subject. As a result, all seven and 11-year-olds, including bi-lingual pupils and pupils with special educational needs, make good progress in mathematics. Most pupils are now confident and show high levels of enjoyment and a faster pace of thinking and working. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' response was slow and they lacked secure knowledge of number.

- 86 Teachers and classroom assistants provide very good support for the learning of the many pupils with special educational needs who work at a level below expectations for their age. Most have positive attitudes to mathematics and present their work well. Teachers' planning is good and they plan together. Support staff are well-informed and their skills are used very effectively to ensure that tasks are matched closely to pupils' needs. Teachers make very good use of resources to motivate pupils and use assessment to check on pupils' progress and to provide extra help when needed.
- 87 By the age of 11, average and higher attaining pupils have satisfactory knowledge of number. They use calculators competently to change fractions to decimals and understand the place value of decimals. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of shapes and explore the effect of rotating them. Several more able pupils in Year 6 work out the differences between rotational and reflectional symmetry. They support and consolidate this work on the computer with a program on tessellation and symmetry. Pupils' knowledge of place value improves as they move through the school. A small group of more able pupils in Year 6 understands the place value of each digit in larger numbers and in negative numbers.
- 88 Pupils' learning in Year 2 is well-developed in the addition and subtraction of numbers and money up to and beyond 20. By the age of seven, several more able pupils understand when a symbol is used to stand for an unknown number such as $? = 20+20$ and $30=50 -?$ They record data in charts and enter it onto spreadsheets on the computer. This was seen when pupils in Year 5 were teaching pupils in Year 2 to record scientific data.
- 89 Mathematics is linked effectively to other subjects. Teachers use plenary sessions well to develop pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Pupils in Year 5 compare differences in rainfall across the world in geography. All classes make good use of information technology to support and consolidate their learning in mathematics. Mathematics programs throughout the school are designed to last for a maximum of twenty minutes so that all pupils have time to benefit by using them every week.
- 90 Teaching in mathematics is mainly good or better. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when some teaching was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy put the school in a good position to further improve standards. All teachers have very good knowledge of mathematics, manage pupils well and support and encourage them in a way that increases their confidence and self-image. They use their knowledge well to question pupils about their ideas and to give clear detailed instructions. This enables pupils to behave well, settle down quickly to work and keeps the pace of learning moving forward. Teachers' very good emphasis on mathematical language enables pupils to acquire the vocabulary needed to explain their work. Clear explanations of the purpose and objectives of the lessons ensure that pupils know what is expected and concentrate and complete their work.
- 91 Good use is made of information gained from analysing the results of regular tests for teachers to plan pupils' work effectively. The school has introduced annual tests for all pupils from age seven to 11. This enables teachers to track pupils' progress each year, but because of changes in classes in Key Stage 2, it is often difficult to see precise trends over the whole of the key stage. Currently the co-ordinator checks the quality of resources, teachers' planning and some teaching and learning on an informal basis. No formal procedures exist for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. To spread good practice, the co-ordinator also gives some demonstration lessons. Procedures for checking and supporting pupils' progress are very good. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is well managed and enables teachers to make a confident start towards raising standards further.

