

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MORECAMBE BAY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Morecambe

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119135

Headteacher: Mrs S Collingwood

Lead inspector: Dr Brian Male

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005

Inspection number: 267346

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	353
School address:	Station Road Morecambe Lancashire
Postcode:	LA4 5JL
Telephone number:	01524 401002
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs T Metcalfe
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This large urban community primary school takes pupils from three to eleven years old, and is maintained by the Lancashire Local Education Authority. At the time of the inspection there were 333 full-time pupils in 14 classes, and a further 40 children attended the nursery on a part-time basis. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average, and the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also well above average. A very high number of 'transient' pupils joins and leaves the school part way through each year. Standards of attainment are generally well below average when children start at the school. The school has been successful in achieving various national awards: Schools Achievement Award 2000 and the Healthy Schools award in 2004. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was relatively new to the school.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
14806	Dr Brian Male	Lead inspector	English History Geography Design and technology
19419	Mrs Sue Boyle	Lay inspector	
6282	Mrs Parveen Raja	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Religious education
30651	Mrs Margaret Entwistle	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education
32686	Mrs Niki Elliot	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** and improving school with many very good features. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has created an exceptionally clear educational direction and a climate of continuing improvement for the school. Supported by an enthusiastic and very capable deputy and a very committed staff, she has accomplished a great deal in a relatively short time. Behaviour and attitudes have been improved, teaching is more effective and so standards are rising. The very positive ethos and very supportive approach ensure that pupils are very well cared for. Leadership and management are good overall, and the school provides **good value for money**.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteachers' excellent leadership and commitment of the staff underpin the many recent improvements in the school
- Teaching is good and often very good, and many new approaches are raising standards
- The school provides a very supportive community where pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and needs are looked after and supported very well indeed
- The school does very well to manage a number of pupils with significant special needs
- Although standards are below the national average at the end of Year 6, they are rising, and pupils achieve well overall taking account of their very low starting point, and achieve very well in information and communication technology (ICT)
- A very positive and practical approach in lessons engages pupils very well in their learning
- There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development
- Very good links with the community enhance the curriculum
- The school's assessment and tracking information is not always used sufficiently precisely in planning lessons to meet the needs of the different groups of pupils in each class
- The many recent innovations have improved the quality of provision and need to be monitored closely to ensure that they continue to impact positively on standards of attainment
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection, but is still well below average and lowers standards for those pupils with poor attendance

The school has made good progress since the time of the previous inspection. Standards of attainment have risen and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are better. The quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership and management have been improved. All of the key issues have been successfully addressed.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	D	E	E
Mathematics	E	E	E	D
Science	E*	E	E	E

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E\* – lowest 5 per cent*

*Similar schools are those where a similar proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals.*

**Pupils' achievement is good overall** and standards are higher than in previous years. Standards found in school are higher than national test scores suggest, mainly because many pupils, especially those newly arrived, lack confidence in test situations. Standards in English and science in Year 6 this year are below the national average whilst standards in mathematics continue to be well below average. These standards are higher than in previous years. Standards in Year 2 are well below the national average in science, and below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is also an

improvement, particularly in mathematics. Standards in ICT have improved significantly since the previous inspection and pupils now achieve very well. Children make good progress through the nursery and reception classes, and achieve well.

Many pupils start in the nursery with very low standards of attainment, so the overall standards found by the inspection represent good achievement for the pupils. Achievement is particularly good taking account of the high number of transient pupils, and those with special educational needs.

**Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Most pupils have very positive attitudes to school and are keen to take part in lessons, especially where these are practical. Behaviour is generally good, although there has been a high rate of exclusion in the past. This is because there is a small number of pupils who have personal problems who can be difficult to manage at times, and whose attitudes and behaviour are not always positive. The school does very well with these pupils, and its positive and supportive approach is having marked success. As a result, the rate of exclusion has fallen significantly, and standards of attainment are rising. The great majority of pupils are very polite, considerate and friendly. Relationships are mainly very good. The rate of attendance is well below average, but the school is working well with a range of families to improve this situation.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good overall. The quality of teaching is good and often very good.** Recent developments have improved the quality of teaching and this is beginning to raise standards. Teachers work very hard and care for their pupils as individuals, and this underpins pupils' positive approach to learning. In the best lessons, teachers involve pupils in an exciting range of practical activities that keep them well engaged and promote good understanding. The overall level of challenge is generally good but some lessons do not make sufficiently precise use of assessment information to target learning to different groups. Teaching assistants provide good support for learning.

There is a broad curriculum enhanced by a good programme of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is very successful in providing pupils with a rich variety of experiences that extend their understanding and keep them interested. There are very good support and guidance for pupils' welfare, and the school copes very well with a fairly high number of pupils coming and going each year. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school's partnership with the community is very good, and enhances learning. The school is well staffed with teachers and support assistants. The accommodation is extensive, but the outside grassed area is rather small for games, and the reception classes do not have direct access to the outside area. Teaching and learning resources are generally good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good overall.** The relatively new headteacher provides excellent leadership, and her exceptionally clear educational direction has created a strong sense of purpose. There has been some very good work within staff groups to develop teaching techniques and introduce new approaches. These now need to be monitored rigorously. Subject and phase co-ordinators provide good leadership. The governors have a good overview of the school, and make an effective contribution to its development. The school is managed effectively.

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

Parents are pleased with the school's provision, but few are active in their support despite the school's efforts. Pupils are very positive about the school, and the school takes good steps to ensure that pupils' views are sought and acted upon.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

In order to raise standards of attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and to build on the already good provision, the next steps for the school are to ensure that:

- precise use is made of assessment and tracking information available to plan lessons that meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils within each class
- new developments are monitored rigorously to ensure that they continue to impact positively on standards of attainment
- the rate of attendance improves

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards by the end of Year 6 are generally below the national average, but this is an improvement over previous years, and standards are rising.

