

INSPECTION REPORT

Burnley Lowerhouse Junior School

Burnley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119215

Headteacher: Mr D Conti

Lead inspector: Mr A Clark

Dates of inspection: 2nd-4th February 2004

Inspection number: 255672

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 7-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 206

School address: Liverpool Road
Burnley
Lancashire
Postcode: BB12 6LN

Telephone number: 01282 426674
Fax number: 01282 839980

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr D Johnson

Date of previous inspection: September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is near the centre of Burnley. The area is one with high unemployment and significant social and environmental disadvantage, particularly the quality of local housing. There are 206 pupils on role aged between 7 and 11. The percentage of pupils who change school, or start the school other than at Year 3, is about average. The majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds. A few pupils are from Asian or mixed race heritage. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average at 25 per cent. About 23 per cent of pupils are on the schools register of special educational needs, which is above average. This includes 2.4 per cent of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, which is also above average. The pupils needs include specific and moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behaviour concerns and autistic spectrum disorders.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average. There are few pupils who start school with higher than average attainment.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21596	Mr Andrew Clark	Lead inspector	Mathematics
			Music
			Religious education
			Personal, social and health education
			Special educational needs
13462	Mrs Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector	
21094	Mr John Brennan	Team inspector	English
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Physical education
32138	Mr Tim Plant	Team inspector	Science
			Information and communication technology
			Geography
			History
			English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited
 14 Enterprise House
 Kingsway
 Team Valley
 Gateshead
 Tyne & Wear
 NE11 0SR

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory school giving satisfactory value for money. Good leadership creates a positive ethos in the school and pupils have very good attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching and learning is good, but the school does not focus sharply enough on raising standards.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good leadership promotes high standards of pupils' personal development, very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics are taught well.
- Provision for special educational needs is very good and the pupils achieve well.
- The pupils' writing often lacks imagination and maturity.
- The school does not plan for change and improvement sharply enough.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved well and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are better. Provision and standards for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved sufficiently. There is still room for further improvement to standards, particularly in English, and the school's use and management of assessment information.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	E	E	E
mathematics	E	D	C	D
science	E	E	D	E

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

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The school has had sound success in raising standards reached by the more able pupils. There has been sound improvement in mathematics and pupils' achieve well. Standards in science are moving closer to average and this is evident in the work of the present Year 6. However, standards are not high enough in English and there has been a downward trend in national test results. The school is now taking strong action to address weaknesses in writing and pupils' comprehension skills, but there is still some way to go. The trend in the school's results since the last inspection was in line with average, but fell this last year because of English test results. Although standards are not high enough in comparison with schools of the same prior attainment, they are better than average for schools in similar social and economic circumstances for mathematics, average for science and below average for English. In the work seen for the current Year 6 pupil's standards in mathematics and science are in line with national expectations and for speaking and listening and reading. They are below average for writing. Standards of ICT are better than normal expectations in Year 6. Standards of religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve well.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards targets set for them. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls and the few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds make similar progress to other class members. A strength in pupils' work is the care they take in presentation and accuracy. There has been good progress in improving pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well. Pupils' moral and social development is promoted very well. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are good. There are very good relationships and teachers' high expectations for hard work, care and accuracy are met well by the pupils. There is good use of drama, role-play and debate. However, the way textbooks are used in some lessons limits creativity and the progress of the more able. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and teaching assistants give good support.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are good opportunities provided to enrich the pupils' learning. Sometimes planning for subjects such as art and design is not effective enough when they are taught as part of a topic with other subjects. Good improvements to the accommodation and resources have led to better behaviour and standards in ICT. Standards of care are very good and pupils are well supported. Links with parents and the community are good and have a positive impact on pupils' personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher and governors is good. Governors fulfil their statutory requirements well. There has been a good impact on creating opportunities for coordinators to monitor provision in their subjects. However, the school's systems to evaluate the success of developments and ensure standards rise well are not robust and effective enough.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school and feel there are good standards of care and learning. They appreciate the openness of the school and opportunities to visit and talk to staff. The pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given, such as running the tuck shop, and say that lessons are enjoyable. They love being there.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the teaching of writing to encourage pupils to structure their work with imagination and interesting plots and phrases.
- Ensure that planning for school improvement is built upon precise and challenging criteria for success.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Standards are average for mathematics and below average for science and English.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics.
- Improvement to pupils' speaking and listening skills has been good.
- Pupils' handwriting is very neat and spelling accurate.
- The pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Pupils do not write with enough imagination and creativity and standards in English have declined.

Commentary

1 The trend of improvement for standards in mathematics and science has been as good as that nationally. Overall improvements in standards fell below the national trend in 2003 because of lower results in English in the national tests. This was unexpected and below the planned targets which are usually accurate and based on sound assessment procedures. However, standards in English have declined because weaknesses in pupils' writing skills and comprehension have not been addressed soon enough. There is now a strong and appropriate action plan in place to improve standards.

2 In English, the work seen in pupils' reading skills in Year 6 are in line with expectations and there has been a good improvement to speaking and listening skills since the last inspection. They are also in line with those expected.

