

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LAYTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blackpool

LEA area: Blackpool

Unique reference number: 119246

Headteacher: Mr P Whiteley

Lead inspector: Mr R Gill

Dates of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004

Inspection number: 256710

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	COMMUNITY
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	629
School address:	Lynwood Avenue Layton Blackpool Lancashire
Postcode:	FY3 7DG
Telephone number:	01253 392179
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr R Fisher
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Layton Primary is a large school situated to the north of Blackpool. It serves an area of social disadvantage. Most of the pupils live locally, but about a third of pupils come from further afield in more disadvantaged areas. The school does not receive funds from Excellence in Cities, but it has been able to appoint two learning mentors by virtue of the proportion of pupils living in disadvantaged wards. It achieved Healthy Schools Status in 2003. A small proportion of pupils has a minority ethnic heritage and very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is about average when compared to all primary schools. The number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is lower than that found nationally and a further 88 pupils have a special educational need. The majority of these pupils have learning difficulties, but the school does cater for pupils with behavioural and communication difficulties. The school population is a changeable one, mainly in Years 3 to 6. This has an effect on attainment at the end of Year 6. The children's attainment when they start school is below that found in most children of a similar age. The school is just about to take possession of some new accommodation that will alleviate many of the current difficulties associated with the school building.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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8988	Mrs J Cross	Lay inspector	
16761	Mr M Hemmings	Team inspector	Science Physical education Special educational needs
4350	Mr C Whittington	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology
25352	Mrs G Taujanskas	Team inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Religious education
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school.** Attainment is currently above the nationally expected levels in mathematics and science, and in line with them in English, and pupils are achieving well. Pupils achieved well in 2003 despite being generally below the national average because many had special educational needs. The cramped accommodation affects learning adversely, but a new extension is being built.

The quality of teaching is good and is guided by good leadership and management that take a close interest in pupils' learning and achievements. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the school is led in a way that inspires very positive attitudes from pupils;
- the good quality of teaching ensures that all pupils achieve well;
- standards in music are well above national expectations and there are excellent opportunities for talented pupils in extra-curricular activities;
- standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations at the end of Year 6;
- pupils' very good social and moral development is enhanced by very good links within the community;
- information from teachers' assessment is not used well enough to involve pupils in discussing their own learning.

The school has improved well since its last inspection in 1998. Standards of achievement are now good throughout the school. The quality of teaching has improved well. Pupils' personal development, the care and support shown by the school and the links it makes with the community are very good. Comprehensive plans have been drawn up to improve the accommodation, the first phase of which is nearly completed. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved very well.

### 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	B	D	E
Mathematics	C	B	D	D
Science	C	B	C	C

*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 good.** It appears that pupils were not doing well in 2003 compared to pupils in similar schools, but they were actually achieving better than expected when their individual progress from Year 2 to Year 6 is taken into account.

The work seen during the inspection confirms that:

- children in the reception classes make good progress and most meet the expectations for their age;
- standards in reading, writing and science go beyond the national expectations by the end of Year 2 and meet them in mathematics. Pupils are achieving well to reach these levels;
- standards, in Year 6, are above average in mathematics and science and meet requirements in English. This represents good achievement. Standards in ICT are below nationally expected levels, but standards in music are well above those expected.

**Pupils' personal qualities are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good.** Pupils' attitudes are very good; their polite manner to each other and adults is excellent. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Attendance is usually satisfactory, but was uncharacteristically unsatisfactory in 2002/3.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good.** The good quality of teaching produces effective learning because pupils' individual rates of progress are considered well, for example in the arrangements made for teaching mathematics to pupils grouped by prior attainment. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to make sure pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language receive teaching well suited to their needs. Some good methods are used to assess pupils' learning, but the information produced is not always used well to help pupils understand how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

The school provides good support for pupils. It works well with parents and very well with the community to enhance pupils' achievements. The curriculum is generally satisfactory, but very wide ranging extra-curricular provision for music and sport has a very strong influence on pupils' personal development.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher, supported by senior managers, sets the tone of the school very well. Parents rightly speak highly of the ethos of care and achievement created by strong leadership. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well and is efficient in the way that it supports the school, checks on its progress and challenges it to do better. Governors ensure that the school successfully includes all pupils and promotes racial equality well.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are generally very pleased with the school. Many appreciate the way in which, even in a very large school, their children are treated as individuals. Pupils have a very good opinion of the school. They talk with great enthusiasm about school life and the lessons and activities they enjoy.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve standards in ICT at the end of Year 6 and make sure that ICT is used well across the curriculum; and
- make learning more personalised by involving pupils more in discussion about how well they have done and targets for what needs to be improved.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Pupils' attainment in English is average and above average in mathematics and science in Year 6; their achievement is good. By the end of Year 2 standards are in line with the national expectation in English and science and above it in mathematics. Achievement is good by the end of Year 2. Standards by the end of the reception year meet expected levels in all areas of learning. This represents good achievement in the reception classes (Foundation Stage).

#### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science;
- Standards in ICT are below expected levels at the end of Year 6, but they are satisfactory in Year 2;
- Achievement of gifted and talented pupils is very good in some extra-curricular activities, but only satisfactory in general lessons;
- Standards in music are good; they are well above expectations in Year 6;
- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage.

#### **COMMENTARY**

1. The trend in results in National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 is good when compared to other schools nationally. Standards are generally rising at a faster rate than that found elsewhere. This trend appears to have been continued in 2004. The, as yet unpublished, results show a continued pattern of good attainment. Over half of the children start in the reception class at below the expected levels and so the results at the end of Year 2 confirm that pupils have made good progress and achieved well. A similar trend of improvement existed in Year 6 until 2003 when results in English and mathematics dropped to below average, and in science they fell to the average. This apparent setback concealed the fact that many pupils achieved well to reach the levels that they did, because there was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that year and the school was coping with a higher than normal influx of pupils, some of whom exhibited emotional and behavioural difficulties, who were not at the school in Year 2. By contrast, this year, many pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining above the nationally expected levels in mathematics and science and meeting them in English. Pupils who have been in the school from the beginning of their education, like many in Year 6 at the moment, do well and sometimes very well.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.8 (15.0)	15.7 (15.8)

writing	16.0 (13.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.2 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 84 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (27.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.5 (28.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.6 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 92 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. Their progress is good in reading, writing and mathematics because teaching concentrates well on the basic skills and children are taught to consolidate their understanding in the many play activities provided, such as writing notes about the class's pet dog or counting out the required amount of dog biscuits. Children's achievement lapses on occasions when they are expected to play, in an imaginary way, to develop their powers of speech and practise many of things that they have been learning about, without being sufficiently prepared with ideas about what they could do. Those with special educational needs, in the Foundation Stage, achieve well because the plans for their learning are clear and precise about what they need to do. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 to 6 sometimes achieve very well, particularly when they are taught in small groups by the special educational needs co-ordinator or one of the teaching assistants. Their achievement in class depends on the precision with which targets are set for them. In some classes they achieve well and in others satisfactorily.
3. Gifted and talented children in the reception classes have been identified, for example those with a talent for speaking about complicated ideas, but their achievement is generally satisfactory because as yet nothing extra is provided for them. The same drawback occurs throughout the school except in the case of talented children in music and sport because provision for them, particularly in after-school activities, has been considered in detail.
4. Standards in ICT differ between Year 2 and Year 6 for several reasons. By the end of Year 2 most pupils reach the nationally expected levels, and achieve well, because they have been taught well, sometimes by the co-ordinator who possesses a talent for advancing pupils' understanding when using the electronic whiteboard. Moreover, they have had the time and the resources to allow every pupil to use the few computers in the classrooms to good effect. It is a different story in Year 6 where standards are below those expected and pupils could do better. There are too few computers for the number of children who need to use them for the length of time needed. Consequently, they have just not covered enough ground to reach satisfactory levels. The often good teaching of ICT brings pupils to the brink of good achievement because their understanding is enhanced well, but their progress slows greatly during the week when they are left to complete the follow-up work using the few computers in each room.