SCIENCE

- 92 The school is trying hard to raise standards, and as a result of better teaching in most classes, standards in Year 6 have improved but are still not high enough to reach national expectations. Low standards result at Key Stage 2 because many pupils who do well in science in Year 2 leave the school before they reach Year 6. Also, many of the pupils who fill their places and who enter the school in their later primary years have learning difficulties. When their achievements are added to those of pupils with special educational needs in the school, they drive standards down to a low level even though most pupils make good progress with their learning. New pupils do not benefit from what the school has to offer all the way from the reception class to Year 6. By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards that are similar to those reached in most other schools.
- 93 Most teachers expect high standards of more able pupils in the way they tackle their work and record results. Some teachers in Key Stage 2 fail to provide sufficient opportunities for them to improve their learning to the high levels of which they are capable. In a lesson where there was a good level of challenge, pupils met it with enthusiasm. They were shown by the headteacher how to use a computer to write a program that distinguishes between hermit crabs, shore crabs and edible crabs. They then went on to achieve good standards without any further help. In some lessons, low attaining pupils find the work difficult because teachers set it at too high a level for their understanding. They enjoy the stimulation of interesting and informative lesson introductions. However, their concentration falls away during activities with a consequent slackening in their rate of progress. This was underlined in a lesson where pupils did not have extra help from a classroom assistant. They lost their way, became noisy and disturbed the lesson.
- 94 With the appointment of new staff, teachers' expertise in science has risen since the last inspection. A high level of expertise is reflected particularly strongly in the quality of pupils' work in Years 2, 3, and 5. Here, teachers have made a good start in improving the school's approach to developing pupils' experimental and investigative skills. This strong teaching is not apparent in every class with the result that some pupils have not made sufficient progress in improving these skills.
- 95 Teaching and learning are good when pupils are provided with *hands on* activities. This was seen In Year 2, for example, when pupils studied forces. With strong support from their teacher, they gained good understanding when investigating the effect of slopes of varied degree and texture on the distance model cars travel. They recorded their results competently in tables and bar charts. Another good feature of teaching is the development of pupils' understanding of the need for fair tests in investigations. Pupils in Year 3 responded enthusiastically and made good progress with their learning when using fair tests to compare the strength of different kinds of magnets. A further strength of teaching arises when teachers provide pupils with very good opportunities for research In Year 5, for instance, pupils' learning about the human body improved when they carried out research, which included the use of information technology.
- 96 Pupils' ability to work amicably in groups adds to the quality of their learning. Younger pupils derived great enjoyment and benefit when working together to make electric circuits. They were delighted when bulbs lit up and explained that circuits must be complete for this to happen. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 improve their understanding of science by entering information from investigations onto spreadsheets and transferring the data into various graphs.
- 97 Variations in teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject influence the way they use questions to deepen pupils' thinking. For instance, in Year 5, pupils' learning improved when the teacher asked, *What do you use your brain for?* This led to an enthusiastic and productive response. On the other hand, teachers sometimes miss

similar opportunities to increase pupils' understanding through questioning. One teacher, for instance, simply corrected a pupil's reply of *air* to *gas*, instead of requiring him, and the class, to consider a re-phrased question.

- 98 The school has no systematic approach to the promotion of scientific method. In some classes pupils record their work as with a story, or by making lists without indication of their scientific meaning. In other classes, teachers show pupils an approach, which includes, for instance, prediction, consideration of equipment to be used, recording by using tables, diagrams and bar charts and then drawing conclusions from results.
- 99 A good feature of the school's provision for science is the high level of classroom assistants available to give extra support to pupils with special educational needs. This helps to maintain pupils' interest and concentration during activities and enables them to make better progress than they otherwise would. Teachers brief assistants well and this benefits the quality of support they give. Sometimes, the quality of assistance they give is diluted when pupils are given tasks which are beyond their understanding. For instance, in Year 5, the work on the human body given to pupils with special educational needs was at too high a level. In Year 6, pupils found difficulty with some of the vocabulary on a worksheet and did not know the meaning of the word *crustacean* in a lesson about crustaceans. In these instances, the good level of provision of classroom assistants is not supported with work to match pupils' understanding.
- 100 Teachers provide a pleasant working environment in classrooms where effective learning can take place. This is at its best where relationships between teachers and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are most positive, such as in Year 5. Pupils learn in a busy, creative atmosphere. Teachers expect them to behave well and they do. Occasionally, however, in a minority of lessons, pupils lose concentration and become noisy, especially if the work is too difficult. This has a distracting effect on other pupils and the quality of learning suffers. It is also in these lessons that standards of presentation are low and teachers accept untidy work.
- 101 The school has improved its approach to science since the last inspection, but still has a long way to go. It has no formal means of recognising and spreading good practice by checking the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. The high level of the knowledge and understanding of some teachers provide the school with a good basis to raise standards in science.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 102 Standards in information technology have improved at both key stages since the last inspection and are well above those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds. This is because pupils are introduced to computers from the time they enter school and soon become adept in their use. By the age of seven, more able pupils independently and confidently log on to the local Intranet. They understand computer symbols and change the size and shape of print by using commands. Pupils in Year 2 benefit from instructions from pupils from Year 5 to enter data from scientific investigations onto a spreadsheet. They are able to interpret the information on graphs.
- 103 A particular strength of the school's provision lies in the use older pupils make of information technology to support their work in subjects such as science, mathematics, English and geography. They learn to read, interpret and understand pie charts and three-dimensional graphs. In mathematics, for example, pupils use a wide range of software designed specifically to match their needs and a new computer room is timetabled to support, extend and consolidate their learning. All pupils benefit from access to between two and four computers in each classroom.