3 There has been a steady improvement in raising standards for the more able since the last inspection. This was reflected in the percentage of pupils' attaining higher levels in national tests for 2003 in all three subjects although it remains below average. This is because teachers sometimes use work sheets and textbooks, which limit opportunities for independent learning by the more able pupils.

4 A significant area of strength in pupils' standards in all subjects is the presentation of pupils' work, particularly handwriting. Teachers' expectations are high. There is a good focus on accuracy and this is very evident in setting out work in mathematics and in diagrams and recording in science. This provides a good basis for learning in all subjects.

5 Achievement in mathematics is good because a thorough review of standards over the last two years led to a curriculum, which provides more challenge to all abilities and ensures able pupils do not waste time on work that is too easy. There is a good concentration on improving calculation skills when pupils first start school and this provides a firm basis for further work.

6 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in English and mathematics. Personal and social development is often very good. This is because teaching assistants are well trained and clear about their roles and work is accurately matched to pupils' needs. The monitoring and assessment of the pupils is very well managed.

7 There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls overtime. The few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve at a similar rate to their classmates and the school's ethos encourages all pupils to strive for success.

8 In most subjects, standards in Year 6 are similar to nationally expected levels and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards in ICT have improved well and by Year 6 are higher than nationally expected. The school has made good progress in addressing pupils' knowledge and understanding of modelling and simulation processes. In religious education standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and there are particular strengths in pupils' ability to discuss their feelings about spirituality. Standards in music are sound. There was insufficient evidence to make clear judgements on standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.9 (25.4)	26.8 (27)
mathematics	26.6 (26.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.6 (28.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils' personal development is good and within this spiritual and cultural development is good while their moral and social development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong moral code and pupils respond positively to it.
- There are very good systems to monitor and promote attendance.
- Older pupils are given good opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility.

Commentary.

9 The school's procedures to promote and improve attendance and punctuality are very good and the school has effective links with the educational welfare service. Attendance has been in-line with, or above, national averages and although unauthorised absence was much higher last year this can be attributed to a small number of specific cases. Most pupils like being at the school and this was confirmed by their answers to a questionnaire. The school is proactive in identifying any patterns in lateness and absence and these are investigated thoroughly. The parents of a small number of pupils do not ensure the children arrive on time. However, the vast majority of pupils arrive punctually and lessons start on time. The school rewards good attendance amongst pupils and discourages parents from taking their children on holiday in term time. However, many holiday absences are the direct result of historic arrangements locally and a lot of pupils do take extra time away from school particularly in September.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94.3%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	1.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

10 The school's behaviour policy is set out clearly in the prospectus and parents are asked to sign a home-school agreement. Pupils invariably behave very well in and around the school and in the last year there were only three exclusions. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and are able to make informed choices about this. During break-times pupils play very well together and take responsibility to help and care for each other. Year 6 pupils are given specific duties to run a tuck shop and bookstore and they also look after younger ones in the dining hall and during wet playtimes. This notion of caring is extended to those beyond the school by making contributions to charity, for example, through Comic Relief. Good teaching is characterised by friendly but firm relationships with pupils and this has a positive impact on their attitudes to work and behaviour. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to take part in the extra-curricular activities made available to them. Pupils are given good opportunities to work in pairs and larger groups and they co-operate well when asked to work together.

11 Other aspects of personal development are being monitored effectively and assessments are being made. The school strongly promotes multi-faith and multi-cultural awareness. Pupil's spiritual development is encouraged well through assemblies and religious education. Many parents attend family assembly on Fridays to celebrate pupils' work and support their children. Pupils value these experiences and are very proud of their achievements. Lunchtimes make an important contribution to pupils' personal development with respect to them making healthy eating choices and meeting the school's very high expectations for conduct and table manners.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	202	2	1
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Good teaching and learning promotes the pupils personal and social development well. The curriculum and assessment are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The use of assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' high expectations encourage pupils to take pride in their work and behave very well.
- The basic skills of English and mathematics are taught well.
- The use of drama, role-play and debate encourages good speaking and listening skills and personal development.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The use of individual education plans by teachers and teaching assistants contributes to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.

- There is an over reliance on published teaching material which sometimes limits creativity and independence in teaching and learning.

Commentary

12 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is better than at the time of the last inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen which is a good improvement.

13 In the majority of lessons good teamwork between teachers and support staff is effective. By planning together and sharing assessment information, they ensure that the majority of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, have the right balance of challenge and support to enable them to progress through the same curriculum at their best rate. All teachers set a good tone for learning and promote confident and happy working relationships. As a result, pupils sustain interest and effort, and do their best to achieve the standard set. The teachers expect pupils to set their work out very neatly and take care to be accurate. As a result pupils are systematic and logical in their work and basic skills are generally well taught. This provides a strong framework for pupils with learning and emotional difficulties.

