

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WEETON ST MICHAEL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Weeton

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119561

Headteacher: Mrs M Roper

Lead inspector: Mr B Tyrer

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 258327

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	34
School address:	Church Rd Weeton Preston Lancashire
Postcode:	PR4 3WD
Telephone number:	(01253) 836 280
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs H Woods
Date of previous inspection:	5 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a school that is much smaller than the average. There are 34 pupils of whom 15 are boys and 19 are girls. Pupil cohorts vary greatly with the smallest year group being two and the largest being 11. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the average. All pupils have English as their home language and there are no pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average and the proportion of those who have a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average. Socio-economic data for those pupils whose families live in the immediate area is average but it is not possible to generalise about pupils' attainment on entry because of the very small cohorts that enter each year. The school roll is at its lowest for five years.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23101	Mr B Tyrer	Lead inspector	Mathematics, Science, Art and design, Music, Physical education, Special educational needs
9981	Mr S Hussain	Lay inspector	
22359	Mrs J Havard	Team inspector	English, Information and communication technology, Design and technology, Geography, History, Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very small school which is **very effective**. Was such a level of effectiveness to be seen in an average sized school with average costs, such a school would be judged to be providing very good value for money. The school is very well managed and there is excellent leadership from the headteacher and key staff. The school is providing a very good quality of education with the result that pupils who are being very well taught make very good progress and achieve very well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils are achieving very well.
- The quality of education is very good.
- Leadership is excellent and management is very good.
- The governance of the school is good.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are excellent.
- The school is very well thought of by parents and it takes very good care of their children.

The school has made a good improvement overall since the last inspection in 1998. Key issues from the last inspection have been effectively addressed and most aspects of the school including teaching and learning have improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The interpretation of results in this school cannot be relied upon to show how well a group of pupils has performed or how well the school has been doing on a year by year basis. The school has a very small number of pupils (34); year group numbers currently vary from two to 11. Additionally the school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the proportion with statements is well above average. In two of the year groups pupil mobility is higher than average. Attainment on entry varies greatly depending on the particular make-up of each cohort. The test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2003 show that overall, pupils' attainment was well above average and that they had made above average gains since their last tests as pupils in Year 2. This reflects very positively on the quality of education being provided and shows that teaching has also improved since that time. In contrast the six pupils in Year 2 achieved standards that were well below average. The inspection found that all pupils were being very well taught. Pupils who were gifted or talented or who had special educational needs were very well provided for and all pupils were making very good progress and were achieving very well in relation to their individual levels of capability.

Pupils' personal development is very good, their attitudes and behaviour are excellent and attendance is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good** and has improved since the time of the last inspection. Teaching and learning are very good, the curriculum is very good, the school takes very good care of its pupils and parents hold the school in very high regard. Because of the high quality teaching and the school's inclusive approach, all pupils are making very good progress and are achieving very well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the headteacher and other staff is excellent. The ethos of the school is excellent. It is very well managed and its governance is good. These are areas that have improved since the time of the last inspection. There is a need for the governing body to decide how it will use its budget surplus which is currently too high.

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

Parents both at the meeting and through the questionnaire expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the school. Some parents said that they had specifically chosen the school because they knew of its very good reputation and felt that their decision was justified. They said that the particular features of the school, including its small size, were what had attracted them and they felt that there was nothing about the school that was unsatisfactory. The views of pupils both in interview and through the questionnaire confirm their parents' views that they (the pupils) like school and are happy to be there.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- The governing body should bring forward plans to show how their budget surplus is to be utilised.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

*Please note*

*The school has no nursery so children enter the school and the Foundation Stage in the Reception Year. The interpretation of standards of attainment seen during the inspection and of year on year results from National Curriculum tests is not reliable. This is because of the very small numbers of pupils in the different cohorts, the impact of one pupil joining or leaving on subsequent tests, their differing levels of attainment on entry and the differing proportions of pupils with special educational needs. Currently the smallest year groups contain two pupils and the largest contains 11 and two year groups have higher than average levels of pupil mobility.*

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

- Because of very good teaching, pupils are making very good progress and are achieving very well for their respective levels of ability and need.
- Pupils in Year 6 in 2003 achieved an average points score in national tests that was well above average.

#### **Commentary**

1. National Curriculum test results were well below average for pupils in Year 2 in 2003 and for pupils in Year 6 were well above average. Inspection found that teaching was very good for both current year groups. There are currently two pupils in Year 6 and four in Year 2.
2. Significantly, the 2003 Year 6 group had made a better than average improvement since the time of their previous tests in Year 2. This again supports the finding that pupils were being very well taught and that teaching had improved since that time.
3. It should also be noted that the school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with special needs and a much higher than average proportion with statements of special educational needs. One of the reasons some parents from outside the area select the school is that they know that pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and make very good progress. This was found to be the case both through the scrutiny of such pupils' work and from observing them in lessons in school. The school is equally diligent with pupils identified as being gifted or talented and ensures their very good progress through its specialist provision which is basically aimed at enriching outwards rather than extending upwards the levels of attainment of the pupils concerned.
4. Lessons were seen in English, mathematics, science and design and technology. Pupils and children in the Foundation Stage were making very good progress. Evidence in the work scrutiny supported this view.
5. Assessment records of high quality were also scrutinised and these showed significant year on year gains for individual pupils. The school had formerly focused on raising the achievement of boys in writing and this was clearly successful as the inspection found that whilst there was evidence of different levels of attainment, there was none to show differences in progress between boys and girls.
6. Year 6 results for 2003 show that pupils can be taught to a very high level. Inspection confirms this, an example of which could be seen with the highly developed individual skills that some