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

- Pupils make good progress across the school and standards of attainment are rising
- The school's very supportive approach enables pupils with a wide range of special needs to achieve well
- Standards of work in school are higher than the national test scores suggest
- Standards in ICT have improved significantly and achievement is now very good
- Standards in science are not as high as those in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2
- Standards in mathematics are not as high as those in English and science by the end of Year 6; however, new initiatives are raising these standards significantly

#### **Commentary**

1. Overall standards by the end of Year 6 are generally below the national average, but represent good overall achievement because most children start with very low standards. Standards are also affected by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the many pupils who spend only a short time in the school, and the poor attendance of a number of pupils. Standards of attainment are rising in the school, mainly as a result of a range of new initiatives to sharpen teaching and improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Overall standards of work in class are higher than the scores in national tests suggest. This is because a number of pupils, especially those newly arrived in school and those who lack confidence, do not perform well in test situations.
2. The overall improvement means that standards at the end of the reception year and at the end of Year 2 are higher than in previous years. Present Year 6 pupils did not attain these levels when they were in those years, so their progress through Years 1 to 6 has been good.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.8 (25.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	23.5 (24.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	25.3 (26.5)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 64 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Inspection evidence indicates that current standards by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are higher than in 2004. Standards are below the national average in English and science, and although still well below average in mathematics, they have risen. The school has introduced some very effective measures to raise standards in mathematics, but there has not been time for these to impact on the older pupils as they had a great deal of catching up to do. Standards in ICT have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now slightly below average at the end of Year 6 and represent very good achievement. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. It was not possible to make overall judgements of standards in other subjects.

### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	11.7 (11.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.3 (11.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	13.5 (12.2)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Inspection evidence suggests that current standards in Year 2 are similar to those in 2004 in reading and writing, and higher in mathematics. The school's very effective focus on mathematics this year has been very successful in raising standards. Standards are well below the national average in science, and below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in science are well below the national average. This is because most pupils attain the expected level, but the focus of lessons does not allow the expected number of pupils to attain the higher level (Level 3). Standards in ICT are generally in line with the national average and represent very good achievement. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. It was not possible to make overall judgements of standards in other subjects.
5. Children make good overall progress through the nursery and reception classes, and very good progress in personal development. As many start with very low standards, attainment is still below average by the time they enter Year 1, but this represents good achievement. The good achievement results from the good quality of the teaching and the very supportive ethos that enables children to grow in confidence and settle into school well.
6. A significant number of pupils join the school part way through each year. This inevitably disrupts their education and means that they miss parts of the course being followed by other children in the school. The school's very supportive ethos ensures that these pupils settle quickly and a focus on their particular needs ensures that they make good progress in terms of their starting point. However, their overall attainment is lower than those who move right through the school, and this lowers the school's overall standards as measured by national tests.
7. There are a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Support for these pupils is good throughout the school and enables them to achieve well. The very supportive ethos of the school is very important in raising these pupils' self-confidence and giving them the belief that they can succeed. Good teaching within lessons and good support from teaching assistants is also very influential.
8. Overall standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The rate of attendance is well below average, but higher than at the time of the previous inspection
- Attitudes and behaviour are often very good
- Pupils are polite and friendly, and relationships are mostly very good.
- The school has created a very effective climate for learning
- Playtimes are particularly well managed

## Commentary

9. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils like school and enjoy their lessons. This is because they feel well supported, and most lessons are interesting and fun. As a result, most pupils work hard and behave very well. Pupils' behave extremely well as they move around the school, which is commendable given the narrow staircases. However, there are a significant number of pupils who have behavioural special needs. Whilst these pupils are generally managed very well, they can be poorly behaved at times and occasionally make it difficult for other pupils to concentrate in lessons. It is these pupils who have accounted for the very high exclusion rates. The school has been very successful in improving behaviour and reducing exclusion by a clear framework for behaviour within a very supportive ethos. As a result, the number of exclusions has recently fallen significantly. The school's involvement in a range of projects such as the 'Behaviour and Attendance Pilot' (BAP) has been very successful because they are part of a coherent overall positive approach at the basis of which is the raising of pupils' self-esteem. The table below represents eleven pupils excluded a number of times each in the year before the inspection. This had been reduced to two occasions only in the term of the inspection.

## 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	367	56	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

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

10. The school has been particularly successful at improving behaviour at playtimes by improving the quality of provision of games and other activities. The impact of this has been significant and pupils play particularly well with each other. It also means that because pupils have enjoyed their play they come into lessons happy and willing to work. The improvements to playtimes, the school ethos and very good relationships have created a climate in which bullying is unusual and there is very good racial harmony. However, if bullying does occur it is taken very seriously and dealt with well.
11. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Pupils are valued as individuals and this helps them to understand themselves and their place in the world. They are encouraged to respect and value others. Pupils show this in the way in which they relate to others in their work and play. The school sets very clear expectations for how pupils should behave and this promotes pupils' moral development very well. Music and art and design are a strong element of school life and give pupils good opportunities to perform, and to take part in local events. The emphasis on local culture supports pupils' personal development well. There are some good examples of pupils learning about and broadening their experiences of other cultures but generally multicultural education is not well developed. Overall, provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
12. Pupils are encouraged to help with school tasks and in this they are sensible and responsible. However, there is scope to give pupils more independence in the day-to-day routines, and opportunities to show that they can be self-disciplined and take responsibility.

13. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, and has had some good success particularly with those pupils whose attendance is very low. However, there is still a large group of pupils whose families do not do all they can to ensure that they attend. The school has identified this group and has plans to work with these families to encourage their attendance. Attendance rates have a detrimental effect on the standards the pupils attain.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	School data	0.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days 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 good. Teaching and learning are good overall, and often very good. The curriculum is good overall and extra-curricular activities are very good. There is good support and guidance for pupils, and the very good partnership with parents and the community contributes to learning.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good overall, and are often very good. Assessment is satisfactory overall and improving.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils learn very well in lessons that provide high challenge and first-hand practical activities
- There are some particularly effective techniques for making ideas and concepts clear to pupils
- There is a good range of strategies to engage pupils in lessons and deepen their understanding
- Many lessons engender a sense of excitement
- Assessment is used effectively in the nursery and reception classes but is not always used precisely elsewhere to plan activities for different groups

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching and learning observed during the inspection in 60 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	16 (27%)	27 (45%)	15 (25%)	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.*

14. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is good overall in the nursery and reception classes where children make a good start to their education and achieve well. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are very good in English, good in mathematics, ICT and religious education, and satisfactory in science. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good in English, mathematics, science, religious education and ICT. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons to make judgements in other subjects.

15. Assessment is being used effectively in the nursery and reception classes to identify the key skills and concepts needed by different groups of children so that teaching is well focused. In the rest of the school, good assessments are being made in English and mathematics that allow levels of attainment to be recorded precisely and progress to be tracked. Assessments in other subjects are neither so regular nor so precise. In English and mathematics, the assessment information is used well to identify groups of pupils within classes who are at different stages of

attainment. At the moment, some lessons do not make precise use of this information in planning activities for different groups, and the information in subjects other than English and mathematics is not always sufficiently precise to allow this to happen.