- Standards reached by pupils in Year 6 in music represent a real strength of the school. They are above nationally expected levels by the end of Year 2 because singing is taught superbly and pupils are prepared so well for learning instruments from Year 3 by virtue of the musical grounding they receive. Progress accelerates rapidly by the end of Year 6 because all pupils learn to play the recorder and keyboard. A talented pupil could, by the end of Year 6, for example, be able to play the recorder, electronic keyboard and an orchestral instrument. They also have the opportunity to sing in two choirs and play in a 40-piece orchestra.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES (ETHOS)**

Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning and they behave well throughout the school day. Provision to promote their moral and social development is very good, and for their spiritual and cultural development is good. Attendance, usually at least satisfactory, dipped uncharacteristically below average during 2002/03, the most recent year that has national statistics for comparison. Punctuality is satisfactory.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils work very hard and want to succeed;
- Pupils learn how to behave acceptably through very strong moral teaching;
- Pupils are exceptionally polite, well mannered and courteous;
- Relationships throughout the school are very good;
- Extra-curricular activities play a large part in pupils' personal development in Years 3 to 6.

## **COMMENTARY**

- Staff create a very good climate for learning within which pupils of all ages and backgrounds achieve highly, including those who find learning or behaving more difficult. Almost all aspects of pupils' personal development have improved since the last inspection as a result of the strengthened provision for their spiritual, moral and social development. Many pupils start school in the reception classes with poor personal and social skills. Nurturing by the staff enables them to establish trusting relationships and develop positive attitudes and behaviour that lead to their good achievement.
- Pupils like school, especially valuing their teachers who make learning fun, and their friends. They appreciate the numerous extra-curricular activities that enable them to develop interests and talents, particularly musical and sporting, as they get older. By the time they leave the school in Year 6 they are mature learners, able to organise themselves extremely well in lessons. They are capable of first-rate collaboration with classmates during investigative work and have a high capacity for personal study, helped by structured homework that raises standards.
- Pupils' most striking personal quality is their excellent politeness. Staff consistently instil good manners and common courtesy and are very good role models for them. Pupils of all ages are extremely good at making eye contact and exchanging pleasantries with

adults, a remarkable achievement in a school so large. They show deep respect for their teachers, support staff and visitors.

9. Pupils are delightfully affable and get on really well together. They play happily and co-operatively in the playgrounds, helped by super facilities that occupy older pupils constructively. School council representatives are justifiably very proud of their influence in improving the quality of their free time through the all-weather pitch and other provision. Some parents expressed concerns about bullying. The school does not tolerate anti-social behaviour of any kind. Staff deal quickly and effectively with incidents of bullying or racism that arise. For example, victims are encouraged to talk about their experiences and they are taught strategies for combating harassment. There were six fixed period exclusions last year relating to four boys.

## 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	602	6	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

10. Music and sport contribute very strongly to pupils' personal development through, for example, the orchestra, school productions, team games and individual sporting endeavour. Moral issues and the importance of upholding traditional values feature strongly in the messages inculcated during daily assemblies and in discussions and debates in lessons. Pupils learn a lot about their own cultural heritage through, for example, visits to museums, taking part in music and film festivals, and their annual European day. Awareness of several world faiths and cultural traditions is raised satisfactorily, sometimes using pupils' personal experiences to good effect.
11. During the past 12 months attendance recovered from its slight blip the year before. Even then it was considerably higher than the average for all primary schools in Blackpool. Term time family holidays, which the school strongly discourages, and the very poor attendance of a small number of pupils have an adverse effect on learning. Most pupils arrive at school on time but some are persistently late and regularly miss important information that is vital to their achievement.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.3
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.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education that includes good teaching and learning. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. There is a sound curriculum which is well enhanced by activities beyond the classroom, some of which are excellent. Pupils appreciate what the school does for them, particularly in the way that their views are taken into account.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and a significant minority of lessons are very good and occasionally excellent. A range of good methods of assessment has been introduced but these methods are not always used to help set demanding tasks and pupils are not involved fully in discussions about how they could improve.

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Some teaching is very imaginative, which brings out the best in pupils;
- Activities are practical and relevant for pupils' needs;
- Pupils' learning benefits greatly from knowledgeable teaching;
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning;
- ICT is not used well in other subjects.

### COMMENTARY

12. Teaching has improved well since the time of the last inspection. In 1998, just over half of the lessons were good or better and now over three-quarters are like that, with one in three being in the very good category. Moreover, occasionally teaching is excellent. This top quality teaching manages to use imaginative methods to fire the pupils' capacity to learn and involves them in extremely useful discussions about their learning.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 61 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	20 (33%)	26 (43%)	13 (21%)	1 (2%)	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.*

13. The way that some lessons are planned to include imaginative methods designed to promote very positive attitudes among pupils is the key to much of the very good and occasionally excellent teaching in the school. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson pupils were led to believe that there was a mini-crisis in the caretaking department. Too many boxes of paper towels had been delivered and some had to be returned, but the school wanted to keep those that were most absorbent. Immediately, pupils were highly motivated to discover the best paper towels and they set about devising tests to help them make the right decision. By the end of the lesson, pupils had made rapid progress,

achieved superbly and reached much higher standards than expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs made equally swift progress because their learning was so well planned in small manageable steps. In other lessons, across the school, a similar approach to learning exists – one which has been endorsed and promoted widely by the headteacher and senior managers. Pupils with special educational needs do not make such good progress in all classes because objectives for their learning are too vague in some cases. The very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language achieve well despite not always having support in their mother tongue.

14. An underlying attribute of teaching, throughout the school, is the way in which lessons have a very practical bias to them and pupils are involved in profitable discussions about the content of their learning. Since this is a strong feature it is easy to spot the occasional lesson that falls short of this strength. For example, where in the infrequent unsatisfactory lessons, or the weak features of satisfactory lessons, teachers talk too much in a way that slows that pace of pupils' learning. Pupils' learning develops well from the good start they receive in the reception year. Good teaching has, in these classes, provided many stimulating and worthwhile practical activities such as sorting dog biscuits, weighing them and getting them ready for the class (toy) dogs to enjoy. Children become absorbed in these meaningful tasks and learn a lot as well. Older pupils love to research, using the Internet, and share their findings well. In a Year 5 history lesson, for example, pupils were finding out about shipboard conditions in Tudor times. They discovered some quite gruesome things that horrified them. The excitement caused when the class discussed these facts represented a rewarding end to the lesson, and one that ensured pupils' liking for history in the future.
15. Pupils hold very positive views about the school and the way in which lessons are made interesting for them. They particularly like it when they receive specialist teaching, the national strategies of literacy and numeracy are taught in lively and well-organised ways, and ICT is used well, despite the difficulties that the school faces with too little equipment housed in very cramped conditions. The music co-ordinator teaches music throughout Years 3 to 6. This has a dramatic effect on pupils' learning not least because every pupil learns to play the recorder and the electronic keyboard to a high level of proficiency. The short, but regular, lessons move along at a fast demanding pace and pupils achieve very well despite being squashed into the small music room. Good use of the National Literacy Strategy makes many lessons exciting for pupils. One Year 5 lesson exemplified all the strong elements which occur across the school. Relationships were excellent and elicited from the pupils a warm, eager and willing response to the task of analysing performance poetry and trying to write some of their own. Pupils were inspired by teaching that was snappy, ambitious, knowledgeable and pitched in a way that appealed to their sense of humour. The teaching of numeracy, which places pupils into groups based on their previous attainment, is, at its best, equally inspiring. In a Year 2 lesson about fractions, for example, pupils of broadly average attainment learnt very well because teaching made the small steps fun and the two computers in the class were used very well to reinforce the ideas. Furthermore, those capable of higher attainment were challenged very well to work out fractions of larger numbers.
16. The main weaknesses in otherwise mainly satisfactory or better lessons are related to the way in which information about pupils' learning is used to help them improve. For example, the school knows a lot about pupils with special educational needs, but their