pupils in Years 3 to 6 displayed in relation to using computers and allied equipment in a science lesson.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' **excellent** attitudes and behaviour, together with **good** attendance and punctuality, contribute **very well** to their achievements. The school has made outstanding improvements regarding attitudes and behaviour since the last inspection. Pupils' personal development including, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils show exceptionally high levels of interest in school life, lessons and the range of activities provided.
- They work and learn in an environment free from bullying, racism or other forms of harassment because the school has the highest possible expectation for conduct and staff work particularly hard to maintain this.
- The school promotes good relationships exceptionally well. Consequently, pupils have excellent relationships with others.
- Pupils are very confident, self-assured and very willing to take responsibility.
- Provision for personal development is very good and is very effective.

### **Commentary**

7. Pupils show great interest in lessons and other school activities such as trips and after school clubs. For example, in the younger of the classes (including children in the Foundation Stage) they all listened and concentrated particularly well as they learnt more about phonics. The inspection team was impressed at the levels of concentration and 'pin drop' silence during an assembly in the church hall.
8. The school is a remarkably calm and orderly community. This owes much to the school's expectations about conduct and outstanding use of praise and reward for good behaviour. For example, pupils are often told how well they line up in the playground. Rewards include 'smiley faces', stickers for good behaviour at lunchtimes and a headteacher's award. Any bad behaviour is dealt with exceptionally well.
9. Staff, especially the headteacher, are excellent role models for pupils to base their own behaviour and relationships. Pupils respect and value each other's opinions and co-operate exceptionally well in lessons. For instance, in a mathematics lesson, the class of older pupils collaborated on their tables very well and pooled their knowledge in problem solving. An effective race equality policy is in place and there are good opportunities for pupils to learn about the need for good race relations.
10. Many opportunities for speaking or giving performances, for instance at assemblies and at circle times, enable pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem very well. Pupils respond very well to responsibilities such as helping younger ones in school or with monitor tasks.
11. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school values this aspect of pupils' development highly and parents comment on the effectiveness of the provision that is made. The pupils know and understand that they are part of a small community and that they are part of the congregation of the church. They know equally well that there are other children in different parts of the country and the world who live lives that are different. These differences can be socio-economic, religious or ethnic in nature and they have learned and are learning to value people for their differences. They are also very well supported in understanding and contributing to their own culture which they do through the

church and through the part they contribute to the local community. Pupils are aware of moral and social issues and are effectively encouraged to discuss matters that affect them on a personal level.

12. There have been **no** exclusions.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
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 quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good**, the curriculum is **very good**, the school is taking **very good** care of its pupils and the links with parents are also **very good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good** overall and this is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Teaching and learning are **very good** for all pupils including children in the Foundation Stage. The quality of assessment is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have an excellent understanding of the needs of all their pupils.
- They are very good at planning for the wide age and ability range of pupils.
- They are making very good use of technology and other resources to support teaching.
- Systems for assessing pupils' progress are very good.
- Classroom assistants make a very good contribution to the way pupils learn.
- Relationships with pupils are very good.
- Pupils are very keen to learn.

### Commentary

13. Teaching is very good in both classes. This is because teachers are very well organised, have very good knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching and are highly committed to working effectively with a very wide range of age and ability. They make very good use of technology and this has the impact of making lessons very attractive to pupils. It further allows pupils to show high levels of maturity and application when, for example, they undertake research using the Internet.
14. Very effective planning based on accurate and relevant assessment of progress means that individual needs are well met. The contribution of classroom assistants is very good and without them teaching would struggle to be so effective. The school's commitment to providing very good levels of support in the class means that individual pupils can benefit from the very favourable adult pupil ratio. Having so few pupils in their care for three or four years consecutively means that teachers are in an excellent position to monitor not only pupils' academic progress daily but also the personal and social aspect as well. Parents are very happy with the care and attention that their children receive.

