

INSPECTION REPORT

ROSEACRE SCHOOL

Blackpool

LEA area: Blackpool

Unique reference number: 110349

Headteacher: S Gillibrand

Reporting inspector: P H Cole
2616

Dates of inspection: 9th – 13th June 2003

Inspection number: 248003

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stonycroft Road Blackpool
Postcode:	FY4 2PF
Telephone number:	01253 319000
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Alana Frith
Date of previous inspection:	9 th February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2616	P H Cole	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Educational inclusion	What sort of a school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13448	D Lloyd	Lay inspector		Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23801	J Kime	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education	
16447	R Grant	Team inspector	Art History Music Physical education Special educational needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
29767	J Royle	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology English as an additional language	
1678	D Peckett	Team inspector	Science Geography	
15064	P Bamber	Team inspector	English	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Roseacre Primary is a very large primary school and almost all its pupils come from white backgrounds; only a very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language and these pupils speak English well. The backgrounds of pupils are very similar to those found in the majority of other schools. Fewer than usual pupils have special educational needs and the attainment of pupils when they come into school is average. The school has achieved Investors in People status, Aiming High (provision of pre- and after-school care) and is participating in the Independent/State School Partnership Scheme, and has applied for the Artsmark.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Roseacre Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils who achieve appropriate standards. However, strong and effective leadership and management are creating improvements in teaching and learning and these are beginning to raise standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching enables children in the reception classes to achieve well.
- Standards in science are good.
- Pupils in Year 6 achieve in line with national expectations in English and mathematics but have made good progress since they were tested in Year 2.
- By Year 6 pupils achieve well in art and music.
- Provision for pupils' welfare and health and safety is excellent.
- Pupils behave well and are positive about learning and their personal development is good, reflecting effective provision and the positive school ethos.
- Effective leadership and management have produced positive changes that are leading to better quality education and to improvements in the standards that pupils are achieving.

What could be improved

- Although a clear majority of the teaching is good or very good a small but significant number of lessons have weaknesses that make them unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has tackled all of the weaknesses in the curriculum well and has developed very good assessment procedures to track the progress that pupils make and to use this information to make their learning more effective. The boys now achieve at least as well as girls and standards in both science and design and technology are now much better. Pupils now have effective skills in researching using information and communications technology (ICT) but their skills in using the library independently could still be better. Leadership and management have improved and have made a positive impact on the school's ethos, staff teamwork, improving the provision for pupils' welfare and safety, and in raising expectations.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	C	C	C
Mathematics	D	D	B	B
Science	D	C	C	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Results have shown improvement over the last three years and in 2002 Year 6 pupils achieved appropriately in English and science and well in mathematics. The school did not manage to reach the challenging targets that were set for Year 6 results in 2002 but more pupils achieved expected levels than the previous year. Boys have tended to achieve relatively better than girls in both the Year 6 and the Year 2 tests. Year 2 tests results have not shown the same overall improvement over the last three years with results in writing in 2002 being below national averages and below those achieved by pupils in similar schools, based on free school meals entitlement. The inspection found a more positive picture with standards in writing across the school showing improvement, particularly in infant classes with pupils now achieving above expectations and good standards by Year 2. By Year 2 and Year 6 standards in science are now above expectations. Although Year 6 pupils are achieving in line with national expectations in both English and mathematics this represents good progress when compared to the below average results these pupils achieved when they were tested in Year 2. The differences in the performance of boys and girls were not found to be significant, with girls achieving at least as well as the boys.

The school has invested a lot of effort into the creative aspects of the curriculum and this has resulted in standards in art and music being above expectations by Year 6 and to clear improvements being made in what pupils achieve in design and technology. There are some weaknesses in pupils' learning in history and geography because of the disjointed opportunities provided in the older junior classes. Children in the Foundation Stage are well taught and make good progress and are achieving above expected levels in most of the areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Positive overall and often very positive during events such as class assemblies, where pupils are keen to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good in class and very good around school and during break times.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils get on well very each other; they are polite, tolerant of others' beliefs, caring and helpful, eagerly taking on responsibilities.
Attendance	Satisfactory and improving.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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.

Teaching overall in the school is satisfactory. It is good in the reception classes and satisfactory elsewhere because although most of the teaching is good or very good across both infant and junior classes a small but significant number of lessons have weaknesses that make them unsatisfactory. There are common approaches to teaching that lead to effective teaching in many lessons. These include planning lessons with clear objectives identified for what pupils will learn and this usually leads to well-focused teaching; teachers are almost always careful to explain the lesson's objectives to their classes and this helps pupils to work purposefully to achieving them. Pupils' behaviour is skilfully managed and positive relationships are created that support learning. In many of the better lessons teachers skilfully question pupils and challenge them to work things out for themselves. In most lessons the professional partners working alongside teachers make a good contribution by helping usually lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs to be fully involved but occasionally the professional partners are too passive, mostly during whole-class sessions, and this limits their effectiveness. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good since teachers almost always provide a good range of quality learning experiences and carefully assess pupils in order to 'fine tune' what they teach.

The unsatisfactory teaching is not connected to a particular subject nor is concentrated in any part of the school. Weaknesses observed included not challenging pupils by 'spoon feeding' them information, setting a slow pace that led to pupils not being worked hard enough and on one occasion a teacher failing to manage the pupils well enough, which led to little being achieved.

Literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively, often by finding opportunities in different subjects for pupils to use these skills. Science is well taught by teachers who consistently use practical approaches that are successfully developing pupils' investigational skills which used to be weaknesses. Although marking is often helpful to pupils, particularly in English, because it makes clear to them what they need to do to improve, this is not always the case. On occasion very general comments are made that add little to children's understanding of how well they are doing.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. Fully meets requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory arrangements for the very small number of pupils identified.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good in all aspects and enhanced by visits and the school's emphasis on the arts.

How well the school cares for its pupils	There are excellent arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety and good arrangements for meeting their academic needs.
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Parents are mostly very positive about the school; they are kept well informed about what is happening and about the progress their children are making. A small number make a very good contribution through their work in school and with the Parents and Friends Association. The learning opportunities for pupils are enhanced through the extensive out-of-class activities and the links with the local community. Assessments of what pupils have learnt are used well to identify targets for them to work towards and by teachers to adjust what they teach.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has high expectations and leads the school very well. She is supported effectively by senior staff and teachers in their roles as subject managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a very good understanding of the school and are fully involved in planning and overseeing developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good systems evaluating how well it is doing. It makes effective use of what these reveal to bring about improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Careful and effective use is made of the funding available to the school.

The headteacher has brought about many effective developments since she took up post. She has improved the school ethos, raised expectations and is continuing to increase the effectiveness of the management structure. Governors are able to make a strong contribution, through for example their link roles and participation in school training days. The school makes good use of the principles of best value to ensure that there are good resources available and that these are used well to benefit the pupils in school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children work hard and make good progress. • Behaviour is good and children like school. • Teaching is good. • Leadership and management are effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information on their children's progress. • The range of out-of-class activities.

Inspectors agree with the strengths identified by parents although they judge teaching to be satisfactory overall with much of it being good. They do not feel that parents should feel concerned with the quality of information on how well their children are doing or with the out-of-class activities as these are both good and better than are usually found.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 The results in the Year 6 tests are better than they were at the time of the last inspection, mainly due to improvements in mathematics and science. In both these subjects results have improved at a faster rate than they have nationally. In 2002, results were in line with the national average for all schools in English and science and were above average in mathematics. This was also the case when compared to results in similar schools, in terms of free school meals. Pupils achieved as well as expected in English and science and better than expected in mathematics given what they achieved when tested in Year 2. Boys achieved better than boys did nationally and girls achieved similarly to girls in other schools.

2 The inspection found standards in both English and mathematics to be in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 6 and to be above in science. For these particular pupils this represents good progress in both English and mathematics as their results when they were tested in Year 2 were below average in both subjects. The weaknesses in writing that the school has identified have been tackled well and writing is now comfortably in line with expectations and Year 6 pupils are able to write at length for a wide variety of purposes. In mathematics more pupils are now working at higher levels than at the time of the last inspection and pupils are able to apply their mathematical skills more effectively than was the case. This reflects the impact of the training given to teachers and the effective setting arrangements. In science the strong emphasis now given to practical work has turned the weaknesses that existed in pupils' skills in enquiry and investigation into strengths. Girls are now achieving at least as well as boys and this is clearly seen in the proportions of girls in the different sets.

3 In 2002 the Year 2 test showed achievement below national averages in writing (mainly due to the small proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels of 2A and 3) and results that were in line with the average in reading and mathematics. As in Year 6, boys have achieved better than girls over the last few years; analysis of the latest test results shows that this year girls have outperformed the boys. The weaknesses in writing have been tackled well and pupils in Year 2 are now achieving above expectations in writing. Inspectors found standards in reading to be in line with expectations and pupils to be achieving above expectations in science.

4 The school places a strong emphasis on the creative aspects of the curriculum. This is paying dividends with standards in both art and music being above expectations by Year 6 while standards in design and technology are now in line with expectations whereas at the time of the last inspection they were below. Standards in history and geography are satisfactory overall but limited opportunities to study these subjects in Year 6 adversely affect pupils' retention of knowledge and skills development.