individual plans for learning vary in quality across the school. Some are very specific about what needs to be learnt, but others are too vague. The school has identified some gifted and talented pupils, but as yet they are not given more demanding work to do. Consequently, their achievement is satisfactory, but it could be better. Even in some of the best lessons, pupils, of all ages and levels of attainment, are not taught to evaluate their own learning and set new targets for future lessons. They talk well about the content of the lesson but not about how well they have done and what might have been better. An inevitable weakness is the use of ICT across the curriculum. This drawback in pupils' learning is being tackled with some urgency with the building of new accommodation and ICT facilities.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. It includes all of the required subjects, along with religious education, and provides a suitable range of learning opportunities, with a particularly good music curriculum. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. A broad range of after-school activities means many pupils benefit from opportunities to extend their learning outside school hours. Accommodation is cramped and this adversely affects pupils' learning in some subjects, notably ICT.

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The music curriculum is a particular strength, where extensive opportunities are provided, both in lessons, and out of the school day for pupils to develop their musical skills;
- Lack of resources and the shortcomings of the accommodation mean pupils do not improve their ICT skills sufficiently;
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in activities outside the school day, to extend their learning;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally good and helps them make good progress along with their class mates, but there is no particular provision for gifted and talented pupils;
- The cramped accommodation limits achievement in some lessons.

### COMMENTARY

17. The music curriculum is exceptionally well developed. Class teaching is supported by specialist instrumental teaching. This offers pupils excellent opportunities to gain a good musical education which they can then put to use by joining the orchestra. Other superb opportunities exist to join the choir and to participate in shows, such as the current rehearsals for *Oliver*, all of which considerably enhance pupils' musical education.
18. There are very good opportunities for pupils to participate in team sports after school, including netball and football. Teachers admirably give up considerable amounts of time, including weekends, to support pupils in sporting events such as cross-country running. Coaching is offered, through very good links with the local sports college, whereby pupils benefit from the opportunity to play a number of sports.
19. Clubs and activities outside the school day also offer opportunities for pupils to develop new skills and enhance their social skills. These include chess and design and technology clubs. However, there is little offered for younger pupils, in Years 1 and 2, in order to begin to experience the benefits of extended learning.
20. Visits and visitors are organised which enhance the planned curriculum effectively. These opportunities inspire and motivate pupils through practical experiences to link learning in school with the local and wider community and the environment in which they live. For example, pupils in Year 2 visit the nearby St Mark's church and demonstrate good understanding and memory of the visit the following day in a quiz in their class. Older pupils go to Blackpool Zoo to study endangered species. A residential week for about half the pupils in Year 6 offers good opportunities for pupils to experience adventurous

activities away from home and school. This is a big commitment from school staff. However, insufficient thought has been given to those pupils who are unable to participate. There is no provision for a parallel experience for those left in school.

21. The school has developed good links with other local schools and colleges both to facilitate learning and to ensure good transfer arrangements for pupils when they move on to high schools locally. Similarly when children enter the reception year, good arrangements are in place to liaise with home, and nurseries and pre-schools nearby.
22. The school has taken part in initiatives such as Healthy Schools and has developed other projects such as European Day for Year 5 which give pupils positive experiences of the wider world. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education, including drugs education, which is taught in all classes.
23. There are appropriately qualified numbers of teachers and support staff to teach the age range of pupils in the school. However, the accommodation is cramped and lacking facilities in some classes, which has an adverse effect on pupils' progress in some subjects, for example ICT where the lack of computer space and chance to install a suite for class teaching means the standards in school have fallen behind compared to schools nationally. The school has tried to use its limited space creatively, such as developing a wild-life area for science teaching in one quadrangle.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and helps them make good progress except in some classes where plans for their learning are not specific enough. Pupils make particularly good progress when they are taught in small groups, withdrawn from the large group. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are identified quickly and suitable levels of support provided at an early stage. Progress is monitored and advice given from the experienced co-ordinator once pupils are able to manage in lessons without support. There is no specific provision for gifted and talented pupils, who are not offered enough challenging activities to stretch their acknowledge capabilities.
25. Since the previous inspection facilities for outdoor play for the Foundation Stage have improved. Resources are satisfactory in most subjects apart from ICT, where there are significant weaknesses.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

Staff take very good care of the pupils. They support and guide them effectively, particularly in their personal development. They actively seek pupils' views and involve older pupils well in decision-making processes.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Very strong pastoral care enables pupils to flourish;
- Well-tailored support and guidance for vulnerable pupils help to remove barriers to their learning;

- Pupils are not always sufficiently involved in the setting and review of personal targets;
- Arrangements to help new pupils settle in are very good;
- Pupils are very actively encouraged to keep safe and well.

## Commentary

26. The school has strengthened virtually every aspect of its care, support and guidance for pupils since the last inspection, important in view of the changing nature of its intake. Its good reputation for high achievement and very caring, supportive atmosphere is attracting rising numbers of pupils from deprived areas and from other schools where some have failed to thrive. Teachers and their assistants look after the pupils very well and have their best interests very much at heart. A school council has been established since the last inspection which enables older pupils to express opinions that shape the school's future.
27. Parents are very pleased with the induction arrangements that help their children to settle smoothly into routines and expectations. Before the children start school reception staff visit the families at home to establish bonds and make an initial assessment of how well the children operate in familiar surroundings. Health issues or other concerns are discussed to help the school meet their needs and sensitivities from the outset. Teachers glean additional information from the main nursery establishments that many children attend.
28. Parents of pupils who have transferred from other schools are full of praise for the way that they integrate, gain confidence and make progress. Some say that their children's lives are transformed for the better by moving to the school. Pupils who have experienced major problems such as severe bullying elsewhere are happy in school, described as a miracle by one very grateful parent. Staff are very good at raising pupils' self-esteem through praise, rewards and encouragement, particularly important for the most vulnerable. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, for example, are actively encouraged to take up interests and develop talents that raise their self-worth. Some achieve goals beyond their wildest expectations.
29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved greatly over the past six years. Pupils particularly benefit from sometimes being taught basic skills in small groups withdrawn from usual lessons. Support and guidance for the relatively few pupils identified by the school as being academically gifted could be stronger. These pupils are not always shown sufficiently how to improve their work to reach higher standards, nor adequately involved in assessing how well they are getting on.
30. Learning mentors successfully help Year 5 and 6 pupils with lower self-image to feel better about themselves. Poor attendance, emotional problems or behaviour issues are often improved by discussing underlying causes confidentially. Success stems from the trusting relationships that are established.
31. Staff rightly invest considerable time and effort in promoting regular attendance. They suitably follow up absences and, where there are concerns, involve the education welfare service. The school takes a strong stance against holidays in term time by, for example, refusing authorisation if the pupil's attendance has failed to reach 90 per cent.
32. Pupils benefit greatly from the 'Blackpool Healthy Schools' initiative and from lessons that promote healthy eating, informed life choices and personal safety. Matters relating to

child protection are taken very seriously by staff who are trained to be alert and respond appropriately.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY**

The school's partnership with parents is good and the school uses the wider community very well to broaden pupils' experiences. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Home visits get the partnership with parents off to a good start;
- Parents are involved effectively in their children's learning;
- Information for parents is generally good but some aspects lack detail;
- Visits and visitors provide many useful first-hand experiences for the pupils;
- Productive links with other schools reap many benefits.