15. Relationships are excellent and the behaviour and attitudes of pupils which are also excellent reflect this clearly. Pupils are treated with respect and are given opportunities to show their capacity for being responsible which they do very well. In this all the staff provide pupils with very good role models. The similarity with a caring family scenario is very strong.
16. Assessment procedures are very good and homework is also used very usefully in this respect. Staff are well aware of the progress that pupils are making.
17. Pupils respond with great appreciation to the respect and high expectations shown by their teachers. They are keen and interested and eager to contribute. They listen with care and value the opinions of others. They enjoy the challenge of using new technology and show a capacity to work in a sustained way as individuals or in a group. Teaching clearly encourages pupils to become mature.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 11 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	7	3	0	0	0	0

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

**The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is **very good** overall. It meets all the statutory requirements and the needs of all pupils. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has a strong commitment to enabling all the pupils to get the most out of their education.
- The school provides a good range of varied activities to enhance and enrich the curriculum during and outside the school day.
- Provision for pupils’ personal, social, health education and citizenship is very good.
- The school is fully inclusive, committed to ensuring all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equality of access and opportunity.
- Good provision of teaching assistants is having a very positive impact upon pupils’ learning.
- There is very good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in other subjects.
- Accommodation and resources have improved since the last inspection. However, large outdoor equipment for the Foundation Stage pupils is lacking.

**Commentary**

18. The breadth of curricular opportunities is very good. Staff have been members of a ‘Small School’ cluster group which has successfully adapted the national guidelines to meet the distinctive nature of small, rural schools. Their introduction is having a positive impact on standards and achievement. The school makes very good use of different communities to enrich the curriculum. For example, the school has very good links with a large urban school in Blackburn. The range of additional activities available to the pupils is good, including sport and music. The staff are very keen for the school to play a fuller role in the community and many activities have already taken place. For example, the information and communication technology (ICT) co-ordinator provided a very successful series of ICT lessons for parents and local residents.

19. Teachers plan very effectively, taking into account the different age and ability groups within the school. Very good emphasis is placed on promoting literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. The pupils use their computer skills very well in all areas of the curriculum.
20. The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good and there are many opportunities to develop this area of learning. For example, the pupils exchange visits with their link school in Blackburn. This provides good opportunities to understand their role in a small rural community as well as more widely a part of multicultural Britain. The school is taking part in the Healthy Schools' Project. Health education is of a high priority with healthy living weeks to support learning in this area. The after school clubs, which are very well attended by pupils of all ages provide opportunities for involvement in music, ICT, art and sporting activities. They take part in performances and inter-school sporting activities. Visits out of school further enrich the curriculum and make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and their overall progress and achievement.
21. All pupils have equal access to learning activities, they are fully included in all aspects of school life and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The provision for pupils with special education needs is very good. The school is very careful, with its higher than average proportion of such pupils, to provide them with very carefully matched support and challenge. Individual education plans are carefully produced and shared with parents. Those parents whose children have statements of special educational need are fully involved in the review process that takes place annually. There is very close coordination with external providers and the school is a tenacious advocate on the part of its pupils and they are making very good progress and are achieving very well. The school is making similar quality provision for those pupils who are identified as gifted and talented.
22. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good and best use is made of their expertise and experience. The teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. In the first class the teaching assistant provides very good support enabling the youngest children in particular to access an appropriate curriculum. The pupils from Year 3 to 6 are also very well supported by teaching assistants. Their expertise is taken into account when deciding who works with which group. This was particularly effective during a literacy lesson.
23. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in accommodation with the addition of a new classroom and staffroom. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although it has many positive features, including a separate resource area which the younger children use. The school makes good use of all the available space, including the church for assemblies. The outdoor play area provides a good resource for curriculum development, including floor markings and a new garden area for environmental work. The grassed area is small, limiting the opportunities for PE. The resources are satisfactory overall for the older pupils, with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT) where there is very good provision. Resources for the youngest children are unsatisfactory due to the lack of outdoor play equipment. However, this a high priority in the school improvement plan.

### **Care, guidance and support**

This is a caring school with **very good** provision for giving support, advice and guidance to all pupils based on monitoring. Consequently, pupils are happy, feel valued and are able to learn and achieve well. The school has made several good improvements in this area of its work since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Induction arrangements are very good.
- There are very good procedures to ensure pupils work in a healthy and safe environment.

- Pupils have excellent, trusting relationships with adults in school.
- Pupils have very good, easy access to well-informed advice, support and guidance to help them progress.
- The school has strong arrangements to seek, value and act on pupils' views.

### Commentary

24. New children to the school are gradually and sensitively introduced through many integration sessions. They can also join in the 'teddy-bears' picnic' in the summer before they start, giving them very good chances to meet staff and experience school routines.
25. The school's designated officer for child protection is well trained and there are very good arrangements to inform staff about the school's child protection policy and procedures. Risk assessment is undertaken as required for general health and safety matters. Emergency procedures are well developed. The school works very well with external agencies to promote health and safety. For example, a 'health week' is held annually, involving the school nurse, a dietician, dentist, physiotherapist and St John's Ambulance.
26. This school has a very strong family ethos and excellent relationships at all levels. Staff work very well together to support all pupils in their learning and personal development. Information is very well used to set targets for personal development and give pupils very good advice, support and guidance. Pupils' issues and concerns are handled with sensitivity and care. The school works very effectively with external support agencies where necessary to provide additional support, for example, regarding special educational needs. This illustrates the school's inclusive approach to learning.
27. There are many opportunities for pupils to make their views known to staff and become involved in the school. For instance, staff listen to their suggestions and opinions about the school during circle times. The school has adopted many of their suggestions, for example, about classroom rules and lunchtime play resources.

### Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a **very good** partnership with parents and the community including links with other schools and colleges. These factors make a very strong contribution to learning. The school has made good improvements regarding links since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have an outstanding regard for the school.
- There are very good procedures to ensure parental satisfaction and to deal with any concerns and complaints.
- The school involves parents very well by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.
- Parents are provided with good written information.
- Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.
- The school has established many links in the wider community that enrich learning.

### Commentary

28. Parents are rightly pleased with the quality of education at this school. They appreciate and value the commitment of the governors, headteacher and staff. The headteacher and staff are always happy to meet parents to discuss any individual concerns or complaints.
29. Parents are issued with a questionnaire regularly and this allows them to make observations about the school and raise concerns. The school analyses the returns very well to inform its policies and practices.

30. The school provides good information to parents about its policies, provisions and pupils' standards and progress. Pupils' annual reports are well presented with detailed information about pupils' progress, strengths and 'targets for development'. Parents are given useful information about the curriculum and topic work through newsletters at the start of each term. There is also a helpful newsletter provided each week on day-to-day issues.
31. The parents' and teachers' association works hard in organizing many social and fundraising events. Money raised is used to support school funds. Several parents help regularly in school, for example, in the library or with some after school clubs. The school organizes workshops for parents annually in computer skills and this enables many parents to support their children's learning better in that regard.
32. Wider community links include those with the adjacent St Michael's Weeton Church, The Rotary Club and the police and fire services. Many school trips and visitors support pupils' learning. For instance, pupils recently went to the Mayor's Parlour in Fylde where they learnt about local government. The school puts much back into the community, for instance, in much fundraising for charities and good causes. It also takes part in the Rose Queen Festival each summer, a major community event.
33. Very good educational links with other schools include links with Hodgson Technology College. For instance, a teacher from there leads many ICT lessons at St Michael's for pupils in Year 6. There are good mechanisms in place for the transfer of pupils to secondary schools. The link with Daisy Fields Primary School (a multicultural school in Lancashire) enables pupils to learn much about other cultures, for example, the importance of Ramadan to Muslims.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is **good**. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is **excellent** and the management of the school is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- There is excellent leadership.
- The school is very well managed.
- The budget surplus is higher than it should be.

### Commentary

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	222,682	Balance from previous year	40,733
Total expenditure	178,880	Balance carried forward to the next	43,802
Expenditure per pupil	5,261		

34. The governors are making a good contribution to the running of the school. They have acquired a budget surplus and are exploring options that would utilise it. This should be done now as a matter of priority. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses in part from their close connections with the school but also from their closeness to the local community in which the school forms a prominent part. They are meeting their statutory obligations well. Improvements to the school that they have sanctioned such as the building of the new classroom are making a major impact on school life, not least in raising its

effectiveness. They are anxious to maintain the very strong emphasis and importance that the school and parents place on knowing the children and pupils very well and for making the best provision for them. The governors play an active part in determining the school's priorities and they are kept well informed about the progress that the school is making in that respect. The school improvement plan is a very well designed document that clearly articulates the direction of the school. It shows that the school is dynamic and challenging and that it knows how and where to improve. Governors also have good financial data and can oversee the way the school's finances are being used. They need to decide how the surplus is to be spent.

35. This is an unusual school by virtue of its very small size and as such it presents challenges that leaders and managers do not usually face. The burden of leading and managing the school falls very largely on the shoulders of two people – the headteacher and the full-time teacher in the Year 3 to 6 class. The headteacher has a class teaching role for three and a half days a week. They both make an excellent contribution as leaders with skills that are different and yet highly complementary. There is a very good understanding of aims and goals and a sharing of common purpose. The ethos of the school is excellent. The result is that teaching is highly effective. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. The challenge of managing a large portion of the curriculum and teaching it to a wide age and ability range is a very demanding one and as such requires clear vision and the management skills to turn that vision effectively into reality. The school is also truly inclusive and the provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who are classed as gifted or talented is of a very high standard and is very effectively organised. There is very good support from the classroom assistants without whom the teachers' role would become most difficult. With so few pupils the adult child ratio is very favourable. Inevitably costs for a small school are much higher than average but parents are extremely happy and satisfied with what the school provides for their children.
36. The school is outward looking and benefits from participation in initiatives that are designed specifically for small schools. The funding opportunities for such schools are maximised in this case. Issues of professional development are identified and training opportunities exploited to the full advantage of staff and school. There has been sensible devolvement of workload and equitable sharing of what remains. The school is well connected to teacher training institutions. In a school where, because of small cohorts, general judgements about standards cannot be relied on, there is very close and effective attention paid to the way in which the progress of individual pupils is charted.
37. The accommodation is now much improved since the time of the last inspection and resources are satisfactory overall with particular strengths in those for the teaching of information and communication technology.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

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

The provision for children working in the Foundation Stage of learning is **very good**.