5 When children start school their attainment is generally that expected of their age. Children make good progress in the reception classes, due to the effective teaching. Most children are above expected levels of attainment in most areas of learning by the end of the reception year, though they reach expected levels in physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their good achievement is similar to that found at the last inspection.

6 Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily.

7 Overall, pupils achieve satisfactory standards that are better by Year 6 than they were at the time of the last inspection. This is mainly due to improvements in pupils' achievement in science, music and design and technology. The school is not complacent about standards and tackles weaknesses in pupils' learning well. This is impacting positively on standards overall.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8 Most pupils have positive attitudes to school and enjoy learning. Their behaviour is usually good, often very good, and they relate well to one another and to adults. Attendance is similar to that found nationally and has shown some improvement.

9 Pupils enjoy coming to school. They arrive in the mornings with smiling faces, eager to learn. In lessons, they are keen to answer questions, and settle quickly and purposefully to practical tasks. They listen attentively and concentrate on their work, sometimes working very well independently. Most are anxious to do well and try hard to achieve the targets that they have agreed with their teachers.

10 Good manners are a feature of the pupils' behaviour around school. They always make a point of holding doors open for adults and for one another; they are polite, friendly and helpful to visitors and confidently talk about their school and their work. In large group activities, such as assembly, their conduct is exemplary; for instance, junior pupils in a hymn practice did not allow the hot and cramped conditions to diminish their concentration or enthusiasm. There is a calm, civilised atmosphere in the dining halls and pupils play sensibly and happily together in the playgrounds.

11 Although two pupils were excluded from school in the year prior to the inspection, it is rare that such extreme measures need to be taken. When, exceptionally, exclusion has to be used as a final means of dealing with poor behaviour, comprehensive support systems involving parents and external agencies are put in place to assist a successful return to school.

12 Behaviour in lessons is mostly good, but sometimes a minority of pupils can be excitable and lack self control. They become noisy, call out answers and are easily distracted from their work. They do not always respond immediately to instructions and slow the pace of learning in some lessons because the teacher needs to spend too much time keeping a few pupils on task.

13 Relationships across the school are very good. Pupils get on well together and say that the friendly relations between themselves and their teachers are one of the aspects of school that they like best. They work very well together in pairs or groups; for example, a Year 5 class practising for Sports Day tried extra hard in their house teams, encouraging their team mates on to make greater efforts. They take turns and share equipment fairly and discuss ideas sensibly. Older pupils, particularly, listen well to one another and show respect and consideration for ideas that differ from their own; for example, a group of Year 6 pupils were interested and thoughtful when describing their knowledge of different religious customs and practices. Pupils and staff agree that there is no bullying in school, nor is there any evidence of sexism or racism.

14 Pupils are eager to accept the opportunities that they have to take on responsibility. Elected members of the school council are proud of their position and happy to devote their

spare time to research projects associated with their duties, while their classmates appreciate the fact that their views are regularly sought and valued. Volunteers are easily found for a range of jobs to help the teachers; for example, Year 6 pupils give up their time to look after the infants at playtime and, in so doing, are developing their own personal and social skills.

15 Attendance is similar to that found in primary schools nationally and has shown improvement, but, in spite of the school's best efforts to persuade parents of the importance of regular attendance to ensure good progress in learning, holidays in term time still account for much of the absence. Punctuality is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16 In the reception classes teaching is good and elsewhere in the school it is satisfactory with the majority of the teaching being good or better than that, which is an improvement on the last inspection. However, as in the last inspection, there is still a small but significant amount of teaching that has too many weaknesses and this makes teaching satisfactory overall.

17 The strengths of the teaching in reception include the strengths of the relationships that staff have developed with children and lead to a settled and busy atmosphere. Staff provide mostly a good range of quality learning experiences that develop independence and question children well to extend their language skills and develop their understanding. They assess children carefully and use what they have found out to improve what they go on to teach. These strengths ensure that children make good progress in most of the areas of learning identified in the Foundation Stage curriculum. On occasion children are left too long on independent activities that are not as well planned as usual without staff supporting them and when this happens their learning can be unsatisfactory.

18 Most of the unsatisfactory teaching was associated with individual lessons with particular weaknesses rather than a pattern of weakness in aspects of teaching, subjects or classes in the school. In one or two lessons pupils were not challenged enough to think or develop new skills; teachers spoon fed them information as in a poor geography lesson when the pupils were only required to follow the teacher's instructions and were given no opportunities to practise their skills in using maps or to apply their understanding of locations. In a music lesson the pedestrian pace of the teaching and weak organisation resulted in pupils being inactive and uninvolved for long stretches and as a result little was added to their learning. Other weaknesses seen in unsatisfactory lessons included not being clear enough about what was expected of pupils and on one occasion the teacher not having secure control of the class, which resulted in little being achieved.

19 In the vast majority of lessons the teachers have thought through what they want pupils to learn and match these objectives appropriately to the pupils in their sets or classes, and their lessons are well organised and prepared. In almost all lessons teachers make it very clear to pupils what they want them to be able to do, understand or know by the end of the lesson and this helps to ensure that pupils work purposefully throughout. A feature of most lessons is the teachers' questioning of pupils that encourages them to think, work things out for themselves and apply what they know. Teachers almost always have good subject knowledge, and this was a strength in the effective specialist teaching of ICT and music enabling teachers to develop pupils' skills confidently and enthusiastically. In most lessons the professional partners are used well to support groups of pupils and they usually do this well. On occasion, some are too passive usually during whole-class sessions, when they could be sat with and helping with target pupils or assessing the contributions that pupils are making.

20 Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught effectively, and the teaching of science is consistently good, with a strong emphasis being placed on the practical approaches to teaching and learning which have led to improvements in pupils' ability to carry out investigational work.

21 Teachers mark pupils work regularly but its usefulness is too variable. In English, teachers make helpful comments that enable pupils to improve their work, but this effective approach is less consistent in other subjects, such as mathematics and science, and opportunities to take pupils forward with their learning are sometimes lost.

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

22 Overall, the school's curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to all pupils' needs, fully meeting the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. There are strengths in the curriculum: in English, particularly in writing and for improving the reading skills of less able pupils; in science, especially in investigative work; in art and design, mathematics and music. Relative weaknesses exist in history, in which pupils are given limited opportunities to develop a wide range of skills, and in geography, where the disjointed provision means that pupils do not build systematically upon their geographical skills.

23 The curriculum for reception children is satisfactory. Teachers create a bright and stimulating environment that supports learning well, particularly in literacy and numeracy. A wide variety of interesting practical activities is provided, though the small size of the classrooms and outside area hampers good provision. For example, in one class, in order to create enough space for the class 'theatre', there was no area where children could choose to read books comfortably. There is usually a good balance between activities directed by adults and opportunities for children to choose activities and work at them independently, though occasionally these activities are not structured carefully enough in order for children to learn effectively from them.

24 Pupils with special educational needs and the very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make the same progress as other pupils. In lessons pupils with special needs are supported appropriately by professional partners. However, on occasion teachers of sets do not use pupils' individual education plans when planning their group's work and some of these pupils' individual education plans are not clear enough about the next steps in their learning.

25 Literacy skills are promoted well and numeracy skills satisfactorily in subjects across the curriculum. One of the foci for improving pupils' writing is to make what they write more relevant to them. There are good examples of letter and diary writing in history, poetry in geography and persuasive writing in several subjects. In science and design and technology particularly, pupils apply their mathematical skills satisfactorily. Both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well implemented and the extra literacy lessons introduced for all pupils have resulted in good improvements in writing.

26 The range of out-of-school clubs on offer provides well for enriching the pupils' experiences and for promoting their social, moral and cultural development. There are particular strengths in the range of sporting and musical activities available. At least two different art and design clubs also contribute well to pupils' aesthetic development and the school is currently seeking the Artsmark in recognition of its good provision in this area.

27 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in all aspects. Collective acts of worship and religious education lessons contribute well to pupils' spiritual awareness, and the frequent reciting of the school prayer, both in assemblies and in lessons, provides pupils with a focus for reflection. Teachers seize opportunities well to encourage pupils to ponder on the beauty of nature and on the achievements of others.

28 A strong moral code is consistently applied and adhered to. Pupils respect each other and adults, and in most cases closely follow the rules set for behaviour, both in and out of the classroom. In English, geography and history lessons, pupils write about and discuss moral dilemmas concerned with wealth creation and the environment.

29 Pupils' social development is well promoted through them engaging in fund-raising activities which often support children less fortunate than themselves. The school council provides its members and those they represent with a useful grounding in the workings of representative democracy and the electoral system. All pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have the opportunity to partake in residential visits, living, working and playing together for a few days, and developing their capacity to accept challenges, to work together in a team and to become more independent.

30 The school's emphasis upon the arts ensures that pupils are aware of and celebrate both their own and other cultures. Pupils make visits to the places of worship of different faiths, listen to representatives of local Hindu and Jewish communities and experience the fashion and foods of Asian countries. From their reading, pupils gain a good knowledge of fables, Greek mythology and the work of Caribbean poets. 'Role-play' days, when local places of historical interest are visited and greatly enjoyed by pupils, provide them with opportunities to experience the lives of Anglo-Saxons, Victorian children, and people in Tudor times and in Britain during the Second World War.

31 The school has appropriate arrangements for teaching sex and relationships education, for making pupils aware of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and for promoting their personal development and their healthy living.