### **COMMENTARY**

33. Parents, justifiably, have very positive views about the school, particularly appreciating the good quality teaching and the way that the school is led and managed. The school, not surprisingly, is popular in the neighbourhood and is fully subscribed despite the falling local birth rate. Parents want their children to succeed and are willing to get involved in helping them to learn.
34. Teachers and their assistants begin to build trusting relationships with parents even before their children start school. They visit families at home and invite parents into school to observe initial assessments of what the children can do, and to exchange important information. As the pupils get older their reading diaries provide a useful channel for communication between parents and teachers about any issues that arise.
35. Parents greatly value the 'open door' approach that enables them to contact the school if they have any concerns. Teachers consult parents suitably about the school's provision and know that they have very few qualms. They are reviewing present practice in the light of some parents indicating that they would welcome more information about their children's progress. Some aspects are not specific enough. Annual written reports, for instance, do not always quantify the child's progress and some of the targets set for development are rather general. A good feature of the reports is the grading of projects undertaken by older pupils, for example in history. Parents are actively encouraged to help their children to research such projects, many getting heavily involved when teachers explain clearly how they might help. Curriculum information otherwise is rather sparse.
36. Quite a number of trained parents and other adults volunteer to help with the 'Better Reading Partnership' in school that helps to raise standards. The once active parents association disbanded recently but parents are good at helping out when teachers make specific requests.
37. A hundred or so grandparents much enjoyed the recent special occasion when they were invited into school to see the pupils at work. Teachers use local facilities and amenities

very purposefully to raise standards and enrich the personal development of pupils of all ages. Pupils in Year 5, in particular, benefit from a wide range of educational visits to museums, conservation areas, the zoo and the coast that give them a broader understanding of history, geography and science.

38. Learning in ICT is enhanced through use of the nearby City Learning Centre that has, for example, enabled Year 5 to make animated films, and through links with a local high school.
39. Visiting specialists and performers bring learning alive for the pupils. These include theatre groups, local clergy, sports coaches, and safety experts. Pupils enter the Blackpool digital film festival and take part in local and national music festivals. They regularly entertain parents and the wider community with their school productions and 'proms' nights.
40. Strong links with local sports and arts colleges and a high school design centre help to enrich the curriculum and make learning fun. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for transfer to local high schools through their pre-visits and specially designed transition work.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good, which is an important factor in the good achievement that pupils of all abilities make. The governance of the school is also good, with governors ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The school is well led by the headteacher, who has forged a strong sense of teamwork between staff, governors, pupils and parents;
- The aims of the school are met well so that pupils can learn in a friendly and caring atmosphere and achieve well;
- Arrangements for using assessment information to help pupils improve their work lack sufficient rigour;
- Governors play a full part in helping to take the school forward;
- There are thorough procedures for checking the performance of the school.

## **Commentary**

41. The headteacher gives the school a clear sense of direction so that all staff know what they are working towards. His leadership has created a climate in which everyone involved with the school can work, as a team, to help all pupils achieve as well as they can. Responsibilities have been delegated wisely so that effective teams have been developed. Members of the senior management team provide very good role models for other teachers and pupils and play an important role in the leadership of the curriculum and teaching. Teachers respond well to the support and responsibility given to them, and carry out their duties diligently and with confidence. An example of the support given to teachers is seen in the way that all year groups have assistants to deal with daily administrative work. This allows teachers to have more time to be directly involved in

helping pupils to learn. The reflection of the school's aims, values and policies in its work is good and contributes strongly to standards of attainment and the good achievement that pupils make. Pupils feel valued, with their achievements being recognised and warmly celebrated. A prime example of this is the way in which strong leadership and management have made sure that pupils' musical talents are nurtured well and that through subsidised lessons many are able to learn to play an instrument.

42. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and in the school development planning process, and in so doing help to shape the direction of the school. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and carry out their statutory duties well. They have high expectations of the school's performance and, as well as being very supportive, are also willing to rigorously challenge the ideas of the senior management team. Consequently, there is a sharp focus on school improvement, as is seen by the recent drive to improve standards in writing. This is also reflected in governors' involvement in the planning to raise standards in ICT with much better provision, including a computer suite, in the building extension.
43. There is a good management structure, with a deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, year leaders and subject co-ordinators, which ensures a clear view of teaching and learning through the school. All have clear roles, which are carried out well. Of particular note is the work of the co-ordinator for special educational needs, which has been central to the very good improvements made in provision for these pupils since the previous inspection. Performance management is well linked to school improvement priorities. Teachers have targets and classroom observations with formal feedback, to help them further improve the good quality of their teaching. The arrangements for discussing the quality of pupils' work with them lacks sufficient rigour. As a result, pupils have little opportunity to be involved in evaluating how they are doing and are not set precise enough targets to further improve their performance. This means that some pupils, especially higher attainers, do not always achieve as well as they could. There are very good induction procedures for teachers new to the school, particularly newly qualified teachers, so they quickly settle into daily routines.
44. The arrangements for checking and evaluating the school's work are good. The school's improvement plan is a thorough document, which contains criteria against which the school can measure its success in achieving its targets. The school is finding this useful in assessing the effectiveness of its attempts to raise the achievement of boys, particularly in writing.
45. The school budget is managed well, with efficient systems in place to make sure that the finances are carefully controlled and expenditure regularly reviewed. Principles of best value are meticulously applied to all budgetary considerations. The administrative staff are good and ensure the efficient running of the school on a day-to-day basis.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,331,612	Balance from previous year	29,389
Total expenditure	1,288,293	Balance carried forward to the next	72,708

Expenditure per pupil	2048
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## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children are admitted into the reception classes in the September before they are five. Most have attended one of 25 nursery settings before starting at Layton. The curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to the children's needs. These are carefully balanced between activities that children choose for themselves and those that are directed by adults. Teaching is generally good but on occasions satisfactory; it is rarely very good. A consistency in lesson planning, teaching methods and the assessment of children's learning has been achieved through good leadership and management. Children's progress is monitored closely; staff, including teaching assistants, know the children well. Their work is well assessed and annotated with useful comments to help parents see what progress has been made. An effective partnership with parents has been created. Parents speak highly of the provision, particularly the value of the home visits conducted before children start school.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Children achieve well as a result of the good teaching they receive;
- Personal development is strengthened by regular contact with pupils in Year 1 and 2;
- Some teaching gives too little direction to children who need it.