14 Although the above features are present in many lessons, there are some important weaknesses. Too many English lessons do not flow smoothly. This is because there are too many disjointed elements with different themes within the lesson so that the pupils are not as motivated as they could be and the less able are sometimes confused. Another common weakness in several subjects is over adherence to a textbook or scheme. This occasionally leads to a lack of challenge for more able pupils, as they have to complete work they are already capable of before moving on and inhibits their independence. In the better lessons teachers are more creative in the use of resources and adapt planning closely to pupils' needs. Overall, mathematics and science are taught well and the teaching of English is satisfactory.

15 In the best lessons, teachers make creative use of techniques such as role-play and problem solving games to challenge pupils. For example, in Year 3 and Year 6 pupils take part in interesting debates, preparing and delivering speeches to the class and visitors such as the leader of Burnley council. In Year 3, pupils show very good levels of independence in planning and executing routes for a floor robot around a stimulating obstacle course. There are some useful displays to capture the pupils' imagination on history and geography. There are particularly good displays in the hall to encourage pupils to learn about other cultures and faiths. However, there are too few questions integrated into displays to engage them to think deeply or puzzle and explore further.

16 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers make good use of detailed individual education plans that set clear targets for the pupils' learning in English, mathematics and other areas of need. The teaching assistants are very well prepared through daily meetings with the teachers and weekly meetings with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the progress of the pupils they work with. Regular and informative contact with parents also helps these pupils make good progress.

17 The use of assessment is satisfactory. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection, although some weaknesses remain. The teachers use a good range of tests and assessments to group pupils and to measure progress overtime. However, there is not enough analysis of the information for each year group to identify patterns in the progress made by different groups of pupils to set targets for improvement and ensure teaching styles are addressing their needs. There is often a blanket expectation for improvement indicating that every pupil will, for example, improve by two points in a particular test over a year. This may not be appropriate to all abilities and lead to under challenge for some and over for others.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	7	11	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for enrichment. The quality of accommodation is good and the level of resources satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and is having a positive effective on the pace of learning. However, weaknesses in how the teaching of writing is organised undermines the effectiveness of the National Literacy Strategy.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to take part in clubs and to go on visits.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and they progress well.
- The linking of subjects to overriding themes can result in some subjects losing their identity.
- Improvement in accommodation have created a pleasant working environment for pupils.
- The lack of a separate dedicated office makes it difficult for the school clerk to do her job.

Commentary

18 The school ensures that pupils are taught all subjects of the National Curriculum and that they are planned in such a way as to avoid repetition. The use of broad themes to link subjects together helps provide a common context for some aspects of pupils' work. However, teachers meet with mixed success in linking the development of subject specific skills to these wider themes. When this is done well pupils see a sense of purpose for what they do. In a Year 3 art and design lesson, for example, pupils were taught particular drawing techniques, such as cross-hatching, as they studied Anglo Saxon artefacts in a wider history project. However, such a considered approach is not common and on other occasions the development of particular skills and knowledge can be lost in the desire to link subjects.

19 The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and has led to recent improvements in pupils' achievements and standards. The school has been less successful in implementing the National Literacy Strategy. Curriculum planning for reading and speaking and listening are effective. However, decisions about how best to use lessons to teach writing have not been as well thought out. The makeup of activities in some lessons means that the teaching of writing is not as effective as it could be.

20 The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of subject related visits which help bring subjects to life and make learning more interesting. In addition, the school provides pupils with a wide range of activities outside of lessons, particularly in relation to sport. These provide a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development and provision for personal, health and social development is good.

21 Provision for special educational needs is very good. The coordinator has developed very effective systems to closely monitor pupils' progress through regular observations, discussions with staff and reviews with parents and educational psychologists and other support. The pupils have access to the full curriculum through good planning and support for their needs.

22 The school has worked hard to bring about improvements to accommodation and has been successful in making classrooms and other areas of the school bright and airy. This has helped reduce noise levels and makes for a pleasant learning environment. Pupils have responded positively to this and look after the school well. However, the school clerk has to work within the staff room and the lack of a dedicated office makes working conditions difficult. The level of teaching

staffing is adequate. The generous number of teaching assistants is having a positive impact on the learning of all, and in particular for pupils who have special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are very good. Support and guidance for pupils is good and pupils have satisfactory opportunities to offer their views to the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection arrangements are very good.
- Arrangements for checking health and safety and pupils' welfare are thorough.

Commentary

23 The ethos of the school is very focused on ensuring very high standards of care and support. The headteacher and all staff have good levels of training and there are very clear procedures to manage child protection and welfare. The governing body ensures that there are up to date policies and that procedures are monitored. The improvements to accommodation have led to a safer and more attractive environment for work. The school also takes strong steps to support staff in safe working practice. For example, they take care to provide subject coordinators with the time to complete their roles and access to training so that their workload is reasonably manageable.

24 Pupils' personal development is tracked well through reports, parents' meetings and parents are very well informed of any developing concerns. The monitoring of pupils with special educational needs is thorough and ensures their safe development and progress. There is an appropriate and effective policy to ensure racial equality. The recording of academic progress is a little complex and does not make it easy to track individual progress. However, teachers know pupils well and discuss concerns with the headteacher or other appropriate staff. Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good as there are close links with the infant school. In particular the special educational needs coordinators from both schools work together to ensure personal and academic achievement of all pupils entering Year 3 are well understood.