32 There are good links with the local community which contribute well to helping children settle happily into the reception class, to arrangements for the transfer to secondary education and to helping less able pupils to gain confidence and improve their reading skills. Links with the local church, temple and synagogue promote pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development well. A link with a local independent school has resulted in improvements in pupils' skills in design and technology and pupils from the local secondary school have worked very productively with older pupils in the school to organise vibrant musical and dance productions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33 The school has excellent arrangements for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of its pupils and monitors their personal development effectively.

34 There is a comprehensive health and safety policy that covers all aspects of school life. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and contribute to the detailed risk assessments that support the regular inspections carried out by members of the health and safety committee. Instructions for evacuation of the building in the event of a fire are prominently displayed in every area of the school and first aid equipment is available in every classroom. Staff are careful to follow safe procedures in lessons, such as in physical education and science, and to encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle, for example, through eating fruit and protecting themselves from the sun. The school is aware that the

building poses problems of access for the disabled and there is, as yet, no dedicated medical room.

35 An effective policy for encouraging good behaviour is consistently implemented by staff. Because pupils are involved in formulating their own class rules, they understand and observe them more readily. A strong emphasis on recognition of effort and achievement motivates pupils to try hard, in their work and behaviour, and contributes to the calm, happy atmosphere that pervades the school. The positive, caring ethos helps to ensure good relationships and consideration for the needs of others, so that there is no bullying or unkindness amongst pupils.

36 There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and encouraging them to come to school regularly, which are effective in ensuring that most pupils have good attendance records. Procedures for child protection are very clear and thoughtful, and all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are properly trained in their application. Through the personal, health, social and citizenship education programme, pupils are taught how to look after themselves, and their very good relationships with adults in the school mean that they can approach staff confidently if they have any worries. Pupils' personal development is routinely monitored by staff, so that appropriate action can be taken if any concerns arise. The highly successful before and after-school clubs provide a good service to pupils and their parents and illustrate the school's genuine concern for the welfare of all its pupils.

37 Very good arrangements are developing to keep track of pupils' progress and these are used well to improve their learning. They have led to the identification of weaknesses, for example in pupils' writing which have been tackled successfully. Assessment of what pupils learn is also beginning to be used well to help pupils to understand what they need to do to make their work better. They are given appropriate targets in writing and these have contributed to the improvements in this aspect of English. This good practice is also used in mathematics but has yet to become established in other subjects, such as science. Appropriate assessments and records of how well pupils are learning are currently being developed and implemented in the foundation subjects. The assessment of the pupils with special educational needs is sound but could be more finely graded to identify smaller and more specific steps for them to take. The school is aware of this weakness and is changing its practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38 The school's work with parents has been strengthened since the last inspection. Parents have generally very positive views about the education their children receive. There is a good range of information about pupils' progress and about what they are learning, and some parents are actively involved in the life of the school.

39 Although only 20 per cent of parents returned the pre-inspection questionnaire and a small number attended the meeting, the views expressed indicate that most parents are very happy with the school. They think that children are expected to work hard and are making good progress. Most parents believe that children enjoy coming to school and that they behave well. They think that teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. They find it easy to approach staff with queries or concerns and are confident that these will be taken seriously.

40 A small number of parents are not happy with the amounts of homework set, and feel that they are not kept well informed about pupils' progress, and some do not feel that the school works closely with them. A similarly small number of parents do not think the school offers an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

41 The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents, but finds the criticisms largely unjustified. Homework is set appropriately according to a planned timetable, which parents receive in the form of a homework diary. There are ample opportunities, both formal and informal, for parents to find out about pupils' progress and the school makes concerted efforts to work closely with parents, on an individual or collective basis, depending on the circumstances. The range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils is good.

42 Documentation such as the prospectus, curriculum information sheets and letters home ensures that parents are kept up to date with events and developments in school. In addition, the school's website enables parents to see what pupils are learning and the introduction of e-mail as a fast, effective means of communication between home and school has been very popular. Written information is supplemented by specially arranged meetings where aspects of the curriculum are explained in detail, for example how the school approaches sex education and drugs awareness. The majority of parents take advantage of these opportunities to find out about their children's progress and about new developments in the school's provision.

43 A particularly useful means of keeping parents informed is the target report issued in the autumn term. This, in conjunction with the homework diary that some parents use as a means of communicating with teachers, helps parents to keep track of pupils' progress. Informal discussions with teachers take place regularly and the process culminates in the annual consultation evening, when parents can discuss their child's end of year report in detail. These annual reports vary in quality. Most give good information about what pupils know, understand and can do, but they do not all identify pupils' weaknesses or say what pupils need to do to improve.

44 The school is most anxious to work closely with parents, and, to this end, undertakes regular surveys of their views. Parents are strongly encouraged to give practical support to pupils' learning, either through helping in classrooms or by taking an active interest in what pupils do at home, for instance by listening to them read, or helping them learn spellings or undertake research. A small number of parents regularly help in school, including some who offer their special expertise, such as helping pupils establish and maintain a quadrangle garden, or running a graphic art club. The Parents and Friends Association, led by a nucleus of committed parents, organises very successful fund-raising and social events, which have enabled the school to buy additional resources for the benefit of the pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45 The school is well led and managed. The headteacher, who has been in post for nearly two years, has high expectations of pupils and a strong desire to improve the quality of their education. She has made a considerable impact by improving the school's ethos, strengthening the management structure, building teamwork, reducing staff turnover and developing effective practices for monitoring and evaluating what the school does and keeping a close eye on how well pupils are learning. She is supported well by the senior management team who set a good example through the quality of their teaching and are mostly appropriately involved in critical aspects of the school's life, such as performance management, inclusion (including special educational needs), development planning, supporting and improving teaching, and analysing and evaluating the effectiveness of pupils' learning. On occasions their efforts are put into less valuable activities, such as inputting assessment information into the computer and booking courses for teachers, which detract from the impact they can make. There are instances where teachers have not followed agreed policies, for example a set teacher not having a pupil with special needs' education

plan to refer to when planning lessons, and inconsistencies in the marking are seen across the school. These have not been identified and rectified and a refocusing of the work of senior managers could help to ensure that these inconsistencies were eliminated.

46 The roles of teachers as subject managers has improved since the last inspection. They make a full contribution to reviewing their subject and in identifying and planning what needs to be done to make things better. Where subjects have been a particular focus, such as English, ICT and science, the managers have made a strong impact reflected in improved provision and good standards being achieved.

47 The governing body makes a very strong contribution to the development of the school through their role as critical friends. They have a very good understanding of how well the school is performing and what is happening in it through, for example, their link roles, and they contribute well to planning developments by taking part in action planning sessions.

48 A range of appropriate and mainly effective strategies is used to find out how well pupils are being taught and whether agreed approaches to working are being consistently implemented. Teaching is observed in line with development priorities, assessment data is analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning, pupils' work is evaluated and teachers planning is checked. This has helped to increase the proportion of good and better teaching and has identified where weaker teaching needs to be tackled. Appropriate support continues to be given to individual teachers and information from monitoring is used effectively to inform staff development needs. Performance management is being effectively implemented and includes non-teaching staff, reflecting the school's commitment to Investors in People.

49 The planning of developments and for improvement is effective. It is based on the identification of strengths and weaknesses, including the views of parents and pupils, and fully involves staff and governors. Priorities are clearly identified, and how they will be implemented is described in detail. Effective action is taken by those responsible to achieve the intended outcomes. This is clearly demonstrated in the rising standards in writing, art and music and the development of very good assessment practices. The use of the school's budget is determined through this planning process and care is taken to ensure that funds are spent wisely to ensure that best value is realised.

50 Many areas of the curriculum are well resourced, including science, English, music, art, religious education, ICT and physical education. This reflects the careful use of the school's budget for the benefit of the pupils in the school. The school's accommodation is well maintained and mostly well matched to the demands of the curriculum, with good facilities for the libraries, ICT and design and technology. Access for the disabled is currently difficult but the school has appropriate plans to tackle this. Staff work hard to create a very positive and attractive learning environment. There is limited space for outdoor games and the Foundation Stage but these areas are used well to promote learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 In order to raise standards further and improve the quality of the education the school provides, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Improve the quality of teaching by tackling the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in the school and the inconsistencies found in marking. This could involve making more effective use of the good quality information being collected on teaching to identify specific strengths and weaknesses, for example from data analysis, scrutiny of pupils' work, the checking of planning and observation of lessons.