The very good level of support for these children gives them a very positive start to their education. The children enter Reception in the September before they are five. There were only six children in the Reception class at the time of the inspection, all working in the first class, which is made up of Year 1 and 2 pupils as well. The majority have experienced some form of pre-school provision. All the children achieve very well because the teaching is very good and the curriculum is appropriately planned. Well-qualified and capable teaching assistants support the class teacher, one of these often taking responsibility for the group activities of the children in the Foundation Stage. All the staff work very well as a team, they are highly motivated and determined that the children in their care will make good progress. The school has worked hard to improve the accommodation since the last inspection. The Reception children make very good use of a separate resource area and playground markings to develop the areas of learning. However, resources for outdoor play are unsatisfactory, mainly due to limited space for storage. The school is aware of this deficiency and has made the acquisition of large apparatus a high priority in the school improvement plan.

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

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

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

- The children achieve very well and are happy in school because of the good support, care and respect shown for each child.
- Behaviour is excellent, the children work and play very well together.
- The very good induction programme ensures all the children settle well.
- The children make very good progress because very good teaching provides a range of activities to enhance children's personal development, enabling them to develop confidence and work co-operatively with others.

#### **Commentary**

38. After one term in the school the children know and follow the routines, settle to tasks with the minimum of fuss and behave extremely well. They interact well with others. The adults in the class make excellent role models, providing a calm but purposeful approach to work. The majority of the children show a keen interest in what they are doing, concentrating on the tasks set. Their efforts are highly valued, for example, the Reception children are often asked to show their work to the older pupils in the class. This has a very positive impact on self-esteem. The children are friendly and take a pride in their work. Very good teaching enables children to be taught how to share and take turns and to persevere in their tasks. The high level of support from adults, working with small groups, effectively promotes concentration. However, there are limited opportunities to enable the children to become more independent and show initiative.



## **Communication, language and literacy**

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching provides a wide range of activities to support learning, which ensures the children achieve very well.
- Every opportunity is used to develop children's language skills in all areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

39. The Reception children display good listening skills, especially when the teacher gives lively and interesting presentations inspiring the children into wanting to learn more. As they listen attentively to an adult telling a story they can follow the text correctly and join in with repeating rhymes with confidence. They respond very well to good questioning techniques, showing an understanding of the main points. The children are making a good start on learning to read and spell accurately through a planned approach to the teaching of letter sounds and patterns. The staff provide a wide range of activities to develop their reading skills, for example, the Reception children enjoy a reading session each day and they all take a book home to share with their parents. The children make good progress in reading during the Foundation Stage. Writing development is good; the children are able to form letters correctly when copying.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teachers and support staff work hard to provide a range of activities to develop learning in this area, including teaching mathematics within the other areas of learning.
- The children are achieving well.

### **Commentary**

40. Little was seen with mathematics as the core activity. However, from an examination of children's work and of the one lesson seen, the children respond very well to the wide range of practical activities to develop mathematical skills. Teaching, which is very good, provides a wide level of support and encouragement. However, some of these pupils are not yet secure in recognising numbers or counting sequentially to ten.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

Overall judgement about provision for the children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good, with staff providing a wide range of activities and experiences to develop curiosity and learning.
- Children's very good achievement is well supported by the use of computers.

## Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are very good. The staff provide a wide range of structured activities to widen the children's experience and develop their knowledge and understanding. For example to develop the children's understanding of materials the Reception children were included in a class science project on the properties of materials. Although unsure at first the children became very proficient when experimenting with the modelling material to see how it could be changed. The teaching assistant used the lesson very well to extend the children's vocabulary. The children are developing very good computer skills, demonstrating an ability to use a computer mouse and keyboard with confidence.

## Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well in this area, especially with manipulative skills.
- The children have limited access to large play equipment and outdoor play and learning activities.

## Commentary

42. The children develop their manipulative skills appropriately through a good range of opportunities, including cutting and pasting, painting, baking and drawing. They are developing good pencil control as demonstrated in their letter formation and drawings. No lessons were seen for the development of large-scale movement. However, the children responded well, demonstrating good motor control during a class activity session. The children have limited opportunities for outdoor play. There is no large equipment for the children to use. However, they do use the outdoor playground markings to good effect and the acquisition of large apparatus is a priority in the school improvement plan.

## Creative development

43. It is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision, but the work on display indicates that the children are achieving well in this area. There was no use of role-play observed during the inspection to develop children's imagination, however, the classroom is organised to facilitate this area of learning.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good** overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of English is very good with effective challenge provided for all the pupils.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support.
- Literacy lessons are very well organised to cater for the needs of mixed age groups and wide ranges of ability.
- All pupils are making very good progress and achieving very well, including the boys in writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making very good progress.
- The teachers use ICT to support learning to good effect.