25 The pupils feel very confident to approach teachers and other staff if they have problems and are confident that they will be listened to and supported. The school involves pupils in important decisions such as the planning for the new environmental area and is starting a school council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents, the community and other schools is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have confidence in the school and the headteacher.
- Parents consider that the school offers a genuine open-door policy.
- Monthly newsletters keep parents well informed.
- Parents offer good support in lessons, especially ICT.
- There are good links with the local community.
- There are limited curriculum links with local high schools.

Commentary

26 Parents have positive views of the school and are supportive. They rightly believe that pupils are expected to behave well and work hard. When the need arises the school spends considerable time and effort working with parents and families to give extended support and enable pupils to do their best. The school communicates effectively with parents in writing and through

regular meetings. The school office is the first point of call for parents and they are comfortable about approaching the school for help and advice, the school will arrange an early discussion with a teacher if this is required. Annual reports on pupils' progress paint a clear picture of their progress but the quality of guidance for future learning varies. Provision is made for parents to discuss their child's report with the class teacher. Few parents take the opportunity to work in school but those that do are used very effectively. There is an active parent, teachers and friends association that makes a valuable financial and social contribution to the school. Parents give their enthusiastic support for events such as, the Christmas production of "The Late Wise Man" and the "Dads and Lads" rugby initiative.

27 The school has productive links with the local community and uses its expertise and resources well. There are good sporting links with other local schools, soccer coaching for girls and boys and a demonstration by visiting gymnasts, to name but three. Regular visits are made to support curriculum projects, for example, to a local mill, Manchester Airport, Clayton Business Park and Blackburn Rovers football club. The school has links with national and local charities raising funds for Pendlebury Children's Hospital and Comic Relief. There have been adult education computer courses, in association with the local education authority, and some parents have gone on to further study at a local high school.

28 There are good links with the main feeder infant school that ensures efficient transfer of records and meaningful discussion between teachers. Arrangements for settling pupils into school work well and prospective Year 2 pupils make several visits to observe concerts and assemblies as well as spending time in lessons. The infant and junior teachers have benefited from joint training in first aid and performance management. Procedures to support transition from Year 6 to Year 7 are well established including visits to chosen high schools during the summer term and visits by secondary teachers to get to know their new pupils. The school has to work with several secondary partners which doesn't make for straightforward liaison, however most pupils opt to go to one of three main schools and there are good links with each of these. Some curriculum links have been established, for example, in science, mathematics and ICT.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is good. The quality of leadership is stronger than management, which is satisfactory. The quality of governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Actions taken to promote pupils' personal development have been well led.
- Leadership ensures that staff with management responsibility are given good opportunities to monitor provision. However, because of weaknesses in the School Improvement Plan, monitoring is not as evaluative or as well targeted as it could be.
- Governors are proactive and have a strong voice in shaping the school's future.
- Planning of improvements to pupils' working environment has been effective.

Commentary

29 The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and leads the school well with a commitment to improving the educational experiences for pupils. One of the school's main priorities in recent years has been to develop pupils' personal skills and to create an orderly learning environment. The school operates in an area of social and economic deprivation. The commitment to improving the quality of pupils' experiences at school has worked effectively so pupils leave the school with very positive attitudes, a clear understanding of right and wrong and show respect for others. This has taken determined leadership backed by high expectations and clear routines. As a result the school operates smoothly and harmoniously.

30 The school has met with mixed success in overcoming the low levels of academic skills pupils' start school with. It has made some important improvements to the way it plans the

development of learning, a weakness noted in the last inspection, but some shortcomings still remain. Sound self-evaluation systems based on the analysis of assessment information ensures that the School Improvement Plan identifies the right priorities for the school, concentrating on improving standards. However, the lack of sharply defined success criteria makes it difficult for the school to assess the impact of the changes it makes. Subject co-ordinators are given a generous amount of time in which to monitor provision. However, the connection of the plan to monitoring is tenuous. The school adopt a 'blanket' approach to monitoring rather than concentrating on the immediate priorities of the School Improvement Plan and resultant changes that arise out the action being taken. The lack of rigour and clear focus in monitoring extends to the observations made of teaching. While the quality of teaching is regularly checked, few pointers for improvement are made to individual staff. As a result, the impact is lessened and satisfactory teaching is not brought up to the standard of the best. As a result, some areas of the school have improved more quickly than others. For example, shortcomings in provision for mathematics were spotted quickly and changes made that have resulted in improved standards and achievement. However, the same cannot be said for English where a longer downward trend has not been tackled quickly enough, so that weaknesses in how the school teaches writing in particular still remain.