Please refer to paragraphs 18 and 20

In addition the following less important issues should be addressed:

1. Sharpening the focus of the work of senior managers; (*paragraph 45*)
2. Improving the curriculum arrangements for history and geography in the upper junior classes; (*paragraphs 22, 100, 110*)
3. Improving the assessment and planning for pupils with special educational needs. (*paragraphs 24 and 37*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	71
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	11	32	19	5	1	0
Percentage	0	16	47	28	7	1	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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)	0	626
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	42	45	87

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	33	40
	Girls	39	41	41
	Total	70	74	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (82)	85 (87)	93 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	40	35
	Girls	40	40	42
	Total	73	80	77
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (88)	92 (91)	89 (87)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	44	43	87

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	37	39
	Girls	36	31	38
	Total	71	69	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (77)	78 (70)	89 (83)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	37	37	31
	Girls	38	32	30
	Total	76	70	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (82)	80 (87)	70 (84)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	527	4	2
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	26
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	25
Total aggregate hours worked per week	579

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	NA
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	NA
Total number of education support staff	NA
Total aggregate hours worked per week	NA
Number of pupils per FTE adult	NA

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	17

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2003
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	£
Total income	1,377,825
Total expenditure	1,337,385
Expenditure per pupil	2,136
Balance brought forward from previous year	54,027
Balance carried forward to next year	94,467

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	630
Number of questionnaires returned	126

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	38	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	47	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	55	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	49	17	5	2
The teaching is good.	46	48	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	46	21	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	40	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	37	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	52	12	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	44	43	5	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	52	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	41	11	2	10

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

52 When children start school, in the September of the year in which they reach the age of five, their levels of skills and understanding are about those expected for their ages. The vast majority of children make good progress in the reception classes, due to the good quality of teaching and the detailed assessments of what children can do that are used effectively to plan what children should next learn. Children achieve well overall and so, by the end of the reception year, standards are above those expected nationally in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and creative development. They are at about expected levels in physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The school has maintained the good standards reported by the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

53 Staff encourage and support children's personal, social and emotional development well. This means that almost all children reach above expected levels by the end of the reception year. Staff build good relationships with children and place a lot of emphasis on encouraging and praising children's efforts. This creates a friendly, stimulating and secure environment in which children behave well, enjoy their activities and try hard with their tasks. Almost all children manage the routines of school life, such as answering the register and lining up to walk into the hall, with increasing maturity. They are helped to become more independent. For example, children are asked to put their name card in a basket to register at the start of the morning session. Almost all children can change clothes themselves for physical education lessons and those that find this difficult are encouraged to keep trying. Staff help children learn to tidy equipment away at the end of sessions and children take turns to carry the registers to the school office. Children show respect for each other's views and efforts when children's work is shown to the class at the end of sessions. They co-operate very well when using the class 'theatre' to act out a fairytale.

Communication, language and literacy

54 Children make good progress due to the good teaching in reception classes and they achieve well; standards are above nationally expected levels at the end of the reception year in listening, reading and writing; they are at expected levels of speaking skills. The classrooms are well organised to promote reading and writing, with good quality books available for children to choose, alphabet pictures, word lists, captions and questions on interesting displays around the rooms. Teachers make many worthwhile opportunities for children to attempt their own writing. For example, writing paper and envelopes are available so that children can choose to write a letter to the three bears from Goldilocks, after discussing that story in literacy sessions. Staff use many opportunities throughout the day to encourage and increase all children's language and literacy skills. For example, in one lesson seen the support staff skilfully questioned children whilst they made porridge, extending their vocabulary and prediction skills well. Specific literacy lessons are planned and taught effectively and children's efforts are valued and praised. Children listen intently to fairytales such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and enjoy changing their voices when reading the speech of each bear. Almost all children confidently read simple books by themselves and write a few sentences to tell a story in their own words.

Mathematical development

55 Teachers provide many opportunities for children to learn early mathematical concepts and skills. Children make paper-bag bear puppets, choosing the appropriate size of bag. They look at the prices of fruit in the outdoor 'shop' and buy several, adding up the money. They carefully measure out two spoonfuls of oats when making porridge. Generally good teaching in specific mathematics lessons contributes to the good progress that children make and results in standards being above expected levels by the end of the year. Children really enjoy the 'spot the deliberate mistake of the teacher' game and almost all can correctly order numerals from one to 20. Teachers help children learn several strategies to find out answers and provide equipment, such as cubes, dice, dominoes and numbers written in order, to help them. Almost all children confidently add two numbers together, checking their answers by counting the spots on the dice, and many successfully add three numbers together without counting them all. Teachers give children a lot of praise and this encourages children to persevere with problems set them. Occasionally, however, in their concern to make sure all children are working hard, teachers give children tasks that are too difficult for a few of them. This was seen, for example, when children had to find two numbers that made a given number between 10 and 20, selecting from a lot of possibilities; a few of the children needed more practical activities before tackling this work.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

56 Teachers provide a range of interesting and practical activities over the year to support early concepts in design and technology, history, geography, religious education, ICT and science at a level relevant to young children. Teachers use these activities satisfactorily to help children make steady progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children write down instructions for making a pizza and experiment with different ways to fix collage materials onto paper. Teachers help children learn about the passing of time by activities such as recording the months of the year and marking their birthday month. Children think about different localities during a topic on the seaside and when writing 'postcards' from holiday places. They learn about festivals such as Christmas by acting out the nativity story. Computers are used to experiment with drawing pictures. Children use programmable toys and are able to make them move a specified distance and direction. At times, whilst the adult-directed tasks are successful in helping children learn, there are too few well-structured activities that help to reinforce what is being taught, so that children can independently work at them. In one lesson, where insufficient adult support for children working independently was also a factor, this resulted in unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Children make good progress in their scientific knowledge and understanding, due to the stronger emphasis on this in the teaching. Teachers encourage children to make predictions and then find things out. Children grow cress seeds and record observations over several days. They use the outside area to grow a variety of vegetables. They go pond dipping and learn about the life-cycle of a frog. They explore the properties of materials such as sand and water. Standards are at expected levels by the end of the year, with strengths in scientific knowledge and understanding.

Physical development

57 Teachers satisfactorily develop children's physical skills through the year and by the end of reception standards are at expected levels overall. The school has recently created an interesting area outdoors for reception children to use, though, because it is small, each class has limited access to it. In the outdoor session seen, this area was being used well for a variety of activities, including those to develop children's physical skills. Children showed average levels of ability in pedalling wheeled toys and in climbing and sliding on the large play equipment. In the classrooms, children are given appropriate opportunities to use equipment

such as scissors, glue sticks and pencils carefully to increase their control and manipulative skills and do so with expected levels of skill. In the one physical education lesson seen, the teacher's very good relationships with and management of the children ensured instant quiet and attention when the teacher asked for them. Children showed appropriate skills when moving round the hall in different ways at the start of the lesson – jogging, hopping and jumping. Good quality movements were used well to demonstrate to the whole class and encourage all to improve. The teacher had chosen an extremely interesting variety of different types of music to portray sections of the story of Goldilocks. This resulted in all of the children moving rhythmically and imaginatively to express the feelings the characters in the story might have had. In this more creative aspect of movement the teaching and learning seen were very good.

Creative development

58 Teachers organise many good opportunities to support children's creative development and children make good progress, so standards are above expected levels by the end of the reception year. Children experiment with paints, pastels and other media and use different techniques such as printing, finger painting and collage work. They make careful drawings of fruit using pastels and explore the effects of mixing colours to make different shades. They make good quality paintings of people and animals and careful models of vehicles. In the art lesson seen, the teacher had good relationships with the children and demonstrated the task well, so that children were interested and knew exactly what to do. It was the first time the children had used clay, however, and not enough time was given to allow children to explore this new medium before being given a formal task such as "to make a bear like this". All children moulded a fair representation of a bear and used tools to add texture to the surface; good standards were achieved. No music sessions were observed, to judge the quality of teaching and learning in this aspect. The physical education lesson seen, however, showed how carefully teachers chose different music for children to listen to, and insisted that children listen quietly and reflect on it before responding to the different moods with imaginative movements. At times, teachers sing the names when calling the register and children hold the tune well when they sing in reply. Children are given many good opportunities to play imaginatively, such as in the 'theatre' and staff enhance the play by providing good quality resources to support and give focus to the 'productions'. At times, groups of up to eight children were observed using the 'theatre' independently, with actors, audience, ticket office staff and ice-cream sellers playing their parts well. The level of co-operation and quality of imaginative play was very good in these sessions.

ENGLISH

59 The results of the Year 6 national tests in 2002 showed standards to be average when compared with all schools and with those of similar type. Overall, standards have remained consistent over the last five years. The Year 2 test results in 2002 showed standards to be average in reading but below average in writing, when compared with all and similar schools.

60 In the last two years the school has placed great emphasis on improving the quality of pupils' writing and as a result standards are steadily rising throughout the school. The most marked improvement has occurred in Year 2 where standards are much higher than those indicated by the 2002 test results. The school's test data, based on nationally set assessments at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5, also indicate that pupils have made good progress in their writing in all year groups in the junior part of the school.

61 Overall, pupils' standards in speaking and listening are in line with expectations. In Year 2, pupils speak confidently in response to questions, especially during introductions to literacy lessons. Most listen attentively to their teachers' instructions and explanations, which means that they can get on with their work promptly with a clear view of what is expected of them. However, a small minority, most often boys, do not listen as well as they should and afterwards miss vital information leading to some confusion about tasks. In Year 6, pupils also readily speak up when asked and enjoy talking about their work. However, the breadth of their vocabulary is limited and their use of grammar is sometimes incorrect, reflecting the local idiom. In the best examples, such as during a Year 6 class assembly, pupils spoke to an audience with clarity, authoritatively and with good expression.

62 Reading standards throughout the school are in line with expectations. In Year 2, the more able pupils read fluently and expressively for their age, responding well to punctuation. Less able readers are more halting and mechanical in their delivery and often pause in the wrong part of a passage or ignore commas and full stops. They do, however, use their knowledge of letter sounds well to read unfamiliar words. Whilst more able and average readers talk with confidence about stories they have read and enthusiastically discuss their favourite books and authors, poorer readers have limited recall of the titles of books or the names of authors.