### **COMMENTARY**

46. As a result of the good teaching in this area, children achieve well and most are on course to reach the expected goals by the time they leave reception. When children start in September, many find it hard to concentrate and take their turn, but by the end of the year most listen well, relate well to adults and other children and wait while others speak. Many show pleasure at other children's success; for example, in one lesson a child achieved an award for having done well and other children broke out into spontaneous applause. They get plenty of opportunities to learn good behaviour from older pupils when, for example, they attend singing practice with pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. These communal activities have a strong influence on children's personal development. Most can manage to collect and look after their own resources for an activity such as when children filled plastic bottles with green water in advance of singing 'Ten green bottles'. The good teaching encourages children to take responsibility, particularly when they have to sign up for certain activities to lessen congestion in the more cramped areas of classrooms. Occasionally, some children lose interest in a task or play activity because they were not given specific enough instructions about what to do or how their play might develop. This was the case when some children left 'the Den', which had been created in the classroom,

and wandered about with their torches and binoculars disturbing others, for a few moments, before they were redirected.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Good teaching helps children to achieve well in speaking, listening, reading and writing;
- Special events and visitors are used well to stimulate the children's writing;
- Not enough is done to develop gifted and talented children.

### **COMMENTARY**

47. Teaching is good and, as a result, most children achieve well and will reach the nationally expected level by the end of reception. Children get off to a good start because most learn to listen well. Teaching uses effective devices to promote close attention and concentration such as a granddad puppet to 'talk' to children about important matters. By the end of reception most can hold a conversation by waiting their turn to speak, listening well to other speakers and explaining themselves clearly. Reading is advanced well because letter sounds are taught systematically and in an enjoyable fashion. Consequently, most children, for example, can easily spot rhymes when they hear them, such as 'door' and 'four'. Teaching produces in children a familiarity with books that will stand them in good stead in Years 1 and 2. Most can talk well about pictures and text and higher attainers talk enthusiastically about the characters in stories.
48. Children make good progress in writing. Some higher attainers started the year needing to copy over words, written by the teacher, to gain confidence and can now write a couple of sentences that clearly express what they want to say. This is good achievement. Similarly, children with special educational needs have made good progress. They can now write a string of letters that nearly approximate to know words and phrases. This is partly because plans for their learning contain a detailed breakdown of what they need to do to make best progress. The breadth of opportunities for writing is good. For example, children have written about Chinese New Year, Shrove Tuesday and their visit from the Paramedics.
49. Teachers have identified gifted and talented children; for example, gifted readers or children talented at speaking their thoughts have been listed. However, they do not, as yet, receive any extra attention in lessons. This means that, in a discussion for example, children do not receive the kind of pointed question that would allow them to develop their talent.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children achieve well because mathematics is talked about often in many contexts;
- ICT is used well to extend learning;
- Educational play is not used well enough in some cases to reinforce learning.

## COMMENTARY

50. Children achieve well in response to the good quality of teaching they receive; most are on course to reach the expected goals by the end of the reception year. Some higher attainers can add and subtract numbers up to 10, while those with special educational needs achieve well to add together numbers up to five. The good teaching incorporates plenty of opportunities for children to discuss mathematical ideas. They can remember what they have learnt and this contributes to their good progress. For example, many children remembered the word 'sphere' when talking about the spherically-shaped balls of lard they were making into food for wild birds. On another occasion, children showed confidence in learning about time because clocks and other timepieces had been introduced well in other lessons. Children have good opportunities to use the limited number of computers for mathematical games, which help to develop confidence and mental agility. Educational play is used reasonably well to reinforce what is learnt about mathematics. For example, counting is a regular feature of activities led by teaching assistants; children fish for numbers in sand and hang the numbers out to dry in the correct order, saying them out loud as they do so. However, there are some missed opportunities for consolidating their learning. For example, in some lessons, children were learning about money and coin values and lacked a shop in which to practise what they had learnt while playing with other children.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- A practical and interesting curriculum ensures that children make good progress;
- Good learning is developed well through valuable conversation, but children get too few opportunities to evaluate their learning.

## COMMENTARY

51. An interesting and wide-ranging curriculum, which is taught well, ensures that children's achievement is good. Most children will reach the nationally expected levels by the end of their reception year. The combination of practical tasks and the use of visitors helps to compensate for children's general lack of experience and knowledge. The making of musical instruments filled with bird seed, for example, prompted some valuable

conversation about what seeds were and where they came from. Moreover, children learnt quickly about the need to screw on bottle tops, with a strong twist of the wrist, when seed showered out of some bottles when shaken vigorously.

52. Children thoroughly enjoyed making bread with a representative from a locally-based national bakery. In doing so they developed their mathematical ideas about weight, scientific notions about change and technical skills in making things. Their knowledge of the world is further broadened by activities such as explorations in the school's wild-life area and studies of various Jewish celebrations. One class produced a bold and imaginative collage of the school pond after spending sometime observing and chatting about it. Achievement is good because so much valuable discussion about the content of their learning takes place, which particularly advantages children who are learning English as an additional language, who make swift progress. The main weakness in teaching is the lack of involvement of children in talking about how well they think they have done in relation to the learning objective for the lesson. They often know what they are doing and why, but rarely get a chance to evaluate their own progress and say what they need to do next.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Improved facilities since 1998 have ensured that achievement is good;
- Children generally make good progress in handling small equipment and objects, but some children do not do as well as they could because they rush too much.

### **COMMENTARY**

53. Most children are on course to meet the expected goals by the end of the year. They achieve well as a result of the good teaching they receive. This represents an improvement in provision since 1998 when children did not have sufficient access to large apparatus. They now have frequent and well-organised opportunities to develop muscle power and co-ordination by using equipment in the school hall, large apparatus in the Foundation Stage quadrangle and resources in the small yards adjacent to classrooms. Children's manipulative skills are developed well through regular opportunities to cut, colour and thread objects and make things such as seascapes using artefacts from the class treasure chest. Occasionally, children are not required to take enough time over manual activities and items get spilt unnecessarily or not tidied away properly. This lack of precision over the development of fine manipulative skills limits the progress of a small group of boys who tend to rush through tasks.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's progress in painting is good;
- Achievement in singing is very good;
- Teaching sometimes gives too little guidance about how children can learn well in role-play areas.

## **COMMENTARY**

54. Most children are on course to reach the expected goals for their age by the end of the year. This represents good achievement as a result of good teaching. Children get plenty of opportunities to use a range of materials and tools. The good progress they make is also a result of the timely advice and encouragement they receive from teachers and their assistants. For example, some children produced paintings of flowers in September that were nothing more than red splodges on the paper. By the spring, they painted hyacinths using fine brushes. The delicate marks made in representing the pink flowers demonstrated how well they had advanced in creative development in a few months. Singing is learnt alongside pupils in Year 1 and 2. Owing to the skilful teaching they receive, and the way in which they are swept along by the older pupils, standards are well above what might be expected by the end of reception. For example, they are able to sing in rounds and keep well to their own part in them. Music lessons, in class, are also productive. On one occasion, children developed their appreciation of rhyming words well while playing percussion instruments to add atmosphere to a rendering of a poem about walking through a jungle. The main weakness of the provision is that some opportunities are missed to create areas for role-play, such as the lack of a shop when it would have been relevant and that some children who need it are not given enough guidance when they are trying to act out situations in the areas that do exist such as the Den in the jungle.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Overall standards in English are above national expectations at the end of Year 2;
- Pupils achieve well in most classes;
- The overall standard of teaching and learning is good and is often very good;
- Developing an appreciation of the joys of language and literacy is a high priority;
- The good relationships between adults and pupils seen in most classes boost confidence and encourage interest and effort, so pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject;
- The co-ordinator makes a positive contribution to the subject;
- Targets are set for pupils, although in some classes these are too broad and there are times when higher attaining pupils are not set sufficiently challenging work.