16. Where teaching is best, the level of challenge for pupils is high and pupils are engaged in first-hand practical activities that engage their interest and promote learning. For example, in a very good Year 1 English lesson, pupils played a card game in which they changed places if the object on their cards had a particular word ending. This was a very enjoyable but challenging way of learning phonetics. A very good nursery class lesson involve children pretending to walk through a jungle whilst introduced to a range of new vocabulary such as 'crunching' and 'scampering' that they were able to learn in context. A very good Year 3 mathematics lesson used a variety of shapes and colours to enable pupils to work together to learn about Venn diagrams. In a very good reception class lesson the study of real snails, spiders and fish was very effective in deepening understanding and helping develop a respect for nature. All of these lessons challenged the pupils and involved them in practical activities.
17. Teachers use a good range of strategies to engage pupils in the lesson and to deepen their understanding. For example, very effective use is made of 'talking partners' where pupils discuss issues and ideas with a fellow pupil. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils acted out parts from their reading book before turning the dialogue into a play script. This was not only very enjoyable, but also enabled pupils to understand the requirements of the script. These techniques, alongside others such as 'hot-seating' where pupils answer questions in the role of a particular character, and group discussions, are also effective in helping to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
18. Some lessons have particularly effective techniques for making ideas and concepts clear to pupils – for example, the excellent series of Year 2 English lessons described below:

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

Year 2 pupils were given information books with the covers, contents and index pages removed, and had to make up their own. The books selected did not have chapter headings. The first task was to divide up the contents into chapters, a very challenging task for this age group. The pupils put 'post-it' notes where they thought each chapter started and allocated an appropriate name. They also put on the 'post-it' the page number where each chapter started. The 'post-its' were then collected and set out in numerical order to become the content page. By re-arranging the 'post-its' in alphabetical order, the pupils constructed their own index. They then went through the book writing down words they did not understand and looked them up in the dictionary. This became the glossary. By this time, they were able to suggest an overall title for the book and write a suitable 'blurb' for the back. A simple but extremely effective method of introducing these aspects of a book to these young pupils.

19. A factor that makes so many lessons successful is the sense of excitement engendered. For example, a series of Year 5 lessons was centred around a 'Greek Day' linked to the history topic. The dressing-up, drama and Greek food were all very exciting and enthused the pupils. The theme was incorporated into very good English lessons through drama, art lessons through pottery making, and mathematics lessons through calculating the amounts needed for the meal. These are exactly the sort of activities that motivate these pupils and help them to learn. Year 4 pupils were equally engaged in the design and technology task of making model chairs. This was helped by the blocked timetable which enabled pupils to complete the task within a week.
20. Classroom management is generally good, and some potentially challenging pupils are managed very effectively and with sensitivity. This management is so effective because the approach is positive and focused on raising pupils' self-esteem.
21. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good support and achieve well. This is because class teachers have a good understanding of the learning requirements of these pupils and ensure that work is well matched to their attainment. In addition, teaching assistants work well and offer extra support to ensure that the individual pupils' needs are met effectively. Where

pupils are withdrawn from the class for extra support, the quality of the teaching is good, but the programme followed is sometimes quite different from the work in class and so create problems in one area whilst providing good support in another. This is most marked where pupils are withdrawn for support with personal development.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced, and is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities and by very good links with the community
- Teachers do everything they can to make sure that the many pupils who come and go from the school during the year can take part fully
- Flexible approaches to timetabling are leading to creative ways of linking subjects and managing curriculum time, but need further development
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- The reception classes do not have direct access to the outside area, and the outdoor grassed area is rather small for games and physical education

### **Commentary**

22. The school has improved its curriculum since the time of the last inspection, putting right the deficit in ICT provision. It now very firmly meets its commitment to providing a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum for its pupils. The recent blocking of curriculum time for history, geography, art and design, and design and technology helps teachers to expect a good standard of work because of the continuity it provides. For instance, during the inspection week, Year 4 pupils were able to return to their 'Chairs' project each day over the week, building upon successes and mistakes of the previous day with an immediacy that kept motivation and skill levels high. Year 5 pupils held a delightful 'Greek Day' as part of their history topic that involved drama, poetry, dance, weighing and measuring and cooking to prepare a Greek feast, as well as developing a host of personal and social skills.
23. The school manages the relatively high number of pupils who come and go from the school during the year very well. Because teachers and assistants assess their needs immediately, and nurture them carefully, new pupils are able to settle to school and join in activities as willingly as most other pupils. Teachers and assistants are sensitive to changing home circumstances, and respond very positively.
24. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good within classes and the extra support provided enables all pupils to participate fully in all parts of the curriculum. This has a significant positive impact on progress. When pupils are withdrawn for extra support, the curriculum they follow is not always continuous with the one in class. Whilst this is sometimes necessary in order to meet particular needs, it does lead to pupils missing parts of lessons and the curriculum that are important to them.
25. The curriculum is enriched by a good number of extra-curricular clubs and activities that are managed very effectively by the deputy headteacher. The school is recognised locally as being a key participant in local competitions and artistic events: "We never miss an event, we go to everything"! This helps to build up strong links with other schools, most especially with the two local high schools, so that transition procedures are good between the end of Year 6 and Year 7.
26. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. As well as sport, there is, for example, a computer club, a story club, a choir and a very active Samba club for which there is a waiting list. These make a very significant contribution to pupils' positive attitudes to school. The school reaches out to give its pupils every chance to join in community events, so that partnership with

the community is very good. Pupils join in a surprising range of local events. Musical events make a very strong contribution to this aspect of school life, but participation goes well beyond this. Pupils take part in library competitions, annual celebrations and are part of a local Junior Warden Scheme to reduce litter in the town.

27. Accommodation is extensive, but the outside grassed area is rather small for games, and the reception classes do not have direct access to the outside area. Teaching and learning resources are generally good, much enhanced by the recent acquisition of interactive whiteboards for a good number of classrooms. The library is very welcoming but has a rather limited stock of books. The school is well staffed with teachers and support teachers, who make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning.