63 In Year 6, more able pupils enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, talk knowledgeably about their preferences for style and author and read fluently with very good expression. Less able readers show less enthusiasm for reading and limit themselves to a much narrower range of types of reading matter. As a result, they are less fluent and respond less well to more complex punctuation, such as semi-colons and brackets. A weakness, which has been recognised by the school, is the inability of too many pupils to infer meaning from what they read or to predict ahead.

64 In Year 2, pupils' quality of writing is above expectations for their age. Many write with a clear joined script, correctly using full stops, capital letters and speech marks. Most write well for a variety of purposes. In religious education, they compile diaries to chronicle the events leading to Christ's crucifixion, write letters to invite fellow pupils to school events, list instructions to enable people to find their way to their classrooms and label diagrams accurately to show the life-cycle of a frog.

65 The quality of writing in Year 6 is broadly in line with expectations but with many good features. Most pupils' handwriting is legible, joined and neatly presented. Many write at good length and for many different purposes. The school's recent effective strategies to improve pupils' standards have resulted in a much greater breadth of writing. There are many good examples of pupils' writing persuasively and imaginatively, for instance, to argue for or against the building of a new terminal at the nearby airport, or in a plea for a sibling not to be born on a pupil's own birthday. In the best examples of Year 6 pupils' writing, adjectives and adverbs, punctuation and sentence construction are used well to engage the reader. However, in too many pieces of writing pupils use the a limited range of words for description and to connect parts of sentences together. Although pupils generally spell accurately when specifically tested, they often misspell words they copy from texts or with which they are already familiar. As a consequence, their writing is frequently marred by spelling errors.

66 The quality of teaching in both infant and junior classes is good overall. In the best lessons, teachers apply the National Literacy Strategy very flexibly and well. Teachers explain tasks and concepts in a clear and simple way, structure lessons very well and set tasks which ensure pupils make good progress in their reading and writing skills and which provide all pupils with opportunities to practise speaking in front of others. Where learning is most productive, teachers use the work pupils complete in other lessons as a focus for their

reading and writing. For instance, in a very good Year 2 lesson, the teachers expertly used the pupils' science topic to further their skills in writing for different purposes, by requiring them to logically organise information about the life-cycle of a frog, using labelled diagrams. In both Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught letter sounds very well, which helps them develop good strategies for reading unfamiliar words. .

67 In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching, although satisfactory overall, varies more in quality. Where teaching is very good, pupils make very good improvements in the confidence with which they read and in their understanding of how to write in different styles. Very good teaching in Year 5, for instance, engaged pupils' interest through the use of metaphor and novel teaching methods promoted their skills in poetry writing, channelling the feelings and emotions they expressed about the plight of children they had learnt about in geography, into the sensitive writing of verse.

68 Relative weaknesses in teaching are in the clarity with which some teachers explain tasks and concepts and in the level of difficulty of tasks set. Where these weaknesses occur, the quality of pupils' learning is unsatisfactory because they fail to improve their understanding or skills sufficiently. For instance, in an unsatisfactory Year 3 lesson, many pupils finished the session unclear about its main learning objective, the difference between verbs and adjectives.

69 The quality of pupils' curriculum is good overall. The school has successfully implemented and adapted the National Literacy Strategy to meet the needs of the pupils well. Extra time is now given to writing throughout the school, which is having the clear impact of raising standards. Suitable thought has been given to promoting pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in English lessons. For instance, Year 5 pupils select the works of poets from around the world to compile an anthology and Years 4 and 6 pupils write discursively about local environmental issues and elections. Extra classes have been provided to help pupils who most need to improve their attainment in order to meet the targets set for their performance in national tests. By grouping pupils by ability, in each year group, more able pupils and those who have difficulties with reading and writing make good progress.

70 For those pupils who need more support, including those with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, individual or small group teaching helps them overcome difficulties with letter sounds when they are younger and with writing when they are older. The 'better reading partners' scheme, in which parents and other adult members of the school or local community pair up with pupils who read less well, has helped these pupils to read more fluently and with greater confidence.

71 The subject is well led and managed. Pupils' progress is carefully and accurately assessed and the outcomes of the assessments are used effectively to inform teachers about what they need to do to help their pupils to improve. The comparatively recent whole-school initiative to involve pupils much more in identifying their own targets for improvement has contributed significantly to pupils' enthusiasm for writing. The subject action plan provides a clear blueprint for improvement and the recent management focus upon improving the quality of marking means that many pupils now receive much more detailed guidance on how to improve their writing. The school is equipped with two well-resourced libraries but evidence from the inspection indicates that they are not as well used as they might be for promoting pupils' research skills. A relative weakness in the role of the subject co-ordinators is in the limited number of lesson observations they have carried out. This means that some weaknesses in the quality of teaching have not been identified.

MATHEMATICS

72 The 2002 results for seven year old pupils were average when compared nationally and with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher level 3, however, was above that normally seen. Boys' attainment was better than girls'. Pupils enter Year 1 with sound levels of attainment in mathematical development. The lessons seen and the analysis of pupils' work indicate that the teaching and learning are good and the progress over time is good and, by the time they are seven years old, are at the level expected. In the 2003 tests for seven year old pupils early indication shows that standards have been maintained, the overall attainment being at the expected level. There was no noticeable difference in the attainment between boys and girls.

73 Results of the 2002 tests for pupils aged eleven were above the national average and that of similar schools. These results are significantly better than those achieved in 2000 and 2001 when they were below average. Examination of work and discussion with pupils show that standards in the present Year 6 are not as high as last year, the overall attainment now being at an average level. When the present Year 6 pupils were tested in Year 2 the overall results were well below the national average. This under-achievement was recognised by the school and in recent years significant additional support has been made available for these pupils with extra teachers, smaller teaching groups and booster classes out of school time. The outcome of this additional support is that attainment overall has improved from well below average to the present average standard. This represents very good progress over time.

74 Setting arrangements have been introduced into Years 2 to 6 and this is allowing pupils to be taught at appropriate levels. The structure of the National Numeracy Strategy is well used to support learning, such as the mental sessions that are well embedded. An analysis of pupils' books shows that the programme of work in applying mathematics, numeracy and algebra, shape and measure is all covered systematically. The main weakness is that in some groups there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their number handling skills., some subjects contribute to pupils' knowledge, particularly science where pupils have opportunities to present their findings and data in graph form.

75 There is a strong emphasis throughout the school on mental computation. All the pupils benefit from regular practice at the start of lessons and their understanding of mental strategies is developing well. In the most successful lessons teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved. This was most noticeable in a Year 6 class. Here the activities were challenging. This session had pace and one of the mental activities, the calculating of squared numbers, linked well to the main focus of the lesson which was finding the area of a shape and contributed positively to pupils' learning and understanding.

76 Pupils in Year 1 illustrate their early knowledge of number in their work. By the time they reach Year 2 they are becoming increasingly confident in counting and can write and order their numbers up to 100. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the patterns and the relationships between numbers, for example that subtraction is the inverse of addition, and an understanding of odd and even numbers. They also use their number knowledge of addition and subtraction in the course of solving simple written problems involving money, totalling bills and calculating the change. Pupils are developing an understanding of fractions, recognising $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$. Some pupils in Year 2 are particularly talented in mathematics and are working at above the normal levels. For example, they work with numbers beyond 100, have a clear understanding of mathematical concepts and use their understanding of numbers well in mental mathematics sessions. Pupils recognise and name simple two- and three-dimensional shapes and can describe some of their properties.

77 Most pupils in Years 3 and 4 accurately partition numbers, using their knowledge of place value and applying this understanding when adding and subtracting numbers up to 1000. Pupils use a variety of strategies to calculate, with higher attaining pupils calculating complex sums. They are becoming confident in multiplication and division and in the mental recall of multiplication tables. Pupils have an understanding of symmetry, using words such as 'reflective' and phrases such as 'the same both sides' to find the total number of lines of symmetry of regular shapes.

78 They have a sound understanding of fractions, adding improper fractions and also displaying them as decimals. In Years 5 and 6 pupils consolidate their understanding of more complex improper fractions and a sound understanding of decimals. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of adding fractions, calculating the lowest denominator and simplifying by cancelling the common factors. Pupils use protractors to accurately measure angles of a triangle to the nearest degree. They know and can describe obtuse and acute angles, and know that the angles in a triangle must add up to 180 degrees. They can measure the area and perimeter of simple compound shapes that can be split into rectangles. Higher attaining pupils can use the appropriate formulas to calculate the area of a triangle and the area of a circle. When pupils achieve below the levels expected of them for their age it is often because they fail to fully understand the relationships that exist between numbers. An example of this was in a Year 6 class. Here pupils were using the appropriate formulas for calculating the area of a shape but failing to understand the link between counting squares and the use of the formula.