31 The governing body has achieved a good balance between supporting and challenging the school. Governors have a good understanding of the weaknesses of the school and have an increasing say in future developments. However, due to the weaknesses in the monitoring procedures reports to governors about the success of the plan tend to list the completion of tasks rather than the impact on learning and standards. This limits their capacity to judge the effectiveness and impact of the initiatives the school has implemented. In contrast statutory performance management structures are effective. Procedures are closely linked to the School Improvement Plan and to the progress made by pupils. The extension of procedures to teaching support staff has led to their increasing influence on achievement.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	497683	Balance from previous year	106196
Total expenditure	486454	Balance carried forward to the next	117426
Expenditure per pupil	2466		

32 The commitment to doing the best for pupils has extended to improving the standard of accommodation. Under the direction of the headteacher, the school has vigorously pursued grants and those in the local education authority who have wider responsibility for building, and as a result have succeeded in making important improvements. These have been well thought out and have made a telling difference to the environment pupil's work in. Governors monitor spending on a regular basis and the school seeks to get the most from its spending decisions. Because of uncertainty over pupil numbers, governors have maintained a reasonable contingency fund through the good use of grants so that any changes to spending or reductions in funds can be phased in without sharp and potentially unsettling adjustments being made. The management of the contingency is fully supported by the local education authority.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

- The actions taken to improve achievement in reading have been successful and pupils now achieve well.
- Good questioning gives pupils opportunities to talk and this is backed by the deliberate targeting of speaking and listening skills by some teachers.
- Teachers manage pupils well and create calm conditions for learning.
- Pupils' writing lacks flair and imagination because of some weaknesses in the organisation of lessons and teachers' expectations.

Main strengths and weaknesses

33 Standards in national tests have declined over the last three years largely because weaknesses in writing and pupils' comprehension have not been addressed quickly enough. Standards of reading and speaking and listening are average and standards of writing are below. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but is good for reading.

34 Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils well, and as a result, classrooms are calm places where pupils can learn in peace. Little time is wasted and teachers can confidently set partner and group work which help pupils' personal development and speaking and listening skills. By and large, teachers exploit this by using questioning techniques that require all pupils to give their opinions. The best teaching builds on this general approach by planning tasks with speaking and listening in mind. In Year 6 for example, pupils take the side of various characters as they debate their relative importance.

35 The school has met with success in teaching pupils to read. Improvements to the library and the range of books in school have enabled pupils to read a variety of books. Pupils in Year 6 have developed satisfactory research skills and can quickly locate information in the well ordered school library. By and large pupils learn to read in small groups and teachers use these times well to help pupils develop strategies to use when they meet difficult words. Thoughtful questions help pupils get under the skin of the text and as a result the more able pupils make good predictions about the author's intentions. The school has recognised that average and less able pupils do not understand the inferences in text well enough. They are tackling this through a very strong focus on this aspect and the use of a published scheme. This is at an early stage and it is too soon to decide whether the time given to this aspect of the English curriculum is yet having a suitable impact.

36 The school places great store on equipping pupils with basic writing skills and has met with success in doing this. High expectations are set for handwriting which, together with opportunities for regular handwriting practice, ensures that pupils of all abilities take care and present their work neatly and legibly. Similarly, the emphasis given to spelling and regular testing means that pupils attain a satisfactory standard. However, pupils have difficulty in building on these skills and in general writing lacks flair and sophistication. Plot lines are often simple and there are few phrases and sentences that catch a reader's interest. There are several reasons for this. Although the co-ordinator has taken prompt action to address weaknesses that were spotted in reading, monitoring which pays too little attention to the impact of changes has not noticed the knock on effect changes have had on the teaching of writing. Too little has been done to investigate the declining trend in standards. With the help of a local authority consultant the co-ordinator has now put in place a detailed action plan, but much remains to be done. In some lessons, although the teachers model good quality writing styles, the tasks that follow for many pupils are not closely linked to this and the teacher does not intervene sufficiently during the lesson. Some teachers overcomplicate lessons

and try to cover too much ground. In some lessons they may have up to three different types of writing on the go. As a result the time spent with different groups is fleeting and the points made superficial and rushed. Pupils' writing therefore, is often simple.

37 The best teaching of writing, as was seen in a lesson in Year 3, linked the work to a well-chosen poem that also fitted well with pupils' wider work. The text was used very well to help pupils transfer the story of the poem to a newspaper report. With the help of a teaching assistant, the teacher was able to work with all the class on a common theme and thereby make the best use of his time and expertise. This is not always the case, and pupils' experiences are often fragmented. Where a published scheme is followed unthinkingly, pupils' complete unrelated work and the linking of reading and writing becomes tenuous.

38 Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. They are helped by the school's concentration on basic skills. The effective deployment of teaching assistants to work with groups and individuals means that they join in lessons well and work systematically towards the targets for them.

39 Recent improvements to assessment procedures ensure that pupils' progress is more carefully tracked and that teachers are better at judging the quality of work. This has been extended to setting specific targets for pupils to work towards. However, it is rare for teachers to refer to these in lessons and this undermines impact.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

40 Pupils are now given many opportunities to write in other subjects and are helped in this by the limited use of worksheets. However, some of the links between literacy skills and other subjects are missed when teachers use published materials in an unthinking way. Pupils in Year 6, for example, have spent a great deal of time in English lessons recently, writing around the theme of the Tudors. However, this forms part of the history curriculum for Year 4 pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achieve well particularly in mental and written calculations.
- Pupils are careful and accurate in their work because of the teachers' high expectations.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
- In some lessons, the way the teacher uses a textbook limits progress of the more able and confuses the less able.