- 104 Many pupils are adept at using the Internet and CD ROMs for research purposes such as finding out about the human skeleton and the climate in other countries. They are working with *Lancashire Enterprise* and other schools to develop a CD ROM linked with *Mathematics 2000*, which will incorporate their findings from a local shopping survey. They have begun to use the e-mail and have formed close links through the *Comenius* project with pen friends in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Poland, Romania and Finland. The school has its own website and pupils make effective use of digital devices such as cameras for video conferencing. Pupils are at ease with computers and use the mouse, windows, menus and keyboard exceptionally well. They also use insert, tools, and format and save to disk. Pupils select, load and edit programs without assistance from teachers.
- 105 Teachers make very good use of resources, to develop and extend pupils' skills. They plan activities well and match them closely to the needs of all pupils. This provides a continuing challenge and enables pupils' learning to be moved forward at a very good pace. Improvements since the last inspection are the use of a separate room and of good quality computers in each classroom to ensure that pupils get good instruction and ample opportunities to use information technology in different subjects. Provision for information technology is now clearly mapped out and supported through very effective planning. Progress since the last inspection has been good and the school is well-equipped to maintain it at this level.
- 106 The subject is led very effectively by the headteacher, who as an enthusiastic and competent co-ordinator has done much to raise the profile of the subject across the school. Because of the training the co-ordinator has led, all staff have very sound training at their own level and the headteacher has provided them with time to develop their expertise. As a result, the school now has some very competent, computer-literate staff. Pupils' learning benefits from the appointment of a teacher who is skilled in information technology and who has started lunchtime computer clubs for pupils from Years 4 and 5. These pupils are making very good progress in exploring different fields of information. They combine their findings with *clip art* to combine text and images and use commands to design a window.
- 107 A policy and programmes of work for information technology are being updated to place more emphasis on communications. Assessment, recording and reporting are linked to a series of skilled-based statements for each year group. New child-friendly assessment sheets, such as *I think I need help with*, are being trialled. These will assist when teachers use information from assessment to plan the next step of learning.

ART

- 108 Standards in art are typical of those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds. The school has maintained the satisfactory standards evident during the last inspection. As a result of good teaching, standards are rising in pupils' skills, techniques and the use of different materials.
- 109 By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have well-developed skills in drawing and painting. They make carefully observed drawings using pencil, chalk, and charcoal, paint detailed portraits and landscapes and study the works of various artists. Many pupils are aware of the effect that different colours have in conveying mood and use this knowledge in their own work. Their work shows sensitivity to detail. Pupils in Year 2 have good skills in using scissors, pencils and designing pictures. They weave materials such as wool, string, yarn, paper and foil to a good standard, discuss and modify their work, and justify the decisions taken. They are also happy to share one another's successes and work well together. After studying the paintings of Lowry, pupils in Year 2 used his style and thought about how his paintings made them feel before producing some very good black and white pictures in chalk. Some pupils with special educational needs produce very

good quality work. All pupils including those with special educational needs and bi-lingual pupils are fully involved in all activities.

- 110 A further improvement since the last inspection lies in the introduction of work with textiles. This has happened since the co-ordinator reviewed the policy and programmes of work for art and attended courses with particular links to textiles. Staff then improved their knowledge of textiles through training from the co-ordinator. As a result, pupils are aware of how different materials and techniques are used to produce a variety of effects. When pupils in Year 6 painted wax onto cotton, they produced some very effective underwater creatures.
- 111 The school has developed good links between art and subjects such as mathematics and information technology. These links extend the effective contribution art makes to pupils' learning and to their social and moral development by teaching them to share equipment, to take turns and to respect one another's achievements. Pupils' attitudes to art are enthusiastic and they are generally well-behaved. They demonstrate a general willingness to work hard. This has a positive effect on standards and most pupils persevere to improve their work.
- 112 Good leadership ensures that art is taught consistently across the school and that good use is made of resources. However, there are no planned ways in which the co-ordinator can be certain of the quality of teaching and learning by checking on classroom practice. Effective displays contribute to an attractive place for learning and inspire pupils to take pride in their work. Improvements to the development of pupils' skills are good and progress has been maintained in both key stages. This issue for action from the previous inspection is being met with good levels of success.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 113 As at the last inspection, standards in design and technology are typical of those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds. While teachers follow the same programmes of work at a satisfactory level, greater emphasis is now given to the development of basic skills in the use of tools and materials. This results in models with a better finish that results from greater accuracy in measurement, and in the cutting and joining of materials. Similarly, teachers encourage pupils to judge the effectiveness of their finished models and to decide how to improve them if they could repeat the task. For example, pupils in Year 6 work hard and with considerable effort to design the interior of shops such as a pet shop and a clothes shop. They make careful drawings of the layouts of the shops and of items on display before producing them with a wide range of materials and placing them in *shops* made from cardboard boxes. The shops are finished to a satisfactory standard before pupils decide on their effectiveness and any essential improvements.
- 114 Good teaching allows pupils to use imaginative ideas to improve their work. This was evident in Year 3, for example, when pupils designed moving vehicles with chassis. Their vehicles ranged from jeeps, rockets and open-air buses, to caravans, racing cars, *Smartie* vans and fire engines. By providing a good variety of materials and tools, pupils gained accuracy and competence in the use of saws, glue guns, wheels, doweling, tinfoil, tissue and paint. A good strategy to raise pupils' awareness of their learning was used in this lesson when they evaluated their finished vehicles. Pupils were asked to record a new skill and why they were proud of their work. In a mixed-age class containing pupils in Year 1, the teacher's imaginative approach to the subject caused pupils to cheer spontaneously when they entered the classroom and saw the room set up for a lesson in design and technology.