79 Teachers throughout the school have good knowledge of the subject and plan their lessons well, sharing the learning objectives with pupils. The plenary sessions at the end of lessons are generally well used to give pupils an understanding of their own learning. These sessions are more successful when pupils are invited to present their work to the class and when teachers question pupils on the methods used for their calculations. This approach contributes well to pupils' speaking skills. A common feature in good lessons is the way that teachers plan their lessons through well-structured activities, ensuring a good balance between direct teaching and independent learning. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve, set a brisk pace to the work and create an atmosphere where pupils are expected and encouraged to do their best. Explanations and demonstrations are clear, and good questioning techniques ascertain pupils' understanding and make pupils think for themselves. These good lessons are also underpinned with good assessment procedures. An example of this was in a Year 2 lesson. Here the teacher, in the light of a previous lesson and issues from her marking, changed the planned lesson to revisit and reinforce a concept, resulting in good learning and progress. Pupils are well managed and any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with quickly by teachers. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and most are successful in showing pupils how they can improve either by feedback during the lesson or by written comments in exercise books. The quality of this approach, however, is not consistent. There are examples of work that needed to be corrected by the pupils and has not been completed or checked by the teacher. Professional partners are used well in the classroom to support pupils with special educational needs and they contribute well to the progress these pupils make. On the occasions when teaching is less successful lessons can be slow to start, the mental mathematics sessions lack pace and rigour and plenary sessions are sometimes not used effectively to assess pupils' progress or challenge them further. Homework is regularly set and supports pupils' learning.

80 The school's assessment procedures for mathematics are good and include optional national tests which are used to give information about individual progress and achievement, allowing pupils progress to be tracked as they move through the school. From these assessments pupils are given targets. Although these contribute to progress not all the pupils understand them; younger pupils in particular are often unsure how to move to the next level.

81 The leadership and the management of the subject are shared, one teacher for each key stage. The co-ordinator for younger pupils has only been in the role for a short period and has yet to have an impact on the subject. The co-ordinator for the older pupils has a clear grasp of the subject and the need to raise standards. Both are working conscientiously to develop the subject with clear views about the future development of the subject. However, there is a need for the co-ordinators to be more involved with the analysis of results, the monitoring of teaching and regular examination of pupils' work in order to be fully aware of the progress that pupils are making and of areas that need to be improved and developed.

SCIENCE

82 Overall standards are above the national expectations and well above those found at the time of the last inspection. In the last three years they have improved above the national trend. In the lessons seen and in pupils' workbooks, standards have improved and are now good. This is especially noticeable in the skills and understanding of investigative and experimental work that they undertake. There are very clear policies and curriculum plans that ensure a consistent whole-school approach. There has been very good progress in the provision for science and in the standards achieved since the last inspection.

83 Pupils in Year 2 have completed a good range of work in science this year. In their current work they are achieving above the expected level of understanding of 'Life processes and living things'. They have studied habitats and produced some very good work following their research about creatures found in and around the different habitats in the school. The work is focused on investigations so that pupils understand how to predict, observe and record their investigations. This was very evident as they observed seeds from a diverse range of fruits and plants and planned an experiment to investigate the conditions to support germination and growth.

84 Pupils in Year 4 have studied all aspects of the science curriculum including 'Materials and their properties'. In one investigation they observed liquids and the fall in temperature over a period of time. They used thermometers to measure systematically and then used their understanding to record their own learning in detailed conclusions. This led on to planning an investigation using materials to keep liquids cool and using their investigative skills to design and carry out a fair test. They have designed and made simple electrical circuits including a switch and a motor and have a good understanding of conductors and insulators.

85 Pupils in Year 6 have a range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding in science. They have a good understanding of what a fair test is. They are particularly good at observing experiments and investigations, and all are able to measure and record their findings with accuracy. Pupils have a good understanding of basic parts of plants and of animals, for example the organs of different plants. Their understanding of materials is good; for example, they can explain how filtering can separate materials in a suspension and that heating solutions enables substances that have been dissolved to be reclaimed. Equally they know that some changes to materials are not reversible. In preparation for their transfer to secondary education they are undertaking an investigation on fizzy drinks that will be further developed when they are in Year 7.

86 Pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as the rest of the class in their acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills.

87 The lessons observed were well taught. Lessons begin promptly in an atmosphere of quiet and clear purpose. Routines are well established and relationships between teachers

and pupils are very good. All teachers show good subject knowledge and their lessons are prepared to match the requirements of the National Curriculum and the agreed scheme of work. They are particularly knowledgeable and enthusiastic about science and there are very good displays in classrooms to stimulate pupils' thinking and learning. The teachers carefully explain to the pupils what they are going to be doing and this is effective in focusing their efforts and ensuring that the lesson build appropriately on their earlier learning. The lessons were particularly well resourced and this enabled all the pupils to be fully involved, for instance in examining a wide range of fizzy drinks or species of flowers. Teachers are very skilled at asking questions and then using the pupils' answers to extend their thinking. There are good links to literacy and good opportunities are taken for different kinds of writing, although more attention needs to be given to ensure spelling of key vocabulary is accurate.

88 Analysis of pupils' completed work in the pupils' science books reveals many examples of challenging work. Much of the work has been marked very conscientiously with comments made by the teacher focusing on achievement and presentation. There are very good examples of the teacher adding challenging questions and the pupil taking time to think and respond. The science curriculum is good, based on the national schemes of work and the long-term planning ensures that pupils follow a consistent programme and approach. The pupils enjoy science and are enthusiastic about the subject. They have a good attitude to learning and work is presented to a good standard. Throughout the school pupils' books are neat, well organised and carefully maintained. There is always a sense of excitement in the science lessons with good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for instance in the close observation of flowers and how they have evolved to compete by attracting bees and other insects to facilitate germination.

89 The co-ordinators are very knowledgeable and confident in this subject. Their very effective leadership has helped to plan the curriculum and scheme of work so that there is an emphasis on investigations as well as covering all the attainment targets. This had led to the improvement in standards. Teachers assess pupils' progress and regularly update their records. The good practice in marking pupils' work in some classes now needs to be extended throughout school so as to link the clearly planned learning objective with the pupils' understanding and progress.

ART AND DESIGN

90 Overall, the school's provision for art is good, though it is stronger in Years 1, 5 and 6 than in other years. The strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained. Standards are at expected levels by the end of Year 2, but above expected levels by the end of Year 6, where the breadth of provision and the very good quality of much of the teaching in the upper school have most impact. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but good in Years 3 to 6.

91 By Year 2, pupils have experienced a satisfactory range of work that includes drawing, printing and painting. The range is very good in Year 1, where pupils have painted bold patterns in the style of Kandinsky, for example, and printed sequences of shapes very carefully. They have begun to learn how to make objects look larger in pictures by their position in relation to the background. Their work is colourful, and shows good development in their skills and increased control in the use of different media. This progress continues satisfactorily into Year 2, for example in pupils' observational drawing, but their work is within a narrower range. A lot of work is done using drawing and colouring tools. Quite strong links are made between art and other subjects in Year 2, for example in pupils' designs for vehicles in design and technology and observations of mini-beasts in science. Although these links are relevant, care needs to be taken to ensure that the development of pupils' art skills is given sufficient emphasis within this work.

92 By Year 6, pupils work very well with a wide range of media. During the inspection, for example, pupils created some excellent sculptures using natural materials, inspired by the work of Andy Goldsmith. They worked with imagination and flair, showing a good aesthetic sense of form and the use of colour. This excellent work arose from talented teaching, based on very good subject knowledge and the use of an excellent range of resources. Strong links were made with ICT through the use of digital cameras. Work in other areas is also good and includes well-proportioned observational drawings of faces and well-executed printing. Striking work in Year 5 included collage pictures of heads and shoulders, using an excellent range of materials, such as velvet, braids and beads. Evidence from Years 3 and 4 is not as strong, and indicates that pupils' work is of a satisfactory, rather than good, standard.

93 Too few lessons were seen to give overall judgements on teaching. The lessons seen in Years 1 and 6, however, confirm that teaching is very good in these year groups and contributes very well to pupils' high achievement. A particular strength of the teaching in Year 1 was the balance between allowing pupils to explore for themselves and the teaching of techniques that advanced their skills. In Year 6, pupils benefited from the teacher's depth of subject knowledge, organisation and provision of an exciting range of resources. Pupils in both year groups responded very well to this very good teaching, discussing their work sensibly, following through their ideas and working with great care.

94 The subject is prioritised for development within the school's development plan, and the co-ordinator has begun work to ensure greater consistency of provision, for example in the use of sketchbooks. She has also checked planning and has implemented a system for collecting samples of work, which staff can use for judging the standards of work produced. No release time has yet been allocated, however, for her to see for herself what goes on in classrooms. This limits the impact that the co-ordination has on standards, which is currently satisfactory. Resources are good and well organised. There are some good examples of the use of ICT, for example in Year 6 pupils' work on Andy Warhol, but ICT could be used more consistently across the school. The school's commitment to art is shown by the four extra-curricular clubs run at different parts of the year, and the opportunities provided for pupils to enter competitions and work on community art projects, all of which enrich the curriculum well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95 During the inspection only three lessons were observed, one each in Years 1, 2 and 5. Judgements on pupils' attainment therefore are based on scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with pupils, examination of pupils' finished work on display and photographic evidence. From this evidence the judgement is that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are at the level expected.

96 Pupils in Year 1 are developing an understanding of how to join pieces of material using a range of resources. In a 'moving pictures' topic they planned the shapes required and developed a clear understanding how to use levers and pivots to make their objects move. In Year 2 pupils are beginning to construct a vehicle with a chassis and a frame by measuring, sawing and cutting wood. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of the design process although they could be given more opportunities to produce individual designs. Pupils are, however, beginning to appreciate the need to test and evaluate their finished product but their evaluations do not indicate what improvements could be made. This was evident when pupils were testing vehicles. Here they tested different vehicles to see which of them had a smooth action but did not suggest ways in which the construction could be improved.