Commentary

41 There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards are average and pupils' achievement is good from their attainment on entry to the school. Through effective and detailed analysis of results of national tests, the school identified weaknesses in planning for mental mathematics and problem solving. New schemes of work and changes to teaching strategies for Year 3 have made significant improvements.

42 By Year 6 pupils have a secure knowledge of number facts and operations. They use their knowledge of multiplication tables well to answer problems and identify patterns and sequences. They have a good understanding of fractions, percentages and ratios and the more able use their knowledge well. Pupils make good use of strategies to check the validity of their answers and make good use of technology such as calculators and computers for this. The pupils' success in building up numeracy skills through the school is due to:

- Sharp and pacy games and activities at the start of lessons to practice skills;
- Consistent use of homework;
- Teachers' high expectation for care and accuracy in written calculations and good opportunities to discuss and explain their thinking. Work is accurately marked.

43 Pupils achieve well in other aspects of mathematics. In particular, pupils' understanding of shape and measure is good and pupils develop a good vocabulary. By Year 4 pupils understand the relationship between diameters, radius and circumference and Year 5 develop methods for calculating the area of a triangle and irregular shapes. Work is often based on practical tasks and this motivates pupils. Their attitudes to mathematics are very good and they work hard. Pupils make sound use of ICT for calculations and data handling.

44 There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans identify and develop targets and strategies for mathematics and teaching assistants are informed well and provide good support. As a result pupils build up their knowledge and understanding systematically.

45 The quality of teaching and learning is good. The work is closely matched to the pupils' ability and previous learning. The teachers' subject knowledge is often good and this keeps lessons interesting. However, there are a few occasions when teachers' use of textbooks limits the progress the more able make in a lesson and the content is too mundane for all. Teachers extend the pupils' mathematical vocabulary through good questioning and the modelling of new words. Pupils make their own dictionaries as a point of reference. Although every classroom has an area of display linked to mathematics this is often a list of key words and does not often challenge pupils through questions linked to their own work.

46 The subject is led well with a clear focus on pupils' achievement. There is imaginative use of additional booster lessons to raise standards for the more able and average pupils. Teachers do not yet make enough use of ICT in their teaching to stimulate reasoning and creative thinking by the most able. In Year 3, it was felt that pupils' attainment was not as strong as the test results from Year 2 would indicate after the summer holidays. The school retest the pupils after a three-week period and use this as the basis for planning future learning. This contributes well to progress made.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47 This is satisfactory. Pupils use their measurement skills and knowledge of shape and measure in activities in art and design and design and technology. In science, pupils use their data handling skills and there is a good emphasis on accuracy. However, there are not many activities which require pupils to make decisions about which aspects of their mathematical knowledge and understanding to use, other than under very controlled situations.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons have a clear emphasis on investigative and practical science.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes, take pride in their work and achieve well.
- Teachers use oral questions and discussion effectively to promote pupils thinking skills.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

48 Standards in science at the end of Year 6 are below the national average, mainly due to the proportion of pupils with special educational needs but are broadly in-line when they are compared with the results in similar schools. Work seen indicates that pupils are working at appropriate levels for their ability throughout the school. There has been satisfactory improvement in standards since the last inspection. The number of pupils achieving higher levels has risen but remains below the national average. All pupils take care with handwriting and presentation and are proud of their work and this reflects teachers' high expectations. The science curriculum is enriched well through links with local secondary schools and special events such as Chemistry At Work at the East Lancashire Business Park. A Year 6 pupil also won a Young Scientist Inventor award.

49 Teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers interact well with pupils using questioning and discussion to extend and clarify their knowledge and understanding. Commercial materials are used to supplement national guidance for teaching science but there is some evidence that worksheets which do not expect enough of more able pupils are used too often. Each year group studies six key topics and these are revisited on a two yearly cycle at different levels of difficulty to revise key concepts effectively. There is a clear focus on investigative work and pupils are encouraged to use scientific vocabulary correctly and plan their own fair tests. In a very good lesson in Year 3, pupils were challenged to find out which type of soil would be best to line a pond. This experiment on materials and their properties was part of an effective link to the story about The Three Little Pigs.

50 Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants and progress just as well as more able pupils. However, there is limited variation in the tasks being set which means that higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged. Pupils are given task sheets to support their recording and while this is a good idea in principle the format limits the opportunities for pupils to write independently and at greater length. ICT is used to draw different kinds of graphs and to word process writing for display purposes. Teachers use questions and discussion effectively to enable pupils to understand and express their views clearly, for example, in Year 6 pupils were asked to consider, "How does this fit in with our original hypothesis?" Pupils in all classes are encouraged to make predictions, draw conclusions and think scientifically.