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

The care, welfare, health and safety for pupils are very good. Support, advice and guidance are very good. Pupils' involvement in the work and developments of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is very caring and very committed to pupils' well-being
- Pupils feel very well supported by adults in the school
- The school works very well with outside agencies to provide very good personal support for pupils
- Arrangements for pupils entering the school other than at the normal time are very good

### **Commentary**

28. The school has improved its provision in this area since the previous inspection. Arrangements for health and safety are very thorough, and first aid procedures well understood. Fire drills are held routinely and there is good attention to risk. Child protection procedures are very well established and very effective. Pupils are confident that if they have a worry they can go to an adult and that they will be listened to. This means that concerns are picked up quickly, and pupils feel well supported.
29. The school's provision for pupils' personal development through the BAP programme, although still at a relatively early stage, is developing very well, and is already having a significant impact on pupils' behaviour and on relationships. This is an important part of the school's overall strategic approach to supporting pupils and raising self-esteem as an essential step toward raising standards of attainment. This positive approach and commitment to the pupils' well-being underpin the school's very supportive ethos.
30. The school works very well indeed with a wide range of outside agencies to co-ordinate support for pupils and their families. This enables support to be well focused and well co-ordinated. The provision of support within the positive ethos is an important factor in the rising standards.
31. The high numbers of transient pupils who join the school part way through each school year are monitored very closely and given sensitive help and support. These pupils often find the change very difficult because of circumstances which are outside the school. The home-school worker works with these families to ensure that they get the help they need. Induction for children entering the nursery and reception classes is good and this helps children to feel secure and to settle into school.
32. Pupils are regularly consulted, and through the school council all pupils can have a say in what happens in school. The council has been influential in the new arrangements for playtimes and is currently helping to plan the refurbishment of the toilets. However, there is less scope for pupils to be involved in decisions about their learning.

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

The schools links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community are very good. Links with other schools are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school draws very well on the community to support the curriculum
- Links with other schools are developing very well
- Parents do not play a full or active part in the life of the school or in learning

### **Commentary**

33. The school's satisfactory partnership with parents is similar to that found by the previous inspection, whilst its partnership with the community is much more extensive.
34. The school regularly consults parents through questionnaires and sends out a regular newsletter that is informative and keeps parents in touch with what is happening in school. A good number of parents come to special events and performances. However, although there are frequent opportunities for parents to find out about the progress their child has made through parent-teacher consultation evenings, relatively few parents use the opportunities provided. The school's follow-up of those parents not attending is informal and is not always successful in ensuring that appropriate contact is kept. Pupils' annual reports are rather wordy and are not always clear about the progress pupils have made. A small number of parents are very keen to support the school and help in various ways such as supporting the 'walking bus'.
35. The school's provision for the wider community consists mainly of courses for parents. It has offered a good range of these courses, but they have not been well attended. However, a recent literacy course, run with the support of a local college, has attracted a small but committed group who successfully completed the course.
36. The school has developed very good and productive links with a variety of agencies ranging from health to education. These links support the curriculum and pupils' personal development. It is keen to involve parents in curricular initiatives and is working with these agencies to educate and encourage parents' involvement in the curriculum; an example is the planned health week. It works well with the local neighbourhood management team, encouraging pupils to feel responsible for their community. The school participates in local events and festivals and this supports pupils' personal development very well.
37. Links with business are well established and used particularly well to enhance the curriculum for older pupils. Other links, such as that with a local church, help to bring the curriculum alive and again effectively support pupils' personal development.
38. The school is working well with the high schools to share expertise and to develop the curriculum. Transfer arrangements for pupils have been particularly well thought out, with units of work that pupils start in the primary school and continue with at high school. These units have been developed by the school and are also being used by other local schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school. The school is well managed. The governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides an exceptionally clear educational direction and sense of purpose
- The school has a very good commitment to improvement and innovation
- Very effective teams have been created to develop teaching and learning
- The many new developments need to be monitored rigorously to ensure that they continue to impact positively on attainment
- The emphasis on paperwork in the present role of the special educational needs co-ordinator reduces her ability to support class teachers

## Commentary

39. The headteacher had been in school for only two terms at the time of the inspection but had already made a significant impact. The exceptionally clear educational direction that she has set, the sense of purpose she has engendered, the working with a range of support agencies and the successful pursuit of specific goals have been outstanding. A particular strength of her leadership is the way in which the range of new initiatives complements each other and all contribute to the overall strategic direction. The major impact has been on the approach to behaviour management. Through the very positive approach, exclusions have now fallen and pupils are now well motivated to learn. The learning teams created have been very effective in developing practice such as talking partners and assessment for learning. The impact has been made possible by the energetic support of the deputy head and the commitment of staff.
40. A particularly positive aspect of the leadership is the way staff work together within a leadership team. Subject and phase leaders lead their subjects well. The senior management team works well, both in helping shape the overall direction and in maintaining an overview of the school. The learning teams are a very effective aspect of the way leadership is organised.
41. There is a very positive approach to staff development clearly linked to an analysis of needs and the school's priorities. This is greatly enhanced by the development teams within the staff that take new developments forward. Performance management is used effectively to set and track targets.
42. The management of the school is good. There are good systems for tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics and precise information is gathered about levels of attainment. The next step for the school is to extend this information to science and other subjects and to ensure that the information is used to plan learning for the different groups that have been identified within each class.
43. The SENCO works very hard and has a great deal of experience in the area of special needs. However, her present role requires her to spend an unusually large amount of time on paperwork. She is very good at this, particularly in terms of the documentation required to obtain a 'statement of special needs' for pupils whose needs are greatest. However, the amount of time spent on this reduces her ability to support class teachers in providing the most effective programmes, approaches and materials for the pupils in their class. Some aspects of her role, such as the management of teaching assistants, also take extra time and detach teaching assistants from the phase teams that are central to the school's drive to raise standards.
44. The school's finances are managed well. The school has been particularly successful in drawing on a variety of funding for special projects, and these have impacted significantly on the quality of provision. The fact that the school has not been placed within an 'Excellence in Cities' cluster has reduced the funding available and also reduced access to some of the very programmes that would be most beneficial to the particular pupils in this school. The school has planned very well for the impact of reduced numbers of pupils over the coming year.

**Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,122,217	Balance from previous year	133,927
Total expenditure	1,166,491	Balance carried forward to the next	89,653
Expenditure per pupil	3085		

45. The governance of the school is good. The governing body has a good overview of the school, and has helped shape the vision for the future. It is aware of the school's strengths and needs. It ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

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

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

46. Children receive a good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes. Most children enter nursery with very low levels of attainment, particularly in language and skills, and this affects their overall attainment in other areas, particularly language and mathematical development. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is good. This is because children are taught well through a good range of stimulating and well-planned activities. Children therefore enjoy all areas of learning and work, and play with growing levels of concentration. Children with special educational needs receive good support with the result that they achieve well. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Good systems are in place to check and record children's progress. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The organisation of the curriculum into play-based areas, emphasis on role-play and addition of high quality resources for learning contributes effectively to a purposeful, exciting and vibrant learning environment. However, whilst there is satisfactory overall provision for outdoor play, the children in the reception classes do not have easy access to the outdoor areas. By the time children enter Year 1, standards overall in most of the areas of learning are below the expectations for this age, except in personal, social and emotional development as well as physical development where children make very good progress and reach the expected levels of attainment.