#### **Commentary**

55. Standards are above the expected levels for seven year old pupils and in line for those who are eleven years old. The national test results in 2003 showed pupils in Year 2 to be above average when compared with other schools in both reading and writing. Those for eleven year olds were below average when compared with other schools. Standards are better this year, showing good achievement across the school. There has been an overall improvement in English since the time of the last inspection, where standards for all pupils were in line with the national average, the quality of teaching and learning was not as good as it is now and resources were found to be unsatisfactory. Those pupils with special educational needs are given work which is appropriate to their abilities and make equally good progress. In some lessons those who are more able are not given suitably difficult work, and so their progress is slower.
56. Most pupils start in Year 1 with speaking and listening skills which are generally average for their age. These skills are promoted well in most classes, and by the time pupils reach Year 6 they are generally confident and articulate.
57. The standards of reading for seven year old pupils are above average and are average for those who are eleven years old. The teaching of reading to pupils in groups is used purposefully and is helping to raise standards. Most pupils have books of their own at home and many belong to a public library, showing considerable enthusiasm for reading. Pupils regularly take books home and read to an adult. There are useful home-school reading records, in which a parent or carer writes a helpful comment. During a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils recommended books to friends and said what they particularly enjoyed about them. A good display featuring the work of Quentin Blake celebrates his work – and links well with art.
58. A wide range of writing genres is covered in all year groups, including biography, poetry, factual writing and play scripts. At the time of this inspection, poetry was a focus in many

lessons and this had a very positive effect on the pupils' appreciation of this form of writing. A 'Writer of the Week' display boosts confidence and celebrates achievement. Other displays include a wide variety of poetry, particularly in Year 4. There are guides to prefixes and suffixes in Year 5 and writing about a sponsored event in Year 2. ICT is not used enough in the presentation of writing.

59. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with most lessons containing some very good features. Over 70 per cent were good or better, which is an improvement from the previous inspection. The best lessons seen were lively and imaginative. During many lessons, both teachers and pupils show high levels of enjoyment, and everyone is, as a result, highly motivated – with all the pupils fully involved. Most staff are very enthusiastic and have the highest expectations. This teaches most pupils to try hard during their lessons, and they are fully committed to their learning. Relationships in these classes are very good and enhance the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. Most teaching assistants are involved fully in lessons and clearly enjoy their work; making a positive contribution to pupils' achievements. All adults give praise to reward pupils and in some lessons pupils too show real appreciation for each other's efforts.
60. Although assessment is generally thorough, the information gained is not always used sufficiently to ensure that the work set is appropriate for the higher attaining pupils. Targets are set in all classes and – at their best – these give a clear indication of what each pupil needs to improve. Some targets, however, are rather too vague (for example, "Practise your handwriting as often as you can."). Day-to-day assessment is constructive and relevant, with many teachers giving considerable time to marking their pupils' books. Homework is provided regularly and this effectively extends and reinforces the pupils' learning. Year 6 pupils have produced interesting and informative written work linked to their history topic on the Victorians.
61. The co-ordinator is effective, recognising the school's strengths and working to improve those areas identified as needing development. The need to improve boys' writing has been identified, for example, and during the inspection this was no longer seen to be a weakness. The overall quality of resources is good. The school libraries are used regularly by classes and groups, so pupils have full access to books they need.
62. The great strength of English teaching at the school is the commitment seen in all lessons to develop a genuine enjoyment of language and literacy in every pupil.

## **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

63. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well and there is abundant evidence of links with other areas of the curriculum. These include geography links in Year 2, where pupils write about Blackpool; writing about Hinduism in Year 4; writing in Year 5 on points of view; and work linked to a topic on science in Year 6. Opportunities are provided in mathematics lessons for pupils to explain their strategies (thus reinforcing their learning and enhancing speaking and listening skills), and in Year 6 pupils have written about the results of various experiments as illustrated from their tally charts.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well;
- Well-taught lessons help to engage pupils' interest and foster very positive attitudes to mathematics;
- Too little use is made of ICT to support and extend pupils' learning;
- Assessment is thorough but not all pupils are clear about how to improve further.

## COMMENTARY

64. Standards in mathematics are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well overall in Years 3 to 6 through a well-planned and taught curriculum, along with well-established setting arrangements. Setting pupils into ability groups enables teaching to be targeted at a specific range of ability, making it easier for teachers to provide good quality focused teaching. These features have a substantial effect on the standards reached by the current Year 6 pupils, an improvement since the time of the previous inspection. By the end of Year 2 standards are average, maintaining standards found at the time of the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well, building on the good start in the reception year.
65. Setting arrangements, combined with good staffing levels, enable teachers to focus on teaching groups of pupils who learn at a similar rate. It also means that in some years those pupils with special educational needs can be taught in smaller groups for mathematics. This has a positive effect on their progress. For example, good emphasis is placed on pupils learning correct mathematical vocabulary and this enhances their confidence in mathematics.
66. Teaching is good overall. In some lessons it is very good. Well-chosen introductory activities, combined with good subject knowledge, enthuse pupils and engage them in the lessons. Good relationships and high expectations of behaviour ensure that lessons run smoothly. Resources are used well to maintain interest and assist learning. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher used individual whiteboards, the overhead projector, and 'ten frames' effectively to maintain pupils' interest throughout the session. Occasionally when teaching lacks inspiration pupils are not enthused and the pace of learning slows. In some lessons insufficient resources mean that pupils have to wait for turns and this detracts from their learning. In Year 2, for example, only four floor robots were available for the whole class lesson. Pupils were extremely patient and support staff helped them to get the best out of the time but more resources would enable better learning. Where teachers make use of technology this aids lessons significantly. In Year 6, for example, the use of the interactive whiteboard engages pupils' interest well and also helps to demonstrate the learning points successfully. Unfortunately, a shortage of computers in the class and school meant this had to be followed up as a paper exercise for most pupils.
67. Marking in pupils' books is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent in some respects. Although praise is used extensively it is not always backed up by clearly telling pupils

what they need to do to improve their work further. Formal assessment is thorough and effective, so teachers are well informed about how well pupils are progressing each term.

68. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the specific needs of the school. Good analysis of assessment information has helped to improve the overall provision for pupils. Monitoring of standards through scrutinising pupils' books and monitoring teaching and learning has helped to improve teaching overall.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

69. Mathematics is used well across the school overall. In Years 3 to 6 there is good use of mathematics in science, particularly for graphs and charts, and for calculations. Appropriate use is made in other subjects such as geography, in map reading and plotting co-ordinates.

## **SCIENCE**

The provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are above average and pupils throughout the school achieve well;
- The curriculum is planned well, with emphasis on developing pupils' learning through practical investigations;
- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management, which has a positive impact on pupils' achievement;
- Assessment information is not used effectively to set targets for improvement for pupils;
- Teaching and learning are good with pupils having positive views about their work in science;
- There is not enough use of ICT in science.