- 115 Clear progression is evident in pupils' learning when they produce attractive plans in the form of the sandwiches and fillings for their own sandwiches in Year 2. Pupils in Year 4 progress to making bread in different shapes, textures and types. Strong links between pupils' work in design and technology and other subjects extend pupils' learning. In Year 2, for example, pupils develop their work on dinosaurs by designing puppets with moving parts. They plan their work effectively by listing the materials they will use and by deciding where to place split pins and doweling rods to animate their dinosaurs.
- 116 Good leadership by the co-ordinator has resulted in improvements in the development of pupils' skills. With good resources and a revised programme of work planned for this year, the school is well-placed to improve standards in the subject. Further improvement would be possible if the co-ordinator had the chance to monitor the school's provision and the quality of pupils' work in classrooms. Good links are established with the local community when pupils in Years 5 and 6 work in the local library and also help to decorate the building.

GEOGRAPHY

- 117 Standards in geography are above those typical of most seven-year-olds. This represents an improvement to pupils' achievements since 1997. This good rate of progress is not maintained throughout Key Stage 2 and the standards pupils reach in Year 6 are only typical for their age. This is mainly because of changes which occur in the composition of classes in the key stage.
- 118 Learning in Key Stage 2 was described as *erratic* in the last report and a similar situation exists today. This is caused by a lack of leadership for geography to ensure the systematic development of pupils' skills. For example, pupils in both Years 5 and 6 are learning about life in the countries of the European Union and the wide variation in geographical features to be found within the continent. In Year 5, pupils produce their own books by researching information about different European countries from reference books and CD ROMs. They develop e-mail links with a range of countries through the Internet. This level of work is not, however, sustained in Year 6 where there is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets rather than the continuing development of research skills and the evaluation of its findings. This results in a mechanical recording of facts and figures with no real involvement or interest from pupils. A weakness exists in the careless way that many pupils at the end of the key stage record their work.
- 119 Teaching is generally satisfactory when teachers have good knowledge of geography and they encourage pupils to challenge stereotypes and to ask questions. Sometimes, however, stereotypes are introduced to younger pupils. For example, country cottages are represented as typical accommodation in the United Kingdom as are mud huts in Africa. Thinking like this goes unchecked because teaching and learning in the subject are not evaluated. Good teaching in Key Stage 1 provides a basis for the continued improvement to standards in geography. Geography is not as well co-ordinated in Key Stage 2 as it is in Key Stage 1 and there is no clear development of skills across the key stage. The lack of leadership and a clear programme of work limit opportunities for improvements to the teaching of skills in Key Stage 2.

HISTORY

- 120 Standards in history are not as high as they were at Key Stage 2 at the last inspection. This is mainly because of the slow pace of work of many pupils with special educational needs currently in Year 6. Although their achievements are satisfactory, pupils in Year 6 do not cover life in the Victorian era in enough depth for standards to be above those typical of most 11-year-olds. To ensure that pupils' understanding of history is deep

enough, the co-ordinator encourages teachers to be selective in their choice of historical topics. For example, instead of learning about the lives of four Elizabethan explorers, pupils in Year 4 learn more details of the exploits of two famous adventurers. Nevertheless, pupils learn about a wide enough variety of different periods of history in the key stage for standards to be typical for their age.