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

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

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

- Children feel secure and confident in trying out new ideas
- Very good relationships between children and adults underpin a very effective learning ethos
- Most children are well behaved and are keen to learn, even though they can concentrate for only short spells of time.

#### **Commentary**

47. This area of learning has a high profile. Children make very good progress as a result of very good teaching, and they achieve very well. Most of the children are well on course to meet the early learning goals with a significant minority below expectations. Children respond very well to the interesting, yet calm and ordered environment. In the nursery some of the youngest children, as a result of encouragement and very good opportunities for collaboration with others, learn to work and play very well together. Adults take every opportunity to encourage responsibility; for example, children are expected to give out snacks, dispose of milk cartons and clear up after activities. Children respond extremely well to the high expectations of conduct, effort and achievement as staff consistently support and encourage them with praise. Daily routines are used very well in the nursery and the reception classes to develop independence. Children understand the need to change activities and learn how to make independent choices. Their capacity to keep concentrating by themselves improves significantly over time. However, many still cannot maintain attention and concentrate for lengthy periods. Relationships are very positive throughout this phase and children have opportunity to develop effective working relationships with one another and the adults who work with them.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities for role-play contribute well to developing speaking and listening skills
- Most reception children have sufficient knowledge of letter sounds to enable them to read and write simple words

### **Commentary**

48. Most children achieve well but are unlikely to reach the goals expected for their age by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good and imaginative play is used very effectively to promote speaking and listening skills. Staff are skilled at initiating conversations and encourage children to use language in a range of contexts. However, sometimes they accept children's responses in single words and gestures and miss the opportunity to develop the habit of speaking in sentences. Listening to stories, playing games and singing rhymes are planned well so that children soon learn letter sounds and a few simple words. Through good direct teaching children are gradually learning to associate letters and sounds. Using this knowledge, the more able children learn to recognise simple words. There is a range of interesting and stimulating activities in both the nursery and reception classes, which promotes writing development well, but opportunities to extend more able children's writing are sometimes missed. The classrooms and other work areas are attractive places, particularly the hall, containing stimulating displays that reflect the importance of language through labels, notices, books and other printed materials.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good range of activities to develop children's mathematical understanding
- Stimulating resources engage children well in mathematical learning
- More able children are challenged and extend their learning well

### **Commentary**

49. Children achieve well, and by the time they enter Year 1, a few are attaining the early learning goals, but overall standards are below those expected for this age. A good range of interesting and attractive resources stimulates and focuses learning nicely; for example, remote controlled toys were used very effectively to develop the language for directions. The computer programs that children access through the interactive whiteboard give good support in reinforcing positional language. Very good relationships encourage them to learn enthusiastically through number songs and games. In the nursery and reception classes, every opportunity is used well to consolidate counting skills; for example, when in a line, during registration and at snack time, children count objects, the number present and how many take fruit or milk. There is a good focus on developing mathematical vocabulary, and children have secure number skills and knowledge and use them well in solving simple problems. The lower attaining children and those with special educational needs are supported well to access similar work but, on occasions, instructions and explanations are not so clear, which affects the pace of their learning.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good planning provides children with many opportunities to learn about the world around them

### **Commentary**

50. Teachers effectively plan a wide range of activities to encourage children to explore and find out for themselves, which helps children learn about the world around them and develop an appropriate vocabulary; for example, children extended their understanding of links between the past and present when examining a very old copy of the Bible and listening to the story of Noah's Ark. Children have appropriate access to computers, and a developing competence in their use. The nursery children create pictures with two and three colours using the 'colour-fill' program. They are encouraged to be inquisitive; for example, one nursery child was observed using a magnifying glass to look in more detail at leaves of a plant that children had grown. He was pleased to see the leaves in greater detail but was also intrigued by the fact that the magnifying glass made the leaf bigger. Designing and making skills and children's senses of time and places are developing well. Opportunities to extend children's knowledge and deepen their understanding are sometimes missed in the nursery and in the reception class with lower attaining children because adults do not always get round to all the groups or individual children engaged in different activities.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's skills develop quickly through many activities available each day in the classrooms
- The outdoor play area provides good opportunities for the nursery children, but opportunities for the children in the reception classes to work and play outside are limited

### **Commentary**

51. The children are well on course to meet the expected standard by the end of the reception year. The provision for children's physical skills is varied, stimulating and well organised and as a result their achievement is good overall. Children make good progress in using tools, such as brushes, crayons, pencils, scissors and spatulas with growing accuracy. Imaginative play with construction equipment provides good opportunities to develop co-ordination and manipulative skills. Teachers manage physical education lessons well and encourage children to extend ball skills. They demonstrate clearly, join in and sensitively involve all the children. The outdoor play facilities for the nursery children are used well for free energetic play. The reception children are given some timetabled sessions and also have some opportunities to use the equipment in the hall. However, access to outdoor facilities generally gives limited opportunities for development of physical skills through, for example, pushing, pulling and balancing on large equipment.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of different experiences is planned and well resourced
- Children make good progress in imaginative work and play

### **Commentary**

52. With good teaching and good levels of support, children achieve well, but are unlikely to reach the early learning goals. Children learn a good range of early printing, drawing and painting techniques; for example they paint self-portraits, mixing colours to match the tone of the skin. Children' skill development is good because they have access to daily activities such as paints, collage opportunities, and a variety of fabrics and artists' materials. Few reception children are yet at a point where they plan and create colourful two and three-dimensional pictures and artefacts without a lot of support, but they do work independently and can select their own materials when appropriate. Children's creative skills are developed further by the provision of a wide range of activities in the role-play areas. The 'Morecambe Bay Vets' in the reception class, the 'African Jungle' in the nursery and the 'Beachside Café' in the hall, all capture the children's interest and stimulate their imagination, which helps them to concentrate and play for longer periods. Conversations with adults in these activities are strengths of the teaching, expanding ideas, inventiveness and vocabulary. Children enjoy the opportunity to sing songs and rhymes and they respond enthusiastically.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall, and very good in Years 1 and 2
- There are some very good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills
- Some pupils do not spend enough time reading with an adult
- There are some extremely effective techniques for teaching younger pupils about books

### **Commentary**

53. Standards of attainment have improved since the previous inspection, and by the end of Year 6, standards are below the national average. These standards are higher than the school's scores in national tests in 2004. Standards are broadly similar in Year 2, but this is good achievement, taking account of the starting point of this particular year group and the number of pupils who have special educational needs. The supportive approach and focus on specific needs ensures that transient pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress.