97 Pupils continue to develop their designing and making skills as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 3 made photograph frames, building on their skills examining how frames are made safe and stable. Pupils in Year 4 designed and made lights of the future using a range of materials, powering their lights with batteries. Pupils in Year 5 have completed a number of activities to include making pizzas, and designing and making musical instruments and clocks. The clock design topic was planned in school but the making took place in a local secondary school, using its resources for cutting, sanding and drilling. All these topics have been evaluated by pupils, looking at ways to improve the construction. Pupils tasted their pizzas, commenting on the texture of the dough and looking at ways that the topping could be improved. Pupils in Year 6 have experienced a range of activities. A recent topic, a project making slippers, showed that pupils have a sound grasp of the design process, making and a clear understanding of the need to test, evaluate and improve their work. Links have been made with science and food technology. Here, pupils in Year 6 made bread, adding different amounts of sugar to the dough to see if the lack of sugar detracted from the taste. Pupils in Year 6 have recently started a fairground topic and plan to use the skills learned in Year 5, of making and designing electrical circuits, to add motors to their carousels.

98 The lessons seen and evidence from pupils' completed work show that the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the design and technology process, the planning showing progression to build on pupils' existing skills. In a Year 2 lesson the planning was very clear to develop pupils' understanding of the need to test a range of vehicles. The practical activity, however, lacked pace. Although the pupils developed measuring skills, the saws used for cutting and sawing the dowelling were very blunt and, as a consequence, pupils experienced difficulties obtaining a clean cut. Teachers circulate well during lessons and with the assistance of the professional partners ensure that pupils are kept on task and health and safety requirements are met. In a Year 5 class pupils showed a good level of interest investigating how a range of toys operated. They were successfully encouraged by the teacher to use the appropriate vocabulary to describe the action of moving parts such as cams. On the occasions when the teaching and learning were less successful the lessons lacked pace and a variety of activities to sustain pupils' interest.

99 The co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision about the future development of the subject, and has monitored teaching and planning, providing positive support for teachers. The school identified the subject as an area for development and recent in-service training has had a positive effect on teachers' confidence and competence. The procedures for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory but would benefit from the development of a portfolio of moderated work to assist teachers to accurately assess work. The school uses the national exemplar materials as a basis for the schemes of work; this is providing coverage and progression.

GEOGRAPHY

100 Overall standards are satisfactory and similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. The scheme of work and medium-term plans are now established to ensure the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils are taught the basic skills of geography more consistently and are more secure in this area and this represents satisfactory progress from the last inspection. However, there are some weaknesses in pupils' knowledge of locations and environments of the world by Year 6 because of the limited opportunities to study geography during the pupils' last year in school.

101 In Years 1 and 2 pupils learn about where they live and the location of their school, as well as a more general study of Blackpool. To study a different locality and compare the

features they visit a small rural village and its school. They study maps of Great Britain and use simple mapping skills to produce plans of the classroom and a plan view of the school. Pupils have a good introduction to mapping skills. Their books are well organised and neatly presented and include examples of good work.

102 There are maps, atlases and globes in classrooms and a good range of books in the library. Pupils in Year 3 study a different locality, using maps and a visit for field study. Year 4 pupils make use of maps to compare the size of the United Kingdom with the continent of Africa and then more detailed comparisons of the climate and habitats, and the social and economic impact of these differences. They develop their mapping skills with local maps of different scales and the use of aerial photographs of Blackpool. Year 5 pupils use maps to learn about the changes in the Blackpool area over number of years. Their work on rivers helps them understand the water cycle and the characteristics of rivers in different parts of the world. The study of a village in India helps pupils to continue their geographical enquiries and learn about the different physical and human features in such a different country. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 produce work that is satisfactory but there are very few examples of work of a higher standard. Their knowledge of maps and of how to use maps is generally satisfactory but the knowledge of places and locations is less well developed.

103 The quality of teaching in geography is variable, generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Where it is poor, the teaching shows a lack of subject knowledge and does not help pupils learn, so they make little progress in the lesson. When it is good, the lesson plans are clear, with the purpose of the lesson set out in the learning objectives and the pupils given the opportunity to extend their geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. Practical approaches worked well in Year 3 when pupils gathered information then explained the differences between residential, commercial and industrial localities. However, there needs to be a greater understanding of the purpose and values associated with the teaching and learning of geography. For instance, some pupils' books are labelled 'Geography' and 'History' whilst others are titled 'Topic Books'. In pursuing a more integrated approach and linking the study to a theme such as 'India' then time for geography is reduced and the particular knowledge and skills of the subject are not developed fully.

104 The leadership of the subject has lacked continuity and has not been as well developed as other subjects. There is a good policy and scheme of work that provide an appropriate structure to help the teachers to plan for coverage of the National Curriculum and the agreed units of work.

105 The headteacher and senior management team have a good understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the subject. The school development plan sets out a detailed action plan to review the provision, resources and teaching of the subject. The teaching and learning would also benefit from a review of how the time for geography is used to enable pupils to follow their studies to an appropriate depth and ensure that standards are higher.

HISTORY

106 Standards in history are broadly in line with expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, though there are differences in the achievements of pupils in the different year groups. This reflects inconsistencies in the time given to history and in the quality of provision. There are strengths in pupils' understanding of work taught through first-hand experience in Year 2 and in the standards achieved in Year 4, where provision is good. The limited time given to history in Year 6 prevents pupils from achieving more highly. Findings are similar to those reported last time.

107 By Year 2, pupils have good recall of aspects of life in Victorian times. This is because they learnt a lot from the Victorian day held in school. They remember a lot about Victorian schools, and can say how they differed from present day schools. Their recall of detail, for example that Victorian classrooms had high windows so that children could not look out, is impressive. They express opinions about schools then and now and know which they prefer. The topic provided some good opportunities for writing and recording information in tables and charts. These provided suitable challenge for higher achieving pupils.

108 By Year 6, pupils have a reasonable grasp of social history related to the Second World War. They remember most from their visit to the Preston Museum, where they were able to try on gas masks and see how much food people were allowed through rationing. Their understanding of the causes of the war and the most significant military events is less secure. They have used different sources to find things out; for example, some pupils have looked on the Internet for information, but this is not consistent across classes. They have some sense of chronology, knowing, for example, that their own parents were not alive during the war, but some grandparents were. The use of time-lines in pupils' books, however, shows that pupils find it difficult to measure out the lines in equal intervals, and some find it hard to date and sequence a number of events. Pupils have been given a satisfactory range of opportunities for writing, including empathetic accounts of being an evacuee, diaries of life in an Anderson shelter and interviews with other pupils about the visit to the museum. Higher achieving pupils respond to these well by writing at length and in the intended style.

109 Work is most consistent in Year 4, where samples of work indicate that some effective teaching has taken place. A particular strength is the matching of work to the different ability groups in the class and very good marking, where the teacher poses a question that is answered by the pupil. Only one lesson was observed, so there is not enough evidence to make judgements on the general quality of teaching. The lesson seen was well organised and managed, but pupils needed a little more help to use their thinking skills in approaching the 'problem' set, rather than simply using trial and error. Generally, pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not have enough opportunities to work independently, and there are inconsistencies in the usefulness of marking.

110 The recently appointed co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and has made a good start by identifying some of the weaknesses in the planning of individual units of work and beginning to rectify them. However, the narrowness of the curriculum in Year 6 and the limited time given to history in this year group have not been tackled, and these are limiting pupils' achievement. A system for assessing pupils' knowledge and skills has been implemented, but is need of fine-tuning to ensure that the targets being assessed are specific enough. As yet, the subject co-ordination is not in a position to have much impact on standards or achievement, as history is not a priority in the school's development plan. Resources are satisfactory and good use is made of visits to promote pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

111 Standards in ICT are comfortably in line with those expected of pupils by Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar judgement to the one at the last inspection but pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are now more broadly based and pupils are making good progress across the school. This is due to the much improved resources that are available to teachers, regular timetabled lessons and effective teaching. Many of these developments are recent but are making a very positive impact on standards. They include specialist teaching in Year 6, more confident teachers in each year group resulting from the extensive training that has been undertaken, and a well-managed network with good Internet access. Teachers and subject leaders are able to concentrate on helping pupils to learn effectively because the

knowledgeable technician ensures that hardware and software problems are kept to a minimum.

112 By Year 6, pupils are able to produce effective presentations that incorporate pictures, sounds and a range of effects that enliven them and capture the audience's interest. They have a secure understanding of how to use the Internet to find information and to communicate with others using email. They can also demonstrate how to use computers to control devices, such as traffic lights, and to sense and record changes in the temperature or levels of light. Earlier in Key Stage 2 pupils are able to enter information in databases and answer questions about it searching using at least one criterion, design branching databases that are logical and handle numerical data with a spreadsheet. Pupils' skills in using a word processor to record and present their ideas show appropriate use of formatting and editing skills.

113 Year 2 pupils have built well on what they learned in Year 1. They are able to produce attractive pictures of fireworks and bonfires using painting tools such as the 'spray can' and 'stamps', and make changes using the 'rubber'. They talk confidently about using the features of a word processor to change the appearance of text and to correct mistakes. They are able to enter information into a data-handling program and produce graphs, and can program a 'Roamer' to make simple regular shapes using the 'repeat' function. They understand that websites on the Internet are a source of information and that email is a quick way of sending and sharing information. In Year 1, pupils are able to make effective use of shape tools and freehand brushes in art programs to create successful pictures of houses and portraits. They can also enter text into a word processor and print it out. Across the school pupils are confident using the network and can save, retrieve and print their work.