## Commentary

44. Due to the very low number of pupils in each cohort, judgements on attainment cannot be reported. There is variation year by year because of the range of ability of particular groups of pupils. However provision is very good. Pupils make very good progress overall and the pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. This is because the school considers improvement in this subject a very high priority.
45. Since the last inspection leadership and teaching of the subject have improved. Expectations are high. There is a marked improvement in assessment and tracking of pupils' progress and individual targets are set.
46. Achievement in speaking and listening is very good overall. Most of the pupils speak with confidence and good articulation. When responding to questions they give detailed explanations and descriptions. The school works very hard to support those pupils who are reluctant to join in discussions or have difficulties with spoken language. They all make very good progress over time. All the pupils demonstrate very good listening skills when adults and other children are talking. They follow instructions very well.
47. Very good teaching strategies have raised achievement in reading and the majority of pupils are competent readers. By Year 2, pupils read with confidence, they can quickly recognise frequently used words, have good phonic awareness and use a range of reading cues. They show an interest in books and are aware of the different parts of a book, for example, one pupil gave a very good description of the 'blurb' during a shared reading session. The older pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate an enjoyment in reading; they talk knowledgeably about the different types of books, expressing their preferences well. They have a good understanding of how to use the library and how to use books for research. In literacy lessons the texts chosen were used very effectively to engage the different age groups and abilities. The pupils responded very well, demonstrating their good reading skills when asked to join in, for example, during a Years 1 and 2 literacy lesson using the 'Runaway Pizza' story. There is a structured home/school reading programme for the whole school. There are good opportunities during the day for all the pupils to read individually to a member of staff. All pupils are encouraged to read with parents and carers at home and this helps them to make progress. Homework is used well to support learning in this area.
48. Staff are working very hard to improve standards in writing. There has been an improvement in the achievement of all the pupils, including the boys who are responding to the wide range of stimulating activities provided to develop their skills. Factors that have been instrumental in raising achievement are:
  - Wider use of information and communication technology (ICT).
  - A wider range of collaborative writing activities.
  - Very good support from teaching assistants.
  - Interesting writing tasks set in all subjects.
  - Improvement in spelling due to good teaching of phonics and use of dictionaries.
  - Pupils' work celebrated in lessons, displays and booklets.
49. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making very good progress in lessons. For example, in story writing they develop their ideas, using increasingly rich vocabulary for descriptions and improving accuracy in their punctuation. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their writing skills well to write instructional and informative text. They are able to draft, revise and edit their own writing. Of the limited work seen, the older pupils demonstrated an ability to write imaginative stories and poems. The most able pupils can sustain ideas and use imagery to engage the reader and they use complex sentences to gain maximum effect. Punctuation is very good, spelling is accurate and their handwriting is neat and legible.
50. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. The teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge, skills and understanding. They manage the teaching of the mixed age groups very well and cover all elements of the National Literacy Strategy. The teachers help

the pupils to develop their literacy skills through purposeful and interesting activities. Humour is often used to good effect, to which the pupils respond well. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and work hard. The depth and range of provision would not be possible without the very good support from the teaching assistants.

51. Subject leadership is excellent. The co-ordinator has a very clear view of what needs to be improved. English is a very high priority in the school with the teaching of writing and spelling currently of the highest priority. This is having a positive impact on learning. There is very good planning, assessment, target setting and record keeping with continuity throughout the school. The subject leader is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic, determined for the children to succeed. Relationships are very good and all the staff are fully aware of their roles and share the same vision with regards to improving standards.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

52. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. Some of the best work was in a science lesson when the staff placed great emphasis on the pupils using the correct scientific vocabulary to describe changes to materials. A geography lesson for Years 3 and 4 provided a good opportunity for the pupils to use their reference skills. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to promote language and literacy skills. The Years 3 to 6 teacher used a data projector very effectively during shared reading and text level work. The pupils use computers with confidence, especially when using the word processor for writing.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- High quality teaching and learning and pupils make very good progress.
- Very good use is made of assessment.
- Support staff make a very good contribution.
- Very effective use is made of information and communication technology to support learning.

#### **Commentary**

53. Judgements are not made about standards seen during the inspection because of the very small size of the year groups. Work was scrutinised and judgements were made from this and from pupils' records and targets about the progress pupils were making and how well they were achieving.
54. The quality of teaching is now better than it was at the time of the last inspection and this has had an effect on the progress that pupils have been making over time. Teaching is now very good, pupils are making very good progress and are achieving very well. Teachers and support staff show great skill and commitment in the way they plan for the needs of the pupils in their two classes. There is a wide range of age and ability and the school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
55. The advantage that the staff have is that they have a very favourable adult pupil ratio and because pupils are in the same class for either three or four years. Staff are able to know them both as people and pupils to a far greater depth than is normally seen. The progress and achievement for pupils are charted very well and so challenging work can be very effectively targeted to small groups or to individual pupils. This means that pupils in the Years 3-6 class are, where appropriate, working with fractions, decimals and percentages and are handling and representing data. They understand ratio, plot points in four quadrants and understand

basic aspects of probability. Very good arrangements are made for pupils who have special educational needs.