### **Commentary**

70. Most pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are above those expected for their age, while pupils in Year 2 reach standards that are to be expected. This shows that pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well as they pass through the school. A major factor in this good achievement is the strong emphasis on pupils learning through structured investigative activities. Because of this, most pupils in Year 6 are adept at devising a test, making sure it is fair and then carrying it out independently of the teacher. This was evident in an excellent lesson given by the co-ordinator, when pupils were investigating the strength and absorbency of different kitchen towels. The imaginative and very challenging activities led to all pupils achieving highly, as they were allowed to take responsibility for organising their groups, selecting their own resources and deciding for themselves how to set up the investigation. However, in some classes, pupils are not as competent when making conclusions to their experiments and these tend to be a description of what they have done rather than an evaluation based on prior scientific knowledge and understanding.

71. Leadership and management are very good, with the high quality teaching of the co-ordinator being a good role model for other teachers. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the subject's weaknesses and how they might be tackled. Of particular note are the successful contacts with the local secondary schools to ensure that pupils in Year 6 will be able to cope with the new scientific challenges they will be faced with when they change schools. The curriculum is planned well to successfully promote pupils' personal development, for instance when they are given opportunity to show initiative and take some responsibility for their own learning when working collaboratively during their investigations. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills, such as when pupils in Year 6 have taken accurate measurements with a thermometer to find out how the temperature of water affects how quickly sweets dissolve. Arrangements for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory. However, the information gained is not used effectively to let them know how to improve their work. This means that some pupils, especially higher attainers, do not always achieve as well as they could. The school provides too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT in science lessons, especially in terms of recording the findings to their experiments.
72. Pupils receive careful explanations about what they are to do, so that they are clear about what they are to learn and what is expected of them. Teachers stress the need to use accurate scientific terminology, which leads to pupils having a well-developed vocabulary with which to explain their ideas. In Year 2, the development of pupils' skills in finding the best way of recording the findings to their experiments is restricted by the over-use of worksheets. Marking is inconsistent, which means that pupils in some classes receive better advice as to how to improve their work than in others. Good management of pupils' behaviour successfully boosts confidence and raises their self-esteem when carrying out investigations. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their activities in science and behave well, showing much interest and curiosity in what they are doing. This has a beneficial impact on the quality of their work. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are in line with national expectations in Year 2 but below them in Year 6;
- Teaching is often good and sometimes very good;
- Inadequate resources and unsatisfactory accommodation restrict pupils' achievements;
- The co-ordinator has worked dedicatedly to compensate for the subject's shortcomings.

### **Commentary**

73. Provision is unsatisfactory because pupils do not reach the nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6 and the current availability and deployment of computers result in too little time for pupils to practise and extend their learning during the week. The co-ordinator has done very well to increase the resources available, in the respect of laptops in all classes and electronic whiteboards in several, and more pupils than ever before are

able to get hands-on experience. However, the lack of a room in which a whole class can be taught, with enough computers for immediate follow-up work, limits the achievement of older pupils in particular. These problems will all be solved when the new accommodation is finished in September 2004, but until then the school has done well to provide what is available.

74. By the end of Year 2, pupils meet national requirements in learning about ICT and being able to use computers for word processing and collecting data, for example. They cover all the required work, and achieve satisfactorily, in Years 1 and 2. They are able to practise their skills during the week because they do not need as much time and equipment as pupils in Year 6. Pupils do meet some of the requirements in Year 6, in respect of finding things out from the Internet for example, but do not have the opportunity to broaden their learning across the full ICT curriculum. For example, they have not used computers to control an electronic toy or to measure changes in temperature in science. There are 90 pupils in Year 6 and far too few computers to allow easy access; achievement is therefore unsatisfactory.
75. Notwithstanding the difficulties that have caused the unsatisfactory standards in Year 6, there is some good and sometimes very good teaching throughout the school. In Year 5, for example, very good teaching prepared pupils for their task in creating a spreadsheet. By the end of the lesson, most pupils were competent at completing the calculations needed and could change the information in cells very quickly. They attained higher than expected levels in an atmosphere of complete concentration; attitudes were excellent. The pupils were very well organised into groups for follow-up work during the rest of the week, but inevitably learning loses its momentum over a period of five days as unavoidable interruptions occur. Furthermore, the assessment of pupils' learning is not completed well under these arrangements; teachers do not have a comprehensive analysis of what pupils have achieved. Teaching and learning were very good in a lesson in Year 2 in which pupils studied the topic of branching databases. Pupils spontaneously stated that the lesson was "fun and magic". The keynote to learning was that pupils thought for themselves, showing high levels of independence and personal development.
76. In most lessons, the common weakness was the limited opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own progress. Lessons had very apt objectives but pupils were not often encouraged to talk about their success in relation to them and to set new targets for themselves.
77. The subject is well managed, despite the difficulties that the school has faced. Many exciting activities have been provided that have compensated for the otherwise limited resources. Year 5 pupils have spent time at the City Learning Centre in Blackpool. They have made some imaginative animated films using computer technology. The school won the Blackpool short film competition with a piece about shapes, largely due to the enthusiasm of the co-ordinator and the school's invaluable technician.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

78. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory, throughout the school, because they are limited by the lack of time and opportunity to use their knowledge and skills in ICT across the curriculum. There are some notable exceptions to this, in history and geography for example, where useful information has been discovered on the Internet but, in general,

lessons in other subjects take place without the benefit of ICT to broaden the scope of pupils' learning.

## **HUMANITIES**

79. **Geography** and **history** were not inspected in depth and therefore no overall judgments can be made on provision. However, pupils' work was examined closely.
80. Standards of work geography and history are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Many older pupils achieve well in research projects, which are undertaken as homework. Standards, for example, are above average in the extended studies about the lives of Victorian children, completed by pupils in Year 6. These projects also provide parents with a good opportunity to help their children and most do so effectively. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and place a strong emphasis on providing them with opportunities to develop the skills they need to learn about their world and about life in the past. Lessons are interesting and are often enriched by relevant trips and visitors, which bring learning to life. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop literacy skills through reading for research and recording work in their own words in a variety of styles. While teachers make every effort to include work on computers, this is restricted by the lack of enough resources and limits the development of pupils' ICT skills in historical and geographical research and recording. Pupils develop an enthusiasm for learning and both subjects make a strong contribution to their personal development.

### **Religious education**

Provision is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use is made of planned visits and visitors to bring different topics alive for pupils;
- Teachers sometimes lack good subject knowledge with which to raise standards;
- Assessment is not used to check learning, so chances to challenge gifted and more able pupils are missed;
- The curriculum is not monitored effectively to ensure that challenging activities are planned and good progress is made in lessons.

#### **Commentary**

81. Standards in religious education are satisfactory at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, meeting the levels expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in finding out about religions, but have few opportunities to think about the religious ideas in the context of their own lives.
82. By the end of Year 6 pupils have studied Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism in most years and also learned a little about Islam and Buddhism. Pupils are interested and willing to learn. However, some groups of pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons. Although higher attaining pupils often benefit from challenging questioning, they are not often presented with challenging tasks, for example research and comparisons.

This means they do not always learn as quickly as they might. Progress is uneven across year groups depending on the time allocated and the regular teaching of content.