114 ICT has been well led and managed and the current caretaking arrangements are working well. This has ensured that good use has been made of grants and funding. The curriculum is well organised and very appropriate assessment procedures have been developed that track the progress pupils make and help the subject leaders to modify what is taught to pupils in order to improve their learning.

MUSIC

115 Standards are at expected levels by the end of Year 2, but higher than usual by the end of Year 6, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The rise in standards by Year 6 is due to good teaching, which is particularly strong in Year 6, the quality of co-ordination and the school's commitment to music education. This is seen in the good opportunities for extra-curricular music available to pupils throughout the year and the very good resources, which include sufficient electronic keyboards for pupils to work in pairs. Pupils achieve well during their time at the school.

116 By Year 2, pupils sing enthusiastically. They hold the rhythm, fit in the words, which are sometimes tricky, and follow the rise and fall of the vocal line. However, the quality of their singing is a little harsh, and some children are inclined to shout. With the support of adults, they are beginning to hold their parts when singing in two parts. Pupils can discriminate between high and low sounds and know the names of some common instruments. They can tap a simple beat.

117 By Year 6, pupils sing extremely well, with increasing musicality. They control their breathing well, enunciate words clearly and sing with a very pleasing tone. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 respond very well to the conductor when practising hymns in the hall, filling it with a very uplifting sound. This is the result of sustained very good teaching of singing, which helps all pupils to give of their best. In lessons, Year 6 pupils compose sound effects to emulate the

chases seen in *Tom and Jerry* cartoons. The best of these incorporate high and low notes for the characters and quick rhythms for the chase. Pupils respond to formal notation as they play rhythms on percussion instruments, with each child taking part. They express their appreciation of pieces of music played during the first part of the day, stating their views confidently. This very well rounded music teaching helps all pupils to achieve well.

118 It is not possible to judge the overall quality of class teaching in Years 1 and 2, as only one lesson was seen and this had organisational weaknesses that slowed the pace of pupils' learning. However, the specialist input into hymn singing for these year groups resulted in better quality learning. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is variable and reflects the subject knowledge and confidence of the teachers. It is good overall. It is very good in Year 6, where a subject specialist teaches all pupils. A teacher with musical expertise also takes classes in Year 3 and contributes to the very good quality singing in hymn practices.

119 Co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator has first-hand experience of the teaching in all classes and knows where teaching is not as strong. The school is considering increasing the use of specialist teaching in music to ensure greater consistency and the possibility of achieving even higher standards by the end of Year 6. This is a positive move. Three teachers contribute to the co-ordination of the subject, to extra-curricular music and to producing musical productions. Their expertise and commitment are helping the school to establish a very strong musical tradition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120 Standards in physical education are improving. The structures and policies now in place provide for lesson planning and help pupils to make progress over time. The subject leaders have good subject knowledge and have a clear vision for the planned improvements. The lessons cover all the strands of the National Curriculum and pupils enjoy their lessons. Extra-curricular provision is good and enriches the opportunities for those pupils who attend. There has been good progress since the time of the last inspection.

121 Pupils in Key Stage 1 work enthusiastically in gymnastics. They understand that parts of the body, including the heart, need warming up as part of the exercise. They show increasing control and balance when hopping, running and jumping and can change direction. The teaching ensures pupils understand the safety procedures needed when working in the hall. Pupils readily demonstrate their skills and enjoy the praise and support of those watching. They show increasing control when executing different movements, such as 'trudging through quicksand', but the teaching does not take advantage of the developing skills to challenge them further. More could be done to use the demonstrations to extend the pupils' ideas, refine their movements and raise the standards. There are pupils who show a high degree of balance and link the sequence of movement in their work about the 'Shoreline'.

122 By the age of eleven pupils are learning to throw with increasing skill and accuracy. Some pupils, noticeably boys, show a high level of skill and development and would respond to higher expectations. All pupils try hard to develop their skills in athletics. In the after-school clubs some pupils show more highly developed skills in running, balance, movement, change of direction and anticipation. Overall, progress is generally satisfactory and sometimes good.

123 Pupils enjoy the physical education lessons. They all dress appropriately and are ready to learn. They listen attentively and show great enthusiasm throughout the lesson. They are, however, not being challenged sufficiently to improve and sense that undertaking the activity is enough rather than practising and making progress.

124 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and often good. In the most successful lessons the pupils move to the hall or the playground ready to warm up and start work. The teachers have clearly established the routines and expectations of behaviour and movement. It is evident how much the pupils are enjoying the lesson and the teacher is able to use the enthusiasm successfully to keep the pupils engaged and involved. Pupils understand the vocabulary and that is part of the learning of the lesson on gymnastics or athletics. Teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge the pupils such as, "Can you now change your balance so that you use your feet and leading arm to improve your throw?" Occasionally there is too much time spent in talking and demonstrating and insufficient time spent on practising and refining. There are examples of very good, energetic teaching that is demanding of the pupils and very challenging.

125 The curriculum across the school provides appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum with a cycle of dance, gymnastics, games skills, athletics and swimming. Resources for both indoor and outdoor lessons are good, providing opportunities to practise the skills of all major sports. However, the outdoor facilities are limited to a hard surface area that is relatively small, which restricts the space available and has an impact on standards. The subject leader is very knowledgeable, committed and enthusiastic and gives a great deal of time to the subject. The plans for the subject and for the improvement of the facilities by adding an all-weather surface are impressive and should help to raise standards. The school does all it can to use playing fields and courts in other schools and parks to ensure the pupils can take part in a good range of games and sports. Teachers need to be encouraged to help the pupils to plan and evaluate for themselves so they try to extend their ideas and get better.

126 Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. However, the number of pupils who attend some of the activities is disappointing when the teaching and opportunities are so good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127 Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity and have begun to learn about Islam. By the time pupils leave school, they have studied many of the major world religions and have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of them. Standards are similar to those expected by the locally agreed syllabus.

128 By the age of seven, pupils talk about the Bible as a special book that is important to Christians. They know several stories from the Bible, including Old Testament stories such as Noah and the flood. Most pupils can tell the story of the nativity with reasonable detail and explain that Easter is when we remember that Jesus died on the cross and "came alive again". They are aware of prayer as "speaking to God" and know that the cross is an important symbol for Christians. Only a few pupils show a clear understanding of why Christians believe Jesus is important. Pupils have little knowledge of other religions, as was seen during the inspection when work on Islam was introduced.

129 By the end of Year 6, pupils know many beliefs, rituals and symbols connected with different faiths. For example, when talking about Hinduism, pupils describe the belief in reincarnation, are aware of the importance of the river Ganges and name several of the Hindu gods, though not the three most important ones. Many pupils, however, get confused as to which of the different faiths a particular belief or ritual belongs to, especially muddling Judaism and Islam. Pupils have a sound knowledge of Christian worship and the major Christian festivals. They learn about well-known Christians who have shown commitment. They know some of the parables Jesus told, such as 'The lost sheep', though most have difficulty explaining the underlying meaning of these stories.

130 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The work that pupils do in lessons contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was seen, for example, in a Year 6 lesson on 'The prodigal son'. The teacher questioned pupils skilfully to help them think hard about feelings of anger, jealousy and forgiveness. Teachers use several strategies successfully to manage the potentially disruptive behaviour of a few pupils and this creates a good working environment. Teachers plan lessons carefully, according to the framework given by the locally agreed syllabus. In Years 1 and 2 particularly, much of the work is done orally and through acting stories out. Teachers try hard to link concepts being taught to pupils' own experiences, and encourage pupils to reflect on them. In Year 2, for example, before introducing the Qur'an as the special book for Muslims, teachers discuss the special books brought to school by pupils, and stress the care and respect due to all special books. In one lesson in Year 2, the teacher successfully checked pupils' knowledge and extended pupils' understanding by skilful questioning as to what pupils wanted to know about people who believed in a different faith. At times, pupils become so interested in activities based on their own experiences that the religious element is not fully emphasised. For example, in one lesson in Year 5, pupils worked really hard when discussing whether pieces of text such as 'Places to visit in Wales' were factual information, opinion or trying to persuade people to go there. This was a useful preparation to thinking about religious writings but the discussions were not drawn together sufficiently well to lead back easily into work on Islam.

131 A programme of visits to local places of worship such as a church, a synagogue and the Buddhist centre enhances the curriculum, as do visitors including a Hindu, a Rabbi and the local vicar. This successfully helps pupils to become aware of the multi-faith nature of the society in which they live. Teachers sensitively use the contributions of those pupils who come from different religious backgrounds to help all pupils respect the views of others.

132 There has been a satisfactory level of improvement in provision since the last inspection. Planning is now much more carefully organised throughout the school. Artefacts and pictures connected to the different faiths have been increased. The subject leader has monitored several lessons and discussed the teaching strengths and areas to improve with the teachers. The school development plan rightly identifies the need to improve the way teachers check the progress made by pupils against what is expected of them in the locally agreed syllabus. The last inspection, however, reported higher standards and a better quality of teaching than was found by this inspection. The differences are partly explained by the clearer guidance on judging standards against the locally agreed syllabus. There have also been many staff changes since the last inspection.