56. Teachers are successful because relationships within the school in general, are excellent and this is true in this instance as well. The teaching of mathematics is challenging and also exciting and staff make their enthusiasm for the subject clear to the pupils. Teaching has many strengths and those that were noted in the two lessons that were observed are also evident in pupils' written work. Homework is effectively used to consolidate skills and knowledge and to provide useful assessment of progress. Because assessment is so good it is possible to set individual targets and to review them regularly.
57. Teachers make effective use of technology in support of the way they teach and in the way pupils can respond. Data presentation is the most obvious form of this. Teaching across a wide age and ability range means that teachers have to group pupils and provide support and it is in this respect that the contribution of classroom assistants is very important. The support is carefully planned and everyone knows what they have to do. Classroom assistants are very good at enabling the teacher to manage classes with such wide variations and without them the task would be made much more difficult and much less effective.
58. Pupils openly admit that they enjoy mathematics. The structure of the National Numeracy Strategy is well embedded and suits the pupils well. They enjoy the challenge of the mental/oral sessions and equally well enjoy the opportunities to review what they have learned and to see where it is going next. The main part of the session gives them the opportunity, in many cases to handle mathematics in a practical way and to develop interpersonal skills in the ways in which they interact with either a partner or their group. Pupils are keenly interested and are enthusiastic about taking part. They are eager to show and talk about their work and take justifiable pride in their achievements. All concerned enjoy teaching and learning about the subject.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. Mathematics makes a significant contribution to other areas of the curriculum not least in science where, in conjunction with very effective use of information and communication technology, data handling skills can be effectively employed and consolidated. Pattern and rhythm are also elements drawn out in art and music. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development not only in the way that the magic of mathematics is revealed but in the opportunities that working with the subject afford for cooperation and healthy competition.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

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

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Pupils are making very good progress.
- The subject makes very good use of technology.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject.

#### **Commentary**

60. Pupils' work was scrutinised across the entire school but because of the very small numbers in each year it is not possible to comment overall on standards reached nor to draw conclusions from differences in levels of attainment amongst different year groups. Reporting therefore concentrates on pupils' progress and achievement.

61. In lessons, pupils were given the opportunity to investigate the effects of forces on malleable materials, on the effect of friction and on the gravitational effect on mass. Both lessons were very successful as they allowed pupils to experiment. This approach to teaching indicates an awareness that information can be absorbed in different ways. All the activities were carefully planned and supported so that no opportunities to develop learning were lost.
62. Because of the hands on nature of the tasks pupils were enthusiastic and engaged in speculation as to what might happen if variables were introduced. Along the way the need to ensure that testing was fair was effectively reinforced.
63. The lessons were also successful because they had been very effectively planned. The support that classroom assistants gave was essential to the achievement of the learning objectives for each group and the plenary sessions showed how well these objectives had been met. Teachers have very good knowledge of their pupils' levels of attainment and teaching benefits from the very favourable adult/pupil ratio and the fact that pupils remain with the same teacher for either three or four years depending upon which class they are in.
64. The school makes very impressive use of technology. Pupils were encouraged to make a spreadsheet of data they had found and then were able to turn it into graph form. In order to personalise this work further the most able used several other software aspects drawing, cutting, pasting and filling to make the finished article very attractive. At the same time, others in the class were using the Internet to discover information about the moon and its gravity. This again resulted in a set of very well produced information sheets with titles, text and images all well laid out.
65. In the Years 3-6 lesson the teacher made good use of the interactive white board both during the presentation aspect of the lesson and the subsequent use of 'Blockbusters' software for part of the plenary. Teaching is effective because pupils have challenges that are interesting and appropriately presented to them. They want to learn and show high levels of maturity in so doing. They work well singly, in pairs or in groups always treating equipment with care as well as being aware of health and safety issues.
66. The subject is very well managed and resources are good. There are very effective systems in place to track and predict pupils' progress and these attest to the very good levels of achievement that pupils show. There has been a good improvement since the time of the last inspection in attitudes to learning and the quality of teaching.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The co-ordinator provides excellent leadership.
- Homework is used very effectively to support learning.
- There has been a noticeable improvement in provision for ICT.
- Achievement is very good.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic when involved in activities associated with ICT.
- The range of resources available to pupils and staff is very good.
- Very good teaching and technical support are provided by the local high school.

### **Commentary**

67. Since the last inspection, provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly. At that time the provision was satisfactory. However, since then much

has happened to help the school to move on. The quality and quantity of resources have improved significantly; a class set of laptops and a suite of computers linked to the Internet are available for use in one classroom. This has resulted in the school being able to use the computers to develop computer skills and support learning in all curriculum areas. Very good and effective plans have been put into place to develop the subject appropriately.