51 Pupils' knowledge and understanding are assessed informally and also by using end of unit and end of year tests. The results from these are analysed carefully, particularly the performance of Year 6 pupils in national tests, to identify strengths and weaknesses and make any necessary adjustments to teaching. Pupils' written work is marked regularly but teachers' comments don't always give pupils sufficient information about what they have done well or possible improvements.

52 The subject is being led and managed well by an experienced co-ordinator, with good subject knowledge, who is well placed to support non-specialist teachers. Time has been allocated for the monitoring and evaluation of standards and the quality of teaching and learning and a good start has been made. As a result, appropriate priorities have been identified in the School Improvement Plan that focus on improving the curriculum, extending the use of ICT in lessons and the links with other schools to enhance expertise and access resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and provision have improved since the last inspection.
- Accommodation and resources do not allow any whole class teaching.
- There is no portfolio of pupils' work to exemplify standards and progress.
- In a constantly changing subject there is ongoing training for teachers and teaching assistants.

Commentary

53 Standards have improved since the last inspection. In Years 3 to 5 standards are in line with national expectations but are above in Year 6 where a majority of pupils are now working towards higher levels. All pupils respond positively and enjoy their work. They make particularly good progress and achieve well in Year 6 where most opportunities to enrich the curriculum are in evidence. For example, Year 6 pupils took part in a data handling / sports science course and went on a residential visit that focused on ICT and outdoor pursuits. A group of higher attaining pupils from Year 6 were confident and competent and had covered a good range of ICT applications including a multi-media presentation and robotic control. email is mainly used to send messages within the school but this does not exploit its full potential. Examples of email being used were seen in Year 3 where younger pupils can find and open an email and draft their response and examples were also seen in Year 6.

54 Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good expectations for pupils to work independently, for example, in Year 3 lessons with the floor robot. They expect pupils to store and organise their own work to an increasing degree. Curriculum planning is based on national guidance for ICT and this ensures progression and continuity. Assessment is based on teachers' perceptions but there is no portfolio of levelled work to support their judgements and some recorded comments are not specific enough, as in, "Excellent all round ability." There are plans to introduce self-assessment opportunities for pupils and to keep samples of their work in individual folders but this is at an early stage. The matter of whole class teaching is under consideration but this cannot be done until more workstations are added to the mini computer suite. This sometimes slows the pace of learning for the class. The school does not have a digital projector or interactive whiteboard to enable whole class instruction and demonstration to take place easily. All classes are timetabled to use the computer suite where only six computers are available. The school has strategies in place so that 'hands on' experiences are supplemented by other activities, for example, completing workbooks and developing library study skills. The suite is also used at other times by groups of pupils working with teaching assistants.

55 Curriculum leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is an experienced teacher who is a qualified New Opportunities Fund trainer. There has been an audit of provision and appropriate priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan to: -

- Provide additional equipment and technical support.
- Continue to train teachers and teaching assistants as ICT constantly changes.
- Extend and develop the mini computer suite.

56 The number of computers available for pupils is below the national average and the school does not have a formal policy to replace and improve existing information technology equipment. Limited access to computers is not helped by the fact that only a few pupils have computers at home. This restricts the pupil's opportunities to use computers as a natural tool for learning.

Use of information and communication technology across the curriculum

57 There has already been some staff training in this area and it is included in plans to develop teaching and learning. Teachers make satisfactory use of ICT to support their own planning, preparation, assessment and recording. Specific examples in other subject areas were noted in: -

- Musical composition.
- Word processing in several subject areas.
- Graphical representation in mathematics and science.
- Internet research to find information in humanities subjects.

58 More work still needs to be done to identify particular lessons where ICT would be advantageous, for instance in science there was a missed opportunity to use temperature sensors in a lesson about keeping things warm.

HUMANITIES

59 Only one lesson was seen in **history** and one in **geography** so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. Samples of work from Years 4 and 6 were analysed alongside work displayed throughout the school. Together with written policies, schemes of work and other evidence, it shows that the curriculum for both subjects meets statutory requirements. In history, there are interesting displays of work reflecting the studies pupils make of the Tudors and Stuarts and the Ancient Egyptians and there are good links to design and technology. In the one geography lesson observed, Year 3 pupils took part in an exciting debate on changing the local environment with the Chair of the Borough Council. Pupils were developing a sound understanding of the considerations they need to make when planning for developing land use.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good use of artefacts from different faiths to promote greater understanding.
- Pupils are comfortable to discuss their spiritual beliefs and teachers create good opportunities to do so.
- There are good links to pupils' personal and social development.

Commentary

60 Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve well. The progress pupils make in understanding other faiths is good. Teaching and learning is good because of the open and positive ethos teachers create.

61 By Year 4 pupils have a good knowledge of the importance of symbolism to different faiths. They have a good knowledge of Hinduism and are very aware of the importance of creating the right atmosphere for prayer and contemplation. By Year 6 pupils relate different festivals from Christianity, Hinduism, Muslim and Sikhism and recognise similarities and differences. They make satisfactory use of ICT to research ideas on the Internet and in radio broadcasts.