83. Teaching is satisfactory. Some teaching contains gaps in knowledge about different faiths and this has an impact on the quality of the lessons. Teachers try hard to make lessons interesting but some lack confidence, for example referring frequently to notes and conducting lessons at a slow pace. Questioning is not always clearly focused on what pupils need to learn. Where teaching is good, for example in a Year 5 lesson on Rama and Sita, the enthusiasm, humour and energy of the teacher engage pupils successfully. Teachers use informal assessment at the end of the lessons successfully to check on learning. Formal assessment is not carried out at the end of topics or term. This means that teachers do not know how much pupils know and have learned. Too little use is made of ICT to support and extend learning.
84. Visits and visitors significantly enhance the curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 benefit from a visit to the nearby St Mark's church and show how much they remember in a quiz in class the following day. Other pupils in Year 5 have talked to a Buddhist nun and some have been to a synagogue. These visits have a positive effect on pupils. Few links exist with other communities, such the Hindu and Islamic faiths. These would be particularly beneficial as pupils are unlikely to gain such experiences in their local community.
85. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because little monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum has been carried out recently. This results in a lack of focus on raising standards.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

86. Since only one lesson in art and design, design and technology and physical education respectively was observed, it is not possible to make a judgement about the provision in these subjects. However, pupils' work was examined and discussions were held with pupils and teachers.
87. In **art and design**, displays around the school show a sound range of different topics, including studies of famous artists such as Georgia O'Keefe and Paul Klee. Pupils have experimented with colour and clay work. During a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils sketched movement, where they had modelled the actions themselves, filming these so that they could study positions of the body.
88. Pupils' work in **design and technology** shows that pupils plan and make models, such as vehicles in Year 6, and moving people in Year 1. Pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about the subject and note how their work could be improved.
89. The curriculum is broad and balanced in **physical education**, with good opportunities for enrichment that make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. For instance, pupils can take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and are also able to work with a variety of professional coaches to develop their skills in hockey and football. These activities have been built up by the co-ordinator, whose work has had a positive effect on provision. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have sessions in the local swimming pool to promote their swimming skills and develop their knowledge and understanding

about water safety. By the time they leave school, most pupils can swim the nationally expected 25 metres. The school has identified dance as an area that is in need of development and is actively seeking ways of doing this. There is good involvement in competitive sports with other schools, with pupils showing good standards in cross-country races that have led them to winning many trophies. Pupils with special sports talents are nurtured well, as is exemplified by several ex-pupils having gone on to gain international status.

## **Music**

Provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well beyond those expected nationally and achievement is very good;
- The subject is led and taught by dedicated and highly able staff;
- Extra-curricular provision is excellent;
- Pupils do not get enough opportunity to talk about their learning.

## **COMMENTARY**

90. Pupils' learning is a real strength of the school because they are all able, by the end of Year 6, to play at least two instruments (recorder and electronic keyboard) and sing very well. Moreover, the subject enhances pupils' cultural development greatly, owing to the frequent opportunities to listen to music and to take part in performances and productions. Standards reached by the end of Year 2 are above those expected nationally and well above them by the end of Year 6. All pupils in Year 6 can play the recorder, sight read music, play a keyboard with two hands and apply their understanding of different keys in music. This is an amazing feat given the seemingly unfavourable circumstances in which it has been achieved. The room in which the keyboards are housed is very cramped and barely holds the large classes that use it. Nevertheless, pupils behave wonderfully and the very good teaching prevails. All lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught by the co-ordinator who has nurtured and developed pupils' interest and talent over many years.
91. By the end of Year 2 pupils' enthusiasm for music has been established very well by frequent opportunities to sing and learn the basics in well-structured lessons in which teachers use commercially recorded lessons. In some cases, pupils' achievement goes well beyond what might be expected for their age. For example, in Year 1 some pupils memorised a tune with ten notes, played on a Sitar, and then sang it unaccompanied in front of the class. The confidence to do this was only matched by the high degree of enthusiasm shown. Pupils from the reception classes, Year 1 and Year 2 regularly sing together and can, for example, sing in the round – a skill not normally expected of pupils until they in Year 5 or Year 6.
92. The grounding pupils receive in Years 1 and 2, guided very well by an assistant co-ordinator, stands them in very good stead to be able to forge ahead in playing the recorder as soon as they reach Year 3. By the end of Year 3, all pupils are able to give, for example, a good rendering of *The Song of Joy* by Beethoven. Older pupils in Year 6,

who are very vocal about their enjoyment of the subject, state that they really appreciate the opportunities afforded them. They regularly listen to music and discuss it, compose their own music and perform in front of others. The school has managed to maintain the interest of boys as they get older. Consequently, they are well represented in the choirs, orchestra and small ensembles that meet throughout the week. Opportunities for pupils to talk about their learning in lessons is the only missing element in the very good teaching that takes place. Lessons are often rushed towards the end and pupils do not get enough opportunities to say, for example, how well they thought they did and what they might need to practise next time.

93. Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent in the way that it gives an opportunity for talented pupils to extend their range. The governors subsidise instrumental tuition and very many pupils take up the chance to learn within the full orchestral range. There is a very large orchestra comprising pupils past and present and two choirs. Parents state that the annual carol festival is a superb musical event and are very proud of the fact the orchestra has played at the Royal Festival Hall.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Provision is broad ranging and relevant;
- Local initiatives and the expertise of professionals are used very effectively to encourage pupils to keep safe and well;
- Trusting relationships enable open and honest discussions about issues, concerns, feelings and values;
- There are not enough opportunities for younger and older pupils to interact.

### **Commentary**

94. PSHCE underpins all that happens in school through helping to establish the bedrock of very good relationships, trust, respect and positive behaviour that leads to pupils' high academic and personal achievements.
95. Good teaching of weekly PSHCE lessons in all classes successfully supplement its integration into the rest of the curriculum. Taking part in the 'Blackpool Healthy Schools' initiative has won an award for the school and reaped many benefits for the pupils, such as active encouragement to eat more fruit. One of the team that shares responsibility for leading the subject has gained accreditation in PSHCE through her hard work and passion for the subject. Staff are benefiting from sharing this expertise.
96. Staff are good at initiating discussions, planned or in response to situations that arise, that help pupils to eliminate bullying and racism, challenge stereotyping and resist peer pressure. Open and honest discussions and debates teach pupils to respect others' points of view and feelings, made possible through the trust that is established with

teachers, learning mentors and other support staff. 'Worry boxes' enable pupils to alert staff to their concerns.

97. Professional expertise is used very effectively to bring home important messages about keeping safe and taking personal responsibility. Water safety, very important in this coastal town, is reinforced well through a video that suitably alerts them to dangers and emergency procedures. Representatives from the British Canoe Union, Network Rail and Kerbcraft successfully raise awareness of other dangers in ways that are relevant and meaningful. The Life Education Caravan, and PRIDE programme that involves parents, enable pupils to learn about the dangers of drugs and importance of preventing misuse. The school nurse is involved in teaching Years 5 and 6 pupils about puberty as part of a well-considered sex and relationships education programme.
98. The school council gives pupils in Years 3 to 6 good opportunities to experience democracy at first hand through voting in representatives and deputies who suitably gauge classmates' opinions about the school. Staff listen to their views and take them on board appropriately. Pupils have made lots of suggestions to improve playtimes that have resulted in much-enjoyed facilities and activities for older pupils. Promotion of health and fitness forms a strong focus of the council's agenda. Younger pupils do not have elected class or school council representatives despite many being mature enough for this role.
99. Pupils from the reception classes to Year 2 rarely come into contact with older pupils because they generally work and play far apart. Older pupils, therefore, miss out on opportunities to bond with younger ones, to learn about their needs and to help staff to care for them. This could, for example, be done through monitors, buddies or extra-curricular provision that spans lower year groups.
100. Pupils learn effectively to care for the environment and for animals through school pets, visits from the RSPCA and educational visits to an RSPB centre. They are good at recycling and composting because this is expected of them.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