68. The pupils are acquiring very good computer skills throughout the school. The pupils in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 are taught on a weekly basis by the ICT co-ordinator. Consequently all the children use the computers confidently and competently. Word-processing skills are very good and used to support learning in other subjects. For example, when researching on the Internet, a Year 3 pupil was able to cut and paste information to create a new document with speed and accuracy. The Years 5 and 6 pupils have a very good understanding of how to create databases and set up spreadsheets, using them to collate and evaluate information. The pupils use graphics and power point presentations using sound or music with confidence.
69. Teaching is very good. Lessons are well prepared by the teachers so that the pupils can develop their skills and learn effectively. Very good classroom management ensures the pupils remain on task, with very good support provided by the teaching assistants. The pupils can work independently on the computers. However, they also support each other well when working collaboratively.
70. The leadership of ICT in the school is excellent. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge, skills and much enthusiasm, motivating all members of the school community to extend their knowledge and skills, for example, by providing a very popular evening course for members of the local community.

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

71. There is very good use made of ICT across many subjects. Literacy in particular benefits with pupils using a wide range of programs designed to improve spelling, punctuation and reading. The pupils also use word-processing when writing and logo in mathematics. In science, Excel spreadsheets are used to prepare graphs that are then very impressively customised using a range of techniques. The pupils access information from the Internet to support science, geography and history.

### **HUMANITIES**

*In humanities, work was sampled in history and geography, with only one lesson seen in geography. Therefore it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.*

72. The evidence suggests that achievement in **history** is at least good. The teachers provide the pupils with a wide range of activities to enhance learning, including visits to places of historical interest and producing individual booklets for each period they have studied. The work produced is of a high standard and shows that pupils are achieving well. During a discussion with pupils from Years 5 and 6 they demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the periods of history they had studied. For example, a Year 5 pupil had good recall of facts about the Tudors as a result of a school visit to a Tudor mansion. From this discussion it is obvious that pupils enjoy history.
73. In the one **geography** lesson that was seen the pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieved very well. The teaching was very good, with valuable support from teaching assistants. The pupils demonstrated an ability to use the Internet and reference books to find facts about the island of St Lucia. The pupils were highly motivated with this project, as many had completed research at home prior to the lesson. The pupils are aware of the physical and human features of the island, making comparisons with their own locality. It is clear that a range of visits plays an important part in making geography work interesting and relevant. For example, when the

whole school visited their urban link school in Blackburn they undertook activities to develop their understanding of how that locality differed from theirs.

74. It was not possible to speak to the history co-ordinator, a part time member of staff. However, the geography co-ordinator leads this subject very well; she has a positive impact on provision. There has been an improvement in both subjects since the last inspection.

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

### **Design and technology (DT)**

*Art and design, music and physical education were not foci for the inspection so it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision or standards and achievement.*

75. Only one lesson was seen in design and technology. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about provision, although limited evidence indicates that it is at least good. In addition to observing the one lesson, the inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work and the pupils about what they had learnt. They also looked at pupils' work.
76. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator is taking part in a local authority small school initiative to produce policies and teaching material. The new scheme, which provides continuity and progression for the whole school, has been introduced.
77. In the one lesson seen and from a scrutiny of pupils' work the children are achieving well in design and technology. They are developing a wide range of techniques and skills in this subject. For example, in a lesson with the younger pupils they had the opportunity to devise simple mechanisms to create movement. The pupils responded to the challenge well. The older pupils demonstrated an ability to design and create structures when making Caribbean hats in an art lesson.
78. Design and technology is linked to other subjects. After listening to the Runaway Pizza story in literacy the Reception children designed and made their own pizzas. Pupils can design and make their own models and incorporate the use of control technology into the process.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**. The pupils are developing into mature, caring and responsible young people.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school ethos has a very positive effect on pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- There are very good relationships throughout the school.
- Many opportunities are provided both during and outside the school day to develop this area of learning.
- The school is taking part in the Healthy School Initiative and holds healthy living weeks.
- Visitors to the school support this area of learning very well.

### **Commentary**

79. The school ethos ensures that all pupils are valued and show mutual respect. There is a very positive relationship between pupils and adults. There is much mutual trust and respect. The teachers make every effort to ensure the work of the youngest pupils in each class is valued. For example, in a literacy lesson the teacher celebrated the achievements of the Reception pupils to good effect. Pupils are confident when offering opinions and know others value theirs. In all lessons seen the pupils listened with respect to the other children and worked well



collaboratively. The older pupils take on extra responsibilities and show a strong sense of maturity. They find it easy to discuss topics with each other and adults.

80. With extra funding from an initiative for small schools they have introduced a carefully planned programme of work organised to provide pupils with continuous development in this area. They have also used the funding to appoint a specialist teacher on a part-time basis to take the pupils for circle time and develop their sense of responsibility and self-esteem. The school nurse provides support with sex education. The circle time, sex and drugs education within the science curriculum as well as the healthy living scheme provide a full range of activities for the pupils. The links with Blackburn and Bloemfontein and the fund-raising for charities including the community of Bloemfontein, help the pupils to become responsible citizens. The headteacher places a very high priority on pupils being involved in community life and has developed opportunities to make links with parents, the community and the local cluster of schools.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>0</b>
Pupils' achievement	2

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	2

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