54. The subject is well led and managed. There are good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress, and subject leaders have a good overview of the school.

### *Speaking and listening*

55. Standards of speaking and listening are generally well below those usually found, although a number of pupils are articulate and speak with facility. The teaching of these aspects is generally good, and there are some very good opportunities created for pupils to develop these skills. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson pupils worked in pairs to extemporise dialogue from their 'Kensuke's Island' reading book. Year 5 pupils made a video of themselves reading poetry and

then discussed how the reading could be improved. Particularly good use is made of talking partners in many classes to develop ideas, but also to improve speaking and listening skills. The next steps for the school are to extend the range of work for talking partners and to make more use of plenary sessions at the end of lessons for pupils to report what they have done and to question each other.

### *Reading*

56. Standards of reading are generally below the national average across the school. This is good achievement for the pupils taking account of their starting point. The teaching of reading is particularly good in Years 1 and 2 where pupils are heard reading individually and in groups. Elsewhere in the school there is less time allocated to these activities and many pupils read with an adult only once a week, which is not always sufficient for those at the lower stages. An exception is Year 5 where some very good arrangements enable pupils to read daily with an adult. This is having a very positive effect on their progress. There are some extremely effective techniques for teaching reading to younger pupils such as those mentioned in paragraphs 17 and 18 above, and some good use made of the literacy sessions with older pupils to look at the literary devices used by authors.

### *Writing*

57. Standards of writing are below average by the end of Year 6 but represent good achievement. However, a fairly high number of older pupils still have problems with some simple spellings and sentence structures. Knowledge of phonetics is generally good, and most mistakes are phonetically correct. The teaching of writing is generally good across the school, and there are some very good techniques in use, for example a very good Year 2 lesson where pupils turned statements into questions. Good opportunities are created for pupils to write in a variety of contexts and styles, such as letters, poems, accounts and stories. There are relatively few occasions on which pupils are asked to redraft and improve their writing in terms of its quality and clarity, rather than to correct errors.

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

58. There is good use of other subjects such as history to extend reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. The Year 5 Greek Day was a good example of this. Pupils make use of ICT and the Internet to find information, but relatively little to help them redraft and improve their work. There is also relatively little use of computer programs to help pupils with early reading and writing skills. The library is very welcoming but has relatively few books, and few classes make extensive use of this facility for independent research or browsing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Although standards in mathematics are well below the national average by the end of Year 6, they are rising and represent good achievement for the pupils
- Very effective liaison between the school and the numeracy consultant is having a strong impact upon achievement
- Recent innovations in teaching and learning are very well chosen for their benefit to numeracy lessons
- Teaching is good because pupils are actively engaged through practical tasks and activities, and so learn well
- Some lessons do not make sufficient use of assessment data to plan for the needs of different groups

## Commentary

59. Standards are beginning to improve, although they remain stubbornly well below average at the end of Year 6. Recent innovations have begun to lift attainment across the school, but it will take time to break the pattern of low results in national tests. This is partly because the oldest pupils have not had full benefit from the changes to mathematics teaching made during 2004 to 2005. Already, the work in books is looking better than test scores indicate. The school's good provision for transient pupils and those with special educational needs ensures that they achieve well.
60. The current Year 2 have achieved well since starting school, and an average proportion of pupils have reached the expected level, although few pupils achieve higher than this. The work of Year 6 pupils is well below average overall, but there are marked improvements to pupils' ability to solve practical mathematical problems, to understand shape and space better, and to carry out calculations accurately.
61. Pupils are presently benefiting from some exciting, lively teaching of mathematics. With advice from the school's numeracy consultant, the co-ordinators have analysed the test results from 2004 and selected key areas of weakness for the teachers to tackle across the school. Each year group has targets to meet by the end of the year, and a sure sign of success is that more pupils in each year group make at least the expected gains in understanding over the year. Problem solving has turned from a weakness into a strength. This is because teachers indirectly include the processes of problem solving within lessons on other aspects of numeracy, and use practical methods when possible. A good example is the way pupils in the lower set in Year 5 developed their understanding of how to break down a problem into its component parts whilst also learning how to estimate, measure and record capacity using decimal notation. The highly practical task consolidated their understanding at every turn. Sharper teaching of measures has improved this element across the school.
62. An interactive approach to learning, stimulating resources and a good pace in most lessons help pupils to concentrate in lessons and learn faster. A good example of this was in a lesson with Year 3 pupils. The teacher used the interactive whiteboard, classroom display, sets of shapes, pupil movement about the classroom, and carefully prepared sets of highly relevant data to build up understanding of the concept of a Carroll diagram. Good resources, a brisk pace, and the teacher's high level of questioning and instructional skill helped a lively class to work hard for the full lesson and succeed in their tasks. Teaching assistants give good and often very good support during lessons. Their work with lower attaining pupils helps them to learn the content at their own pace and level. Very good team work between teaching assistants and class teachers contributes to this effectiveness.
63. Several teachers are exploring the use of self-evaluation and ongoing assessment within lessons as a teaching tool. In these classes, the level of challenge is good for all groups of pupils in the class. In other classes, teachers may at times under-estimate the capabilities of the higher or even the lower achieving pupils. Feedback through marking is not consistent across the classes, so that pupils do not always know how well they are doing or how to make their work better.
64. Leadership and management of the subject are good, and poised to become even better as responsibility for co-ordination is taken up by one person. The subject leader has the knowledge, drive and initiative to implement further changes successfully, is an excellent role model and has the capacity to foster a productive team spirit within planning teams.
65. During the inspection, very little use was made of the computer to teach or practise mathematical skills. There is evidence in pupils' work of the use of ICT to produce graphs and charts, but there were no opportunities in lessons for pupils to choose ICT as their preferred way to solve a problem.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

66. Mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. It is used in history lessons, to measure ingredients for cooking, and in ICT lessons to construct graphs and charts or learn about measuring and turning through angles. There was also some use of mathematics in preparation for the Year 5 Greek Day. However, such opportunities are neither sufficiently regular nor widespread.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In Years 3 to 6, teaching is good and pupils achieve well, although standards are below average
- Lessons in Years 1 and 2 do not always stretch higher attaining pupils
- In most classes insufficient emphasis is given to develop scientific vocabulary and a formal reporting style for writing up investigations

### **Commentary**

67. Standards of attainment at Year 6 are below average and have improved since the 2004 national tests when they were well below average. Standards at Year 2 are well below average and have declined over the previous year when standards were below average. This is because there are a high number of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 2 cohort. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities and often better than their classmates in Years 1 and 2 because the school provides well for them.

68. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 have risen since the time of the last inspection. This is because the school has analysed test results and taken appropriate action to address the areas of weaknesses. Science is now a key priority, new resources have been added, and staff and the co-ordinators have been provided with training in teaching of investigations and experimental science. However, work is still not always well matched to the abilities of the higher attaining pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Too frequently they do the same work as pupils of average and lower ability. As a result higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

69. In most lessons teachers give good emphasis to learning through investigation. As a result, pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of the need to carry out a fair test in order to ensure meaningful results but skills in making predictions as a 'sensible guess' about outcomes and drawing conclusions are not as well developed. In discussions, most pupils struggle to explain their work and rarely use the appropriate scientific terms. A few Year 6 pupils found scientific vocabulary difficult to grasp and relied on simple everyday language when talking about their favourite experiments. All pupils recognise the importance of recording the results of investigations, but there is inconsistency in the way pupils do this in different classes and in the importance teachers attach to it. Moreover, the use of worksheets, particularly in Year 2, limits the opportunities for the pupils to record their work in individual ways and practise their literacy skills. There are also very limited opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to choose the method to record their findings or to write up their experiments, using their own ideas and skills acquired in numeracy and literacy. The best examples of recorded work were seen in the Year 5 pupils' workbooks.

70. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons generally capture the pupils' interest and most pupils work with motivation and have good attitudes to learning of science. In a good Year 1 lesson, pupils were given a lively introduction, scientific terms were consistently used and the teacher stated clearly what pupils were going to investigate in the playground,

which prepared pupils well for the task. The mixture of class, group and individual teaching allows the different groups to work at a pace suitable for their needs and most teachers are developing an awareness of how to teach practical investigative science. Pupils' work is marked and corrected but written comments do not provide pointers for improvement. The subject makes good contribution to pupils' personal development because pupils have good opportunities to work together, share, take turns and discuss the work with 'talking partners'. Health and safety topics are covered well.

71. Leadership and management of science are good. The role of the subject co-ordinators is developing well. The more recently appointed co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, is enthusiastic and has initiated an audit of the subject. There is good understanding of strengths and of areas for development and an appropriate plan for action is in place. The co-ordinators are aware that assessment procedures are under-developed. Resources for the subject are good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has been very successful in addressing the issues raised by the last inspection, and pupils now achieve very well
- Resources for ICT are now good and improving all the time
- Teachers are confident with the subject and teach the skills well
- Assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress need further development
- Teachers do not make enough use of ICT to support learning in other subjects

### **Commentary**

72. Pupils achieve very well so that standards are broadly average at Year 2, and only just below this at Year 6. Observation in lessons, examination of saved work and discussion with Year 6 pupils show that a substantial majority of pupils reach the expected Level 4 by the time they leave school. There are some weaker areas such as in the use of e-mail, and the creation of multi-media presentations is not as advanced as in many schools. Nevertheless, present attainment is a significant improvement on the last inspection, given that the older classes have not had the full benefit of improved resources throughout their time in school. Despite limited opportunity to practise ICT skills at home, Year 6 pupils say "We are better than most of our mates"!

- Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to correct the weaknesses identified at the last inspection, and has done so very effectively.
- The issue of access to computers has been resolved. The installation of a large computer suite allows for regular timetabled lessons of a substantial length. A work-station per child means that each pupil gets maximum opportunity to try out and then practise their skills.
- The co-ordinator has built up a much better range of software to support direct teaching and to use in other subjects.
- The school has adopted the nationally recommended scheme of work, so that planning shows a clear progression in skill acquisition and understanding.
- The gaps in provision for the control and modelling elements of ICT have been plugged through the purchase of suitable software programs. More recently, the purchase of kits such as 'Connect' and data-logging programs has had an immediate positive impact on standards.
- Staff knowledge and expertise have kept pace with the fast rate of change in ICT. Teachers have benefited from additional training, and help each other with newly introduced resources and techniques.

73. Teaching is good and sometimes very good, so that pupils achieve very well. Teachers make full use of varied resources to keep lessons interesting, varied and lively. In classrooms where there is an interactive whiteboard, teachers often introduce the lesson through a short, well-focused demonstration. This gave a flying start to a very good lesson in Year 2 during which pupils were

shown how to place text within a speech bubble. Pupils continue this progress through the school, so that the work of the current Year 6, and the achievement in lessons of the present Year 5, indicate that standards are very close to average now by age eleven. For instance, in the Year 5 lesson, most pupils showed the capacity to control icons on the screen through writing simple procedures, and were ready to progress to a repeated set of instructions.

74. Teachers expect the pupils to work independently, and try to solve problems for themselves so that pupils meet the challenge by using what they already know; for instance, Year 3 pupils showed surprising confidence in exploring and then manipulating icons to re-organise sounds and other melodies to a ten-bar piece. In all lessons, teaching assistants and the ICT technician give good and often very good support during the lesson and enable the teachers to match work to different needs. However, assessment is not specific enough to ensure that pupils' progress can be accurately monitored across the school.
75. Leadership and management in the subject are good, with very good features. The knowledgeable and hard-working lead co-ordinator has good support from the science co-ordinator, especially with the control element. She is confident, enthusiastic and up to date, and generates enthusiasm amongst the staff, but she does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning across the school through regular observation of lessons. She is also aware of the need for sharper assessment, and is taking advice from the school adviser on how best to proceed.

### **ICT across the curriculum**

76. There is use of ICT in subjects such as history or geography, as pupils research the Internet for information, or word process their writing in English and other subjects, and also in science. However, this aspect needs more attention if pupils are to turn to ICT as their preferred way of tackling a task set in other subjects. As yet, teachers do not plan for enough situations in which pupils can use ICT within a meaningful context.