62 Pupils in Year 6 are very confident to discuss their perception of a 'soul' as an integral part of a human being. This teaching is confident and sensitive. Lively use is made of charts and diagrams to involve the pupils. The development of pupils' self-awareness is good as teachers are sensitive to pupils' feelings and marking often reflects this. For example, when pupils have written about the characteristics of famous people the teachers comment on the positive qualities of the pupils in their marking.

63 The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is a well-planned scheme of work, which is regularly reviewed. Pupils make good use of literacy skills in producing reports, myths and stories and for taking notes. There are a few occasions when the work in books is not very demanding. For example, filling in one word blanks and colouring in.

64 Leadership and management are sound. Lessons and work are monitored regularly and planning is under close review. There are good links to planning for personal and social development. There are good links to the community through Christian groups who work regularly with pupils in assemblies and provide a stimulating but balanced view of the role of faith. Displays on different faiths and cultures are stimulating and have a central position in the school hall.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

65 Only one lesson was observed in each of art and design, design and technology and music. It is therefore not possible to give a judgement on provision in these subjects. Evidence was gathered from scrutiny of work, displays and discussions with staff and pupils. It is not possible to give an overall judgement on provision in physical education because lesson observations were only of gymnastics.

66 Comprehensive schemes of work exist for **art and design** and **design and technology**, with teachers alternating which subject pupil's work on at any one time. In the one lesson seen, in art and design, teaching was very good because the teacher successfully linked the development of drawing skills to work on history. Pupils not only picked up new sketching techniques but developed a better understanding of Anglo Saxon art. Work on display shows that these subjects are often linked to broad themes but not enough thought has been given to incorporating key subject skills into the overall theme. Because of this, in art and design by the end of Year 6, pupils have a limited knowledge of the work and techniques other artists use. In design and technology there are interesting examples of construction work relating to historical projects such as the Tudors and Stuarts and Egyptians. The quality of finish and care taken is sound. However, the pupils' knowledge of mechanisms and the importance of design and evaluation are weak. There is a satisfactory scheme of work in place and the subject coordinator is currently reviewing provision.

67 It was not possible to make an overall judgement on standards in **music**. However, standards of pupils' singing are good. Pupils sing tunefully and with a good awareness of the dynamics of a song. Their diction is clear and precise. They know a good range of songs by Year 6 including traditional and modern music from different cultures such as Caribbean and European. They enjoy singing in both their lessons and assemblies. Older pupils sing songs in different parts and hold their tune well. From limited evidence pupils' skills in composition and appreciation are broadly average. In Year 3, for example, pupils devise their own notation and record their own tunes. This is displayed in a stimulating way with an opportunity for pupils to listen to their own recordings through a dictation machine.

68 A reason for the good standards in singing is the good role model set by the subject coordinator in lessons, choir and hymn singing. There is good use of radio broadcasts to provide a wealth of recorded material. The subject coordinator takes a sound lead. She monitors teaching and this has led to improvements to resources and better overall planning. There is now a satisfactory range of instruments representing different cultures, which was a weakness at the last inspection.

69 In the two lessons seen in **physical education** pupils experimented with balances. In Year 5 pupils achieved well because they were given every encouragement and valuable tips on how to improve their balances. This involved pupils evaluating each others work and striving for improvement. In Year 3 the children were not as challenged because the work did not get progressively harder. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to swim and many pupils go beyond the expected standard of one length. The subject coordinator is knowledgeable and committed to providing a good range of experiences. The curriculum is enriched by clubs and regular participation in team games between other local schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, health and social development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities to promote citizenship through several subjects.
- Awareness of healthy living is good.
- Provision contributes to pupils' positive attitudes and concern for others.

Commentary

70 Pupils' personal development is central to the quality of education in the school. Teachers create good opportunities for pupils to be aware of their role as citizens in a multi-cultural society and are not afraid to discuss the many social and environmental issues in the area. For example a very stimulating lesson, linked to geography, gave Year 3 pupils the opportunity to hold a debate on improving the environment, which was chaired by the leader of the Borough Council. This was a very practical opportunity for pupils to learn how decisions are made. They showed a good awareness of the need to consider others point of view and to revise their own thinking if necessary. In Year 6, pupils regularly participate in debates on important issues and prepare well for this. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and present their ideas on the characteristics of a good person well.

71 Pupils develop their knowledge of healthy living, sex education and drugs awareness through the science curriculum. There is a good range of visitors to support learning in this and a close relationship with the school nursing services. Pupils have strong opinions on healthy eating and are making changes to their tuck shop to reflect this.

72 There is sound leadership and management. The subject coordinator had to put on hold plans for greater involvement in Local Education Authority Healthy Living Awards due to maternity leave, but these are back on line again. Although only one lesson identified as personal, social and health development was observed, the quality of teaching and learning in religious education, science and other lessons related to the subject indicate that this is good. Teachers plan activities well to promote self-awareness and positive attitudes which is very significant in view of the social deprivation and strong political feelings within the local community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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