- 121 Effective teaching and learning results in Key Stage 2 when teachers provide pupils with a contrasting variety of historical knowledge. For example, in Year 5, good teaching provides pupils with two widely contrasting periods to maintain their interest in the subject and to extend their understanding of the local area. Work about the origins of the Olympic Games lends itself successfully to establishing links between events in the present day and in the distant past. It also provides a good vehicle for pupils to develop the skills of historical research while working with computer programs they can read and understand. By asking pupils to find out about the different sports incorporated into the original games, the teacher ensures that groups of pupils share their knowledge with the rest of the class and everyone learns more about the topic than they would by working independently. As a complete contrast, fieldwork in Blackpool combines effectively to work in geography and extends pupils' knowledge of the origins of their own culture.
- 122 Standards at Key Stage 1 are typical of those reached by most seven-year-olds. In addition to learning about the lives of famous people from the past, younger pupils are acquiring a sense of the passage of time. Some of the work teachers plan to give pupils an understanding of *then* and *now* is appropriate as it builds on pupils' knowledge of the present and the more recent past. In a mixed class of pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, most of them coped well with the idea that grandmother came first, was followed by mother and then by themselves. They also knew about *the olden times* and that people in the past had no microwaves. Pupils managed to sort different objects into piles of *old* and *new* things. It was much harder for all but the most able pupils in the class to place a series of objects in order according to their age. This idea was beyond the understanding of the youngest pupils and lower attaining pupils found it difficult to label the pictures they drew.
- 123 Strong links with other subjects extend pupils' understanding of history. A particularly effective example of this was in Year 4, where the teacher extended the study of Tudor times to include poems by William Shakespeare such as *Winter*. In this way pupils gain rich images of the way people lived in the past from contemporary poetry. A weakness in teaching and learning that detracts from the quality of pupils' work lies in the lack of attention some pupils give to presentation in their exercise books. Teachers accept work that is untidy or unfinished without comment. This reinforces pupils' views that the lack of effort they make when recording their work is acceptable.
- 124 Good knowledge of history places the co-ordinator in a good position to raise standards in the subject when a review of the policy and programme of work takes place. The co-ordinator lacks the opportunity to raise standards by checking for consistency in teaching and learning in classrooms. Helpful assessments at the end of each topic allow teachers to plan the next stage of pupils' learning. The school provides good supplies of books, which are chosen at the right level for all pupils to carry out independent research. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. It has no historical objects to bring the subject to life for pupils but compensates for this by borrowing replicas, such as Viking tableware, from a museum in the region. Good use is made of the locality for pupils to learn of the origins of their school and the tourist industry.

MUSIC

- 125 Standards in music are typical of those reached by most seven-year-olds and are above those achieved by many 11-year-olds. This represents a notable improvement to standards since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2 and results from enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching. It also results from pupils' good attitudes to music at both key stages, and their enjoyment of lessons and music practices. They are well-motivated, listen carefully and behave very well when singing or playing musical instruments.
- 126 The co-ordinator, who provides good leadership for music, uses very good knowledge and understanding of the subject to teach all classes in the school. Pupils are well-managed, and good use is made of day-to-day assessment to evaluate their work and to raise standards. Good teaching of the use of notation in Key Stage 2, allows pupils to use percussion instruments to perform their own music and to record it competently and accurately. All pupils have opportunities for musical appreciation during assemblies, where teachers use music well to create a calm and meditative atmosphere for collective worship. Pupils in Year 6 listen to a range of instruments and music from different times and places. They analyse the structure, pitch, purpose and feelings in the music as they listen to Grieg's *In the Hall of the Mountain King*. They improve their singing by varying the sound, sustaining notes at the end of phrases, and pronouncing words clearly.
- 127 The teacher plans the work well, and lessons have clear objectives for pupils' learning. A variety of methods and many opportunities allow pupils to sing to a good standard. In assemblies, for example, pupils sing modern songs for worship enthusiastically and with good diction. During choir practice, they sing very tunefully, with accurate rhythms and sensitive variations in sound. This was evident when they practised for a performance in a local departmental store as part of their contribution to *Blackpool Music 2000*. Their expression and use of mood is of high quality. The teacher ensures that all lessons provide a good mixture of activities to develop pupils' skills and to maintain their interest. As a consequence, because pupils in Year 4 listened carefully to the rhythms in *Zorba's Dance*, they recognised patterns in the music. They went on to invent complicated rhythmic patterns, and to clap them out while chanting their own raps.
- 128 Although pupils at Key Stage 1 listen carefully and with interest to music from different eras, their appreciation of music is not strong. They recognise that different instruments make different sounds, and appreciate the contrasts used to convey the moods of a variety of pieces of music. Pupils in Year 2 listen to contrasting rhythms and clap the different patterns but they still have problems keeping the rhythm when clapping in a round. They sing simple songs tunefully, and play percussion instruments loudly and softly.
- 129 A helpful programme of work helps pupils to develop musical skills in a logical progression and is supplemented very effectively by a commercial scheme. Adaptations to these programmes of work in 2000 will provide further improvements to standards. No formal assessments of pupils' achievements take place although the co-ordinator knows pupils very well and tailors her expectations to their needs.
- 130 A good selection of recorded music extends pupils' knowledge of the subject. A good range of percussion and instruments from other cultures adds to pupils' skill and enjoyment when composing their own work. Good use is made of the music room for visiting teachers and the music co-ordinator to provide keyboard and brass lessons for pupils with strong interest in the subject. The co-ordinator works hard to widen pupils' experiences of performing. For example, pupils play regularly in assemblies to gain experience of performing for a large audience. They sing carols annually in the town centre and recently sang during the *Women's day of Prayer* at the Salvation Army headquarters. Pupils in Key Stage 2 took part in a millennium production for parents, and