### **HUMANITIES**

77. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in history or geography for an overall judgement to be made about provision or standards. A review of pupils' work indicates that there is some good work in both subjects that builds on the pupils' interest and extends their understanding.
78. In **geography**, pupils are involved in a good programme of practical activities and visits that gives them some first-hand understanding of the subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils made papier-mâché 'islands' and used these to explore how the pattern of contour lines on a map corresponded to the shape of a hill. There was a good link made to English in Year 4 lessons where pupils reviewed the tourist facilities offered by their town and wrote publicity leaflets.
79. In **history**, an extremely exciting Greek Day in Year 5 illustrated how practical activities and role-play can help pupils become enthused about a subject, and also learn a great deal. Very good links were made to art and design, drama, geography, mathematics and design and technology. The Greek meal where pupils, dressed in ancient Grecian clothes, and ate moussaka and feta cheese salad after performing their Greek play is the sort of experience that brings history to life and will stay in their memories for many years to come.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

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

- Lessons help pupils to learn about both themselves and others because teachers link work closely to their experiences
- There are some good practical opportunities for pupils to learn about the Christian religion, but fewer for the other religions that form part of the syllabus

## Commentary

80. Standards achieved at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below those expected for these ages in the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus and are not as good as at the time of the previous inspection. This is because the subject has not been an area identified as a priority for development and also there has been some lack of leadership and management due to the co-ordinator's absence on sick leave. A new co-ordinator has now been appointed and she has already ensured that there are now adequate resources for the subject. Achievement and the overall quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory.
81. The syllabus enables pupils to learn from, as well as about, religion. For example, Year 1 pupils learnt about baptism when a visiting curate carried out a mock ceremony for their dolls and had a party to celebrate the occasion. In Years 1 and 2, teachers place good emphasis on the teaching of Christianity, so that pupils know the significance of the key festivals. They are familiar with many Bible stories. They also learn about other religions but the religious significance of celebrations and special occasions is sometimes missed. For example, as part of the class topic on 'Celebrations', Year 2 pupils find out how Hanukkah is celebrated. In this lesson a range of activities was provided to make the celebration come alive, but during the activities the focus shifted to completing the written tasks and the religious significance was lost. In Years 3 to 6, pupils acquire knowledge about some of the main religions. In the very good lesson in Year 5, pupils had very good opportunities to develop their understanding of how Christians use the Bible for guidance. In this lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge underpinned the use of specific religious terminology and very good use of questions to stimulate a vibrant discussion. Pupils asked searching questions such as "Why is there no mention of Jesus in the contents page in the Bible?" However, in other lessons seen sometimes opportunities to link learning about religion to issues were missed.
82. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to visit the local church but there are no planned visits to other places of worship from different faith communities. This has a significant impact on pupils' awareness and regard for a diversity of beliefs and cultures.
83. There has been little monitoring and evaluation of pupils' achievements in religious education, so that some inconsistencies in practice have not been addressed. The new co-ordinator has already evaluated strengths and weaknesses and has planned appropriate action. The school recognises that assessment is under-developed and improvements are a key part of the action plan.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in any of the four subjects (art and design, design and technology, music and physical education) for an overall judgement to be made about standards or the quality of provision.
85. In **art and design**, there are pockets of teacher expertise within the school, and hence examples of very good teaching, so that pupils in certain year groups achieve very well in particular elements of the art and design curriculum. For instance, observational drawing is strong at Year 6; pottery is taught very well indeed in Year 5; abstract collage work is of a good standard in Year 4; pattern and design are well developed in Year 1; and three-dimensional art work is more evident about the school than is often found in schools.
86. Art work is often used to link various subjects, for example in the study of Ancient Greece during the inspection. The art activities heighten the pupils' motivation for learning, as well as awakening fresh interests and developing new skills; for example, skilled teaching by the art co-ordinator meant that pupils achieved very well in using clay to make coil pots of a very good standard. During this session, pupils also practised valuable personal and social skills, as they worked harmoniously, exchanged opinions, self-evaluated and admired the skills of others.

87. There are many examples of good work in **design and technology** around the school that indicate that pupils are introduced to a good range of projects, materials and techniques. In the Year 4 project during the inspection, pupils designed and made a stable straight-backed chair from rolled paper and card. They worked collaboratively in small groups, with excellent concentration and purpose, in order to customise their chair to suit a particular character, using a range of media for this. The 'blocked' timetable enabled them to work on their chairs at some point every day and so finish the project during a week. This greatly enhanced their enjoyment, sense of purpose and their learning, because they were able to follow up and extend ideas that were still fresh in their minds.
88. **Music** plays an important part in the life of the school, even though there is a limited level of musical expertise on the staff. The school is looking to appoint a music professional to assist in teaching composition of music, which the school identifies as a weaker aspect. However, a temporary teacher has very successfully co-ordinated music for this year, and leaves the school with a properly structured curriculum and year group planning files that will be a good support to class teachers when they plan lessons in the future. Teaching was very good in the one music lesson seen, in which Year 2 pupils delighted in their success at identifying and then composing with slow and quick, loud and soft sounds. More could be made of opportunities to listen to music before, during and after assembly time.
89. Visiting teachers work well with individuals and groups of pupils who are learning to play brass and keyboard instruments. A 'celebration' of these pupils' successes during an assembly showed the progress they had made in mastering their instrument. The school buys in the services of a local 'community Music Company' to teach singing and percussion for two hours per week of curriculum time, plus an hour's lunchtime. Year groups are involved on a rotating basis, so there is an issue of continuity, as there are long gaps for classes in between each series of lessons. Balancing this is the enthusiasm generated for all things musical. The Samba drumming lessons are highly popular, and the Samba club has a long waiting list. There is an active school choir who give performances in school, and who make very regular contributions to musical events in the town. The school strives hard to ensure that the pupils join in with local and community musical events as much as possible, and for the pupils involved this is a great boost to confidence and self-esteem.
90. In the **physical education** lessons seen, both with a focus upon throwing, catching, hitting and striking skills, standards were broadly average for the age of the pupils. All pupils have swimming lessons in Years 3, 4 and 5, as a response to the seaside location and the safety issues involved. The co-ordinator and teachers in the school regard physical education as an important subject, for itself and for what it can offer the pupils in terms of life skills, personal development and community involvement. The school is proud to be known locally as 'the school that enters everything'. Teachers work hard to make sure that all groups of pupils can benefit from timetabled lessons and the extra-curricular clubs and activities such as football and netball. The issue raised in the last report about pupils who do not change for physical education and games has been very well resolved, as there is a good stock of spare equipment for 'forgotten' kit.
91. The co-ordinator and management team are active in looking always to improve provision. For instance, physical education and games was a school priority for improvement in 2003-4, so that teachers' skills in teaching gymnastics and dance were up-dated. Currently, further improvements are planned. The school is now part of a local primary cluster of the national School Sport Co-ordinator programme. Other initiatives are aimed at younger pupils, and encourage pupils to be more active at break and lunchtimes. These plans should complement the school's Healthy School bid, as well as enrich the sporting curriculum.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
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).*