all pupils are encouraged to take part in the school's annual Christmas productions to add to their confidence and social development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 131 Seven and 11-year-olds achieve standards in physical education that are typical for their age. The school provides a balanced programme, which includes gymnastics, dance, games, athletics and swimming. Almost all pupils in Year 6 swim 25 metres and many are much stronger swimmers. Standards have been maintained at this satisfactory level since the previous inspection.
- 132 Teaching is mainly satisfactory. By paying close attention to the rules of safety, teachers ensure that pupils avoid accidents during physical education. They do this by ensuring that pupils dress correctly, by explaining rules and procedures and by providing warming-up and cooling-down activities. Some teachers adopt the good practice of discussing safety at the start of lessons. They emphasise the reasons for rules carefully to younger pupils. Older pupils are expected to think more deeply about safety, as when pupils in Year 3 were asked to explain the reasons for rules. Insistence and reminders about keeping rules pay dividends in developing co-operation and teamwork. Seven-year-olds follow the rules of games such as *bench ball*, but still crowd together in attack and have less interest in defence. However, in Year 3, pupils' appreciation of teamwork increases so that when they are in Year 4, they have good understanding of its effectiveness and of the importance of fair play in *Kwik Cricket*.
- 133 Teachers assess pupils' learning accurately and ask those who achieve high standards to demonstrate their skills for the benefit of others. For instance, some young pupils demonstrated movements such as *frog jumps* and *log rolls* so clearly that others were able to identify them. Teachers expect pupils to improve their own skills after watching good practice but do not always give pupils the support or insistence on improvement for this to happen. When judging pupils' performance, teachers give praise where praise is due and provide pupils with encouragement and confidence. However, in one lesson the teacher allowed pupils to laugh at a pupil's mistake without reprimand. This knocks pupils' confidence and willingness to take part in activities.
- 134 Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education. Teachers' good management and control of lessons effectively ensures order and safety. However, although pupils behave well, the acoustics of the hall magnify sound and sometimes there is too much noise. In a lesson, where the teacher was in clear control, pupils were quite noisy, but listened to instructions, obeyed them and were silent when requested. When a teacher had to remind pupils about excessive noise during a game, the school's behaviour policy was used effectively to restore calm when points were deducted from the score of the noisiest team. In another lesson, the teacher allowed excessive noise by not ensuring that pupils, who were unable to take part, observed a demonstration. This affected standards and pupils' concentration.
- 135 A good feature of teaching is the use teachers make of the work of classroom assistants to support pupils who lack skill or confidence in physical education. By taking part in games, classroom assistants give good help to these pupils and encourage them to succeed. They also help to keep good order by supervising pupils while waiting for a turn. Classroom assistants help pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and initiative when they provide them with rotas for clearing away at the end of lessons.
- 136 The limited ball skills of many pupils in Year 4 reflect the constraints of the school's outdoor facilities. The playground is small and there is no school field. Nevertheless, the school does its best to overcome this problem by providing older pupils with games in a nearby park. Also, the school takes part quite successfully in area competitions in

football, netball, athletics and swimming. When a new co-ordinator is appointed in September to give leadership and more attention to the subject, the school will be in a better position to improve standards. However, the school's outdoor provision will continue to limit improvements to some aspects of